

Nettleham Methodist Church Cell Material
Week commencing 3rd May 2009
Theme: 'a network of relationships as the cradle of faith'

Welcome:

Paul was the Thessalonian Christians' 'father and mother in faith' (2: 7, 11). Share with each other something about a person who has had this kind of impact on your life, or something about the person who first introduced you to God.

Word:

Read 1 Thessalonians 3 and John 21:1-18. In both situations there are a number of different relationships being developed or encouraged.

- What important relationships can you identify in these passages?

Both Jesus and Paul provide encouragement before they come to the point of addressing a difficult issue. Both Peter and the Thessalonians find themselves in a relationship of love and trust before they are challenged.

- What kinds of things do you think build relationships? Think about different contexts (e.g. between cell group members, between members of different congregations in the church, between churches in the circuit, between churches of different denominations, between the church and community groups...add your own examples).
- Notice what the similarities and differences are in approach as you think about different situations.

Commentators suggest that Paul is already setting the scene in chapter 3 for his discussion with the Thessalonians about 'hope' (chapters 4 and 5). He mentions their faith and love (v6)...but talk of hope is conspicuous by its absence in this chapter! He also talks about 'whatever is lacking in your faith' (v10). In our reading from John's gospel, the disciples appear to have returned to their old life of fishing, despite their meeting with the risen Christ.

- one of my tutors in college suggested that God did something so astonishingly and shockingly new when Jesus was raised from the dead, that we should be worried if we ever felt comfortable with the idea...what do you think ?
- What does it mean to you that Jesus is risen?
- Be honest with one another about the times when it is hard for you to hope.

Witness:

One of the people who has been important on my spiritual journey once said '...we are called to be Resurrection people but too many of us are stuck in Good Friday or even on Easter Saturday...'.

One commentator says this about the resurrection... 'And the consequence of what they had witnessed is that, as Archbishop Desmond Tutu puts it, "ultimately goodness and laughter and peace and compassion and gentleness and forgiveness will have the last word".'

- What difference does it make to our local community that we are 'resurrection people'?