

## **Home group notes – week beginning 13<sup>th</sup> April 2015**

### **Home group / study notes: Being church**

*Feel free to use as much or as little as you wish. The aim is to encourage us to become better disciples by being aware of the importance of 'church' and our commitment to being part of it.*

This week sees our church Annual Meeting, when we review our mission, renew our vision, and elect those who will oversee our church.

#### **Is it possible to be a Christian and not be part of a church?**

*John Wesley: 'There are two things we simply cannot do alone. We cannot marry alone and we cannot be a Christian alone'*

Each think of two people you know well who are not churchgoers – could be friends, family, neighbours or colleagues. Why are they not part of a church? How could you help them? Which of the following are their reasons:

- Don't feel the need
- Never even crossed their mind
- Actively unbelieving, agnostic or atheist, or of a different faith
- Not actually Christians even though they may assume they are
- Been hurt by churches in the past
- Fear they would not be welcome for a variety of reasons
- Scared by the idea of church
- Not sure what they believe and don't want to be hypocritical
- Other...

**Read** 1 Cor 12:12-15 What does this imply for those who try to go it alone?

**Read** Jn 3:5-7 What does this imply about being a Christian? *Birth in complete isolation?*

So perhaps we should be more straight with people who say or assume they are Christians but say they have no desire or need to 'go to church'? How can we challenge them to decide whether they are, or are not, Christians in a helpful way? Are we ourselves too scared of their reaction to us? Is leaving them where they are actually the kindest thing for them?

*This has been the most important mission question in Britain for many years – centuries even – the tacit assumption of being a Christian but never actually making a commitment of any kind.*

**Read** Mark 8:27-29 It's what *you* can say from the heart about what your faith means to you that will affect those you thought about above. Can you help each other come up with something short and sincere? *Will be different for different people. We all need to have something ready for when people do refer to church or faith. (For some this will build on, or be revision for, thinking about 'Beautiful Lives'.)*

**Read** Hebrews 10:19-25. Do you hear a challenge to be more faithful in being church?

*We all know how uplifting it is on one of those Sundays when everyone seems to turn up! When you are not part of worship God cannot use you there – in so many different ways. Can you think of some?*

Spend time praying for those who are not committed to Christ (*especially those in our 'Beautiful Lives lists'*); and for you to be challenged in your own commitment as needed.