

Home Group notes for the week following Sunday 1st June 2014

THEME: ASCENSION

As we Gather

This week's reading recounts the events leading up to the establishment of the Christian Church, and serves as a bridge between the events of Jesus' life on earth and the beginning of the Church.

Reading Scripture ACTS 1 : 1 - 11

Thinking together

After the resurrection, Jesus appeared to his disciples over a period of 40 days, teaching about their new ministry, as He transferred to them His authority and mission.

What was this new ministry (v 7)? Discuss

The disciples were eye witnesses to all that happened to Christ, and to see Him taken up into heaven was important for them as it removed any doubt that He is God.

Lessons learned

- *Reality of Christ's resurrection.* It was important because
 - = their spiritual power depended upon this (v4)
 - = the message of the Gospel involves the truth about the resurrection (Matt 28:16-20)
 - = believers were able to refute the official Jewish position that the disciples had stolen His body (Matt 28:12-13)

- *Coming of His kingdom.* The reign of God over the lives and hearts of those who trust Him enables believers not to be anxious about the future and to share the message of God's spiritual kingdom (vv7-8)

Share with the group what happened on an occasion when your timetable did not coincide with God's timetable. Discuss

- *Power of the Holy Spirit.* John the Baptist had announced a future baptism by the Holy Spirit (Matt 3:11 and other Gospels), and Jesus had also promised the coming of the Spirit (John 14:16).

= fulfilment now gives believers enduring empowerment to serve the Lord and accomplish His will

What is your place / role in accomplishing God's will (Matt 28:16-20)? Discuss

= the power of the Church comes from the Holy Spirit, not man (Zechariah 4:6)

What happens in a church when there are cliques and power struggles among it's leaders? Discuss

= ordinary people are able to do extra-ordinary things because God's power is at work in their lives (Acts 2:4)

Discuss your feelings / reactions to such occurrences which have been in the news recently

= all of God's people are enabled to be witnesses and tell the lost about the Saviour, although some are gifted with the calling to evangelism (Ephesians 4:11)

When last did you share with someone your experience of Christ in your life?

Discuss

- *Assurance of His coming again.* Ascension is an essential part of Christ's ministry. The 40 days of resurrection appearances had finished and Christ returned to the glory from whence He came

= this confronts us with the second coming (John 14:28 & Acts 1:11), and we must prepare ourselves for that day

How can we do this? Discuss

= now Christ is freed from the physical restraints of the human / physical form, He is able to

- Send the Holy Spirit to be with us
- Intercede for us with the Father, giving us the grace we need for life and for service
- Be our advocate before the Father, forgiving us when we confess our sin.

In Closing

Jesus told the disciples to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit (v4). In the busyness of life we need to learn to be still with the Living Christ in order to experience the power, courage and peace that come from the infilling of the Holy Spirit (Isaiah 40:29-31)

A PRAYER YOU MIGHT LIKE TO READ

Eternal Father, through Christ our ascended Lord you sent your Holy Spirit to be the bond of fellowship in the Church, unifying the whole created order in Christ, who reigns supreme over all things with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen