

Home Group notes for the week following Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2014

**THEME: THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER**

**As we Gather**

In His teachings, Jesus always used concepts familiar to His listeners. This week's teaching grew out of a confrontation with Jewish leaders, the concept of shepherd being familiar to everyone, particularly the Jewish listeners. People not only saw shepherds with their sheep on a daily basis, but for Jewish people, all leaders – both spiritual and political (kings and prophets) – were viewed as shepherds of the people / nation (Psalm 100:3 John 21:15-17 Acts 20:28)

**Reading Scripture      John 10 : 1 – 10**

**Thinking together**

In John 10:1-6 Jesus used as illustration a practice common in the villages / small towns. A number of flocks of sheep would all be led into a walled and gated pen overnight, guarded by a porter or one of the shepherds. In the morning as the shepherds came to collect their flocks they were recognised by the guard. He would unlock the door and the shepherd would call to his sheep. Recognising his voice they would follow him out of the pen leaving the other flocks behind.

**Today, who are the watchmen / porters appointed (called by God) to watch over the flocks of believers? Discuss (see Jeremiah 23:1-4)**

Because not everyone understood what Jesus meant, in John 10:7-10 He applied to Himself the illustration of a shepherd out in the hills with his sheep. At night the shepherd would lead his sheep into a roughly constructed (stones / thorn branches) open circle. The shepherd would then lie across the entrance to keep the sheep safe from dangerous animals or thieves.

**From what / who does Christ protect His followers today? Discuss**

John records (verse 8) that all who came before Jesus would have led the sheep the wrong way (eg adventurers , insurrectionists, Zealots) – away from God – but the sheep did not listen to them

**Why do you think the sheep did not listen to them? Discuss**

**Why today do some sheep listen to false shepherds? Discuss**

Christ came as the appointed one (sent by God) just as the Scriptures promised (see Ezekiel 34 – NB 11-16 & 23-24 Isaiah 40:11). Through Him we have access to the Father (Ephesians 2:12-13).

He leads His sheep into one flock – the church – to find salvation and pasture (John 10:9-10 see also Numbers 27: 15-17 Deuteronomy 28:6)

**What does this mean to you? Discuss**

## **In Closing**

If life is in the hands of God (as revealed by Jesus) then those who walk with Christ know His presence and follow His way of peace and love, secure in the knowledge that this way leads them closer to the Father.

**Is your life dull and burdensome or vital and worth living?**

### A Prayer you might like to read

Holy Shepherd,  
you know your sheep by name and lead us safely through the valleys.  
Guide us by your voice,  
that we may walk in certainty and security to the joyous feast prepared  
for us in your house.                      Amen