

Home Group notes for the week following Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2014

**THEME: FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY**

**As we Gather**

Those who responded to Jesus by becoming His disciples (John 1:38-42 and Matthew 4:18-22) found their lives radically changed. In addition, by being in Jesus' presence 24/7 they found themselves changing. They heard Jesus teaching in the synagogues, telling parables to the crowds, and they watched Him perform wonderful miracles of healing. They ate with Him, listened as He explained what they had seen and heard, and as He taught them more about God's kingdom. Gradually, Jeremiah's prophesy (31:31-33) came true for them.

**Reading Scripture      Jeremiah 31 : 13 – 33    and    John 15 : 1 – 8**

**Thinking together**

Disciples who live close to Christ will find God's law (way of life as revealed by Christ) slowly displacing human wilful (sinful) inclinations in their hearts, creating a unique personal relationship with God

**How can you ensure that you live close to Christ – where do prayer, bible reading and community / fellowship fit into practicing the presence of Christ? Discuss**

Jesus always used pictures and ideas familiar to His hearers, and in John 15:1-8 we read the parable of the vine. Grapevines were a familiar sight in Palestine, and through Israel's religious history the vine had become a symbol of the nation.

In the Old Testament, the vine refers to

- Israel's failures in doing God's work (refer to Jeremiah 2:21 ; Ezekiel 15 and 19:10-14; and Isaiah 5:1-7)
- God's goodness to His people ( the fruit of the vine used in the Passover meal, and Psalm 80:8).

The fruit that God looks for in us is Christ-likeness

**What do you understand by Christ-likeness? Discuss**

**What does Christ-likeness comprise (see John 15:2, 4-5, and 7-8)? Discuss**

Jesus said He was the true / real vine (John 15:1)

**What do you think He meant by this? Discuss**

The branches of the vine are all those who claim to follow Christ.

Fruitful branches are those who remain in Christ / are true believers with a living relationship with Christ

**Of what does a living relationship with Christ consist (see 1 John 4:15; John 1:12; 1 John 3:24; 1 John 2:24; John 15:12)? Discuss**

Useless branches – those not bearing fruit, are cut away and burned.

**How do branches (disciples) become useless and without fruit? Discuss**

### **In Closing**

Jesus went throughout Galilee teaching, preaching and healing (Matthew 4:23).

A good disciple

- Enriches his / her own life

**How does a disciple do this?**

- Brings glory to God

**Have you committed yourself to bringing glory to God?**

**How do you intend doing this?**