

## Bible Chat notes week starting 30 4 23

John 10: 1 - 16 (NRSV)

*'Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. 2 The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. 5 They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.'* 6 Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

*7 So again Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. 8 All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. 9 I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.*

*11 'I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 12 The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. 13 The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. 14 I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. 16 I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.*

1. Consider verses 1 - 5. Can you remember a time when you did hear the voice of the shepherd? Did you realise it at the time, or only when looking back? What are the hallmarks of the voice of the Good Shepherd?
2. How can we develop a better sensitivity to the voice of the Good Shepherd? How can we distinguish the voice of God from other voices, such as the voice of our own selfish needs, the demands others may make on us, or the general pressures of life?
3. Look at verses 6 - 10. Reflect on what it might mean to have life 'abundantly'. Is this a description of our life? What holds us back from living an abundant life? Who or what is the thief who comes to steal, kill or destroy?
4. Read verses 11 - 16. Discuss the character of the Good Shepherd. What is his ultimate aim? To what extent do we reflect his character or fit in with that ultimate aim? How does this ultimate aim connect with our ability to experience abundant life?
5. What do you take away from this passage?