

## Home Group notes for the week following 29th April 2018

### EASTER SEASON – Living Deepening Love

#### AS WE GATHER

Jesus used the example of the grape vine in His teaching because He knew His listeners would understand, as vines grew prolifically in and around Galilee. This teaching is the last “I am” statement of Jesus recorded by John in his Gospel.

**READING SCRIPTURE**    **John 15:1-8**    [optional readings    Acts 8:26-40    Psalm 22:26-32  
1 John 4:7-21]

#### THINKING TOGETHER

In the Old Testament the vine was symbolic of the nation of Israel and its fruitfulness in doing God’s work on earth; but it produced ‘wild’ grapes of oppression, unrighteousness and rejection of God’s Son [optional readings    Psalm 80:8    Isaiah 5:1-7    Matthew 21:33-36].

In His teaching Jesus pointed out that He was the true vine, the vine of God, and faith in Him was (is) the only way to God’s salvation.

True believers are the branches and have

- A living union / relationship with Him through which they produce much fruit (John 15:5)

**What are the fruits produced / qualities of the Christian character? Discuss**

[optional readings    1 Corinthians 12    Galatians 5:22-24    2 Peter 1:5-8]

**What makes people drift away from Christ? Discuss**

**Is it always easy to be fruitful? Discuss**

- A loving union / relationship with Him so they may enjoy Him. The believer’s lives are enriched through their daily contact with Jesus who is the example of what it means to love God – the source of our love.  
By our fruitfulness we bring glory to God as others see Christ in our lives / lifestyle

**What does it mean to you / what do you understand by the phrase ‘to enjoy Jesus’?  
Discuss**

**What is the real test of our love for God? Discuss**

[optional readings    1 Corinthians 13:4-7    1 John 4:19-21]

- A lasting union / relationship with Him because we belong to Him

**What does it mean to ‘abide in Christ’ Discuss (John 15:3-4)**

**What evidence is there that we are abiding in Christ? Discuss (John 15:2 + 7)**

[optional readings    Acts 8:35-38    Romans 6:22    Hebrews 13]

**How can Christians cultivate / nurture this relationship of abiding / indwelling with Christ?**

**Discuss** [optional readings    Galatians 5:22-25    Hebrews 13:15]

Nothing sinful or evil can exist in God's presence. He cannot overlook or condone sin, but because He loves us, and if we trust Him, we will not have to bear the penalty for our sins but be acquitted by His sacrifice [optional readings 1 Peter 2:24 Romans 5:18].

The greatest judgement God can bring on a believer is to let him / her go their own way, but in His loving grace He "prunes" and encourages us to bear (more) fruit for His glory (John 15:2, 5, + 8).

**How does the Father "prune" us? Discuss** [optional reading Hebrews 12:1-14]

## **IN CLOSING**

There is always fruit where there is life.

When people come into a right relationship with Christ / God, they begin to bear fruit in their lives. Spirit produced fruit (evidence of love) goes on reproducing from one life to another, and true believers united with the vine / abiding in Christ, will always produce the fruit of love in their lives: thereby bringing glory to God.

**Are you receiving the nourishment and life Christ, the true vine, offers?**

## **PRAYER**

God of love, you sent your Son into the world that we may abide in Him.  
Graft us into His risen life that we may bear the fruit of love for you and one another, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen