

Facilitator

1. Open with Prayer

2. Welcome any newcomers

3. Read Esther 6 and give a five-minute review of the sermon using Peppy's sermon notes.

Facilitator: Please don't feel you have to cover every question. Try to keep your discussion to an hour and a half at the most.

**CONNECT Group study questions, Esther  
October 26, 2014**

**Title: Haman's terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day**

We've all had them—the occasional sleepless night when for no apparent reason you can think of, sleep just isn't there. You're left thinking of the sad shape you'll be in when you face a new day with your eyes at half mast. I read recently that anthropologist and historian Roger Ekirch at Virginia Tech credits the advent of electricity for changing people's sleep patterns. For centuries people practiced segmented sleep or a first and second sleep that began at dark was blissfully interrupted for periods of contemplation, prayer, and other activities (use your imagination—one source listed burglary). In Psalm 119:148, the writer anticipates the night watch “that I may meditate on Thy word.” Our typical 8-hour repose from lights out until the rooster crows offers much less sleep than people enjoyed up to about 150 years ago. Perhaps it was between sleep segments that King Ahasuerus, unable to return to sleep, ordered the book of records—the chronicles of the kingdom—be read to him. Let's look for the hand of God at work as an entry in Persia's logbook catches the king's interest.

**Question:** What keeps you awake at night? Anxiety? Anticipation of the day ahead? Nagging aches and pains from the day before? What helps you get to sleep? What Scripture verses can you think of that would help you slip into a sound sleep knowing God is in control? **Facilitator:** If one or two verses aren't offered, suggest Matthew 11:28-30; Philipians 4:6-7; Matthew 6:25-34.

**Question:** If you've ever had a plan, and then changed your mind, or got cold feet and put it off until you could gather your courage, you might understand what may have been going on in Esther's mind during the first banquet for the king and Haman in Chapter 5. Can we also say it was a case of God keeping her from the confrontation until He could humiliate Haman in Chapter 6? What can you imagine was happening from Esther's point of view? From God's overarching point of view?

**Question:** Haman's pride has been inflating since he was promoted in Chapter 3. In Chapter 6 we see it reach a pinnacle from where it plummets. The king places the honor Haman chose for himself on Mordecai. Read Proverbs 16 and assign the name Haman or Mordecai to verses that best describe one or the other. **Facilitator:** Not every verse in Proverbs 16 will fit Haman or Mordecai, but many will.

**Meditation:** Privately or in discussion, consider the Proverbs 16 verses that best describe you. If you're like me, you'll find yourself in some of the Haman verses and in some of the Mordecai verses. Try to get a fix on where you are right now by Proverbs 16 standards and where you would like to be. What spiritual disciplines would help you become more like Mordecai and less like Haman?