

Nettleham Methodist Church

Cell Outlines

Week beginning: 19th / 26th June 2005

Theme: Foundations of Christian Living – The Fatherhood of God

Welcome: Recount any good memories of your fathers, if you knew them? Maybe they're still alive, if so do you regard them as good examples, or not? Are there any Fathers present in your cell? Ask them to recount any good/ bad experiences of being a dad

Worship Suggestion: Perhaps you could focus your worship on God being our loving heavenly Father? [If you have musicians you can sing or listen/ sing along with a worship CD or do something even more creative!]

Word/ Teaching Key Scriptures - John 14:6-11; James 1:17-18; Ephesians 1:17-23; Luke 15:11-32

We can call God our Father because we are adopted into His family as His sons. This is mainly a New Testament concept. Whereas the everlasting power and divinity of God are manifest in creation and generally in the Old Testament, His Fatherhood is largely the subject of New Testament revelation. This is clearly shown when we learn that God is referred to as the Father only fifteen times in the Old Testament and two hundred and fifty-four times in the New Testament.

The word 'Father' in Greek is 'pater' which is from a root word signifying nourisher, protector and upholder. We need to know God as our Father in order to have a balanced view of Him.

Ways to Understand and Know the Fatherhood of God

(i) God reveals Himself in many ways e.g. through the prophets (Hebrews 1:1), through creation, and through His Word, the Bible. (ii) Jesus revealed the Fatherhood of God while on earth, especially His love, unity and authority (John 14:6-11). (iii) Our human father shows us only an imperfect representation of what God the Father is, but God is the originator of all fatherhood (Ephesians 3:14-15 AV), and so our human fathers can reflect (hopefully) something of God the Father – if they know Him! (iv) The Holy Spirit is a gift from God the Father to us and He will reveal to us God the Father (John 14:26).

Questions and Discussion Starters

1. The story of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32) shows much of the character of God the Father. Discuss.
2. Does our concept of our natural father have any bearing on our concept of our heavenly Father?
3. Discuss how God the Father has revealed Himself to you in practical ways in your life.
4. Does the way we live our lives show a lack of knowledge of God the Father and, as a result, a lack of trust in Him?
5. Even though we have a standing invitation to come boldly to our heavenly Father's throne do we?

Witness

Our Heavenly Father's Loving Purposes for Mankind

- He delights to show mercy (Micah 7:18).
- He purposes that we may have life and have it to the full (John 10:10).
- He wants to set us free from fear (John 14:1; Psalm 118:5-9).
- He desires to give man an eternal home (John 14:2-3).
- He wants all mankind to be saved (1 Timothy 2:3-4).
- He wants to take care of our needs (1 Peter 5:7).

How can we demonstrate this in practical ways? Pray for opportunities to show the love of God with those known to you either Christian or non.

2005 © Nettleham Methodist Church