

Nettleham Methodist Church Cell Outlines

Week beginning: 12th March 2006

Theme: What is Love?

Welcome/ Ice-breaker suggestions: Tell the cell about your first date! Where did you feel safest/ warmest as a child?

Word/ Teaching Slot (Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-13)

The word most often used for 'love' in the New Testament is 'agape'. This is a characteristic word and expresses an idea little known until the advent of Jesus and His true Church. 'Agape' is a word expressing a love, which is sacrificial, unconditional and selfless. God showed us what this word meant by sending His Son Jesus into the world to suffer and die for us who are totally unworthy.

Love is the most important quality in God's Kingdom. Knowing all, moving mountains, giving all we have to the poor, and even dying for our faith mean nothing if we do not have love (1 Corinthians 13:1-3). Knowledge and the gifts of the Spirit are important, but in the end all will be revealed and these things will not be so important. Therefore, if we base all our lives and ministries on these things, we will end up with nothing because these things will fade away and be lost. They will be like children's toys which are fun and needed when we are children, but useless when we are adults. We need to grow up into more important, productive and fruitful things such as faith, hope and love (most importantly - love). Love is the big gun of Christianity, not healing or prophecy. Love never fails but all else will pass away. The gifts of the Spirit may be the means to express God's love but so often we concentrate on the gift and forget why it was given. Gifts are there to point people to Jesus and to show people the love of God (1 Corinthians 13:8-13). The passages in the Bible on the gifts of the Holy Spirit are always balanced by passages on love. They go hand in hand because power without love is dangerous. Power should only be a way of enabling and expressing love. Love is what counts. Love for God and others should be the motivating force behind all our work for God.

Questions & Discussion Points (If you take the following questions seriously you won't have time to do all these, so be selective.)

1. Does God appreciate signs of our love for Him? (Mark 14:3-9) When did you last tell your Heavenly Father that you love Him? (Be honest!).
2. Read Luke 10:25-37. What should we do to inherit eternal life? Who is our neighbour? How should we treat our neighbours?
3. Read 1 John 4:7-21. Where does love come from? How is love made complete in us? Can we rely on the love God has for us? Why is love made complete in us? Is there any fear in love, and why? Can we love God and hate our brother?
4. Discuss ways in which you could improve your relationships in the church and in the world.
5. God sacrificed His Son for us. What can we willingly give to Him and give up for Him?
6. Why does God's love follow those who are His disciples? (Psalm 23:6).
7. Why should love be our ultimate aim?

Worship Suggestion: Play or sing a worship song that focuses on expressing love for our Mighty God. Psalm 105:1-5 might help, if not choose another one!

Witness

People often receive the Gospel when we genuinely show them His love for them. Jesus can pour His love into us so that it flows out to others. Pray together as a cell for this to happen/ continue to happen, so that you have opportunities to share this amazing love with others this week. Are there those known to us who need to receive special attention, who may be going through particular difficulties right now? Pray for ways to serve them.

Reminder: Our lives, as well as our talk, are a testimony to those around us. You might like to pray into this too.