

# SEVEN LETTERS to SEVEN CHURCHES



## SMALL GROUP NOTES: Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> June – Week 1 'EPHESUS'

Read together Revelation 2.1-7

Ephesus – a successful important city and a successful church with a great track record and reputation. If you want to be reminded just how good they were – skim through the book of Ephesians. And yet things had gone wrong and off-balance.

**In what ways was this a church out of balance?**

**To what extent can you sympathise with the church at Ephesus?**

**Why do you think they ended up out of balance?**

**What practical steps do you think they need to put into place to respond to the warnings in this letter?**

It's interesting that Jesus talks about love as something you do – rather than just something you feel. Love-in-action because love is an action. 'Do love' says Jesus to the Ephesian church. Be hospitable, be practical, be caring, reflecting the self-giving love of Jesus himself.

**To what extent is 'love' a feeling/emotion, a commitment and an action? (i.e. does love have to show itself in action to be truly love?)**

In recent times I think we have seen a re-balance in our communities and streets as people have showed a fresh outpouring of love in so many ways – **discuss together some of the ways you have seen love-in-action in your street.**

I wonder what will happen as things become busier again. Love-in-action is not exclusive to the church but perhaps one of our roles as Christians is to encourage and facilitate love-in-action as others let things slip. **What do you think?**

Over recent weeks we have heard much about the *Black Lives Matter* movement – responding to ignorance and racism within ourselves, our communities and institutions is seen by many as a very topical place to see Christian love-in-action right now.

**How do you respond to this?**

**What might love-in-action look like with regards to inequality, discrimination and racism?**

**Part of love-in-action is having a voice that speaks out about the things that really matter in the Kingdom of God – how does this relate to issues of racism?**

As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13.2 *'If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries, and all knowledge, and if I have faith that can move mountains but have not love. I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames but have not love, I gain nothing.'*

**What might you want to add to this?** If you were writing your version of these sentences that reflect you in 2020 right now, what would you say?

'If I have.....but have not love. I have/gain nothing'

Spend a few moments writing down your own thoughts then share as a group.

Finally, the letter to Ephesus finishes with a phrase repeated in all 7 letters 'those who have ears let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.' If this letter had been written direct 'To the angel of the church in Jesmond Vale and Sandyford', **what would your reaction have been? Which parts ring true for us?**