

Home Group notes for the week following Sunday 24th August 2014

THEME: DISCIPLESHIP

As we Gather

Matthew's Gospel focuses on Jesus as King, stressing His authority. The two readings this week emphasise the importance of preparedness for Christ's return, and of walking in His footsteps until that day.

Reading Scripture **MATTHEW 25 : 1 – 13 and 28 : 16 - 20**

Thinking together

Like all Jesus' parables, the story told in Matthew 25:1-13 had an individual, local meaning and a wider, universal meaning. Jesus was telling His followers that

- As the chosen people their whole history should have prepared them for the coming of God; yet they were totally unprepared and were therefore shut out of the Kingdom.

The first point of this parable is, be ready for the unexpected, do what you can to prepare, and keep alert.

Not every believer is ready to meet the Lord. Many are no longer excited about His coming, having become lethargic and drowsy. They give little effective witness that the Lord is returning

Are you able to recognise and describe such people in the church today? Discuss

How can we prepare for the coming of the Lord? Discuss
See also Matthew 28:16-20

- Some things cannot be obtained at the last minute; just as there are certain things which cannot be borrowed.

The second point of the parable is that we are all responsible for our own spiritual condition, and for using and developing what God has entrusted to us

What resources has God put at our disposal? Discuss

Some professing Christians have not really trusted Christ sincerely. The oil in the story symbolises the Spirit of God. Without the Holy Spirit and the word of God to give a dynamic relationship with the living Christ, there can be no true salvation and effective witness to what it means to be a Christ follower [see John 4:26 Acts 1:4].

What does it mean to you to be a Christ follower? Discuss

Before His ascension, Jesus gave His followers a commission (task) and a promise (see Matthew 28:16-20).

Christ leads us – as His followers – to think, live and pray that His Kingdom will come to everyone (see 2 Peter 3:9 Acts 11:19-21 Acts 18:1-10).

The Church [body of Christ / faith community] should be holding out the word of life (Philippians 2:12-16): Teaching others how to know Christ and live for Him (Luke 24:44-45 Matthew 28:19-21 and 2Timothy 2:1-2).

How do you witness for Christ? Discuss

In Closing

Discipleship is costly.

Christ requires total commitment without compromise. This means putting God's interests ahead of our own. This means letting go of personal ambition. This means that relationship with Him supersedes *all* other relationships, even if this entails the risk and cost of division and rejection.

What has discipleship cost you?

How has discipleship blessed you?

A PRAYER YOU MIGHT LIKE TO READ

God of awesome wonder, Lord of heaven and earth, you sent your Holy Spirit to be the power of your Church.
Inspire us, as followers of Christ, so to love the world that your name may be known
Throughout the earth