

Giving Study Sheet

Aim: A series of sheets to prompt group discussion around giving. This discussion may primarily lead to individual action. It should not lead necessarily to action within the group. The discussion may lead to different ways of doing things in the life of the church.

Text: Philippians 2: 1-11

¹If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, ²make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. ⁴Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. ⁵ Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited,

⁷but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness.

And being found in human form, ⁷he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross.

⁹Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

¹¹and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

(New Revised Standard Version)

Reflection

St Paul's words from Philippians chapter 2 may well be familiar to us. Experts reckon that the heart of this passage, verses 5-11, may form part of an early Christian hymn. The contemporary hymn 'At the name of Jesus' is based on them.

Paul encourages us to consider what God has done for us in Jesus Christ and especially in his birth, death, resurrection and exaltation.

v5 talks about having 'the mind of Christ'. Other translations speak about having the same 'attitude' as Christ. The translator of The Message puts it this way, 'think of yourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself.'

Originally the letter was written to encourage ordinary Christians (like us?) as they worked out what it meant to be a follower of Jesus in the day to day of everyday life. Relationships sometimes can be tense and difficult. Paul encourages us to be like Jesus; humble, selfless, loving and concerned for others. In essence, he wants us to live today as Christians in the same way that Jesus lived, not selfishly, but for others.

One particular aspect of what God has done for us in Christ and 'the attitude of Christ' we could reflect on in our discussion is his generosity.

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).

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God generously gave his only Son. Jesus willingly gave himself. What might this mean for us?

Discussion Points

These are suggestions – address as many or as few as your group wishes to do. There are no right or wrong answers.

- What has God given to you for which you are most grateful? You might want to think about what he has given to you:-
 - as an individual
 - as a group
 - as a Church
 - as a community
 - in other ways
- For each of the above, consider how your gratitude is expressed.
- What might the passage overleaf tell us about sacrificial giving? What does it teach us about the generosity of God?
- The 'reflection' overleaf asks the question, 'what does this mean for us?' What do you think?
- What does it mean to be a follower of Jesus today? To what extent is it possible to live as he did, not selfishly, but for others?

Concluding thought

Spend a little time reflecting on the following lyrics:

1. Thou who wast rich beyond all splendour,
All for love's sake becamest poor;
Thrones for a manger didst surrender,
Sapphire-paved courts for stable floor.
Thou who wast rich beyond all splendour,
All for love's sake becomes poor.

2. Thou who art God beyond all praising,
All for love's sake becamest man;
Stooping so low, but sinners raising
Heavenwards by thine eternal plan.
Thou who art God beyond all praising,
All for love's sake becamest man.

3. Thou who art love beyond all telling,
Saviour and King, we worship thee.
Emmanuel, within us dwelling,
Make us what thou wouldst have us be.
Thou who art love beyond all telling,
Saviour and King, we worship thee.

Music

At the name of Jesus
Give thanks with a grateful heart
Now thank we all our God
Hallelujah my Father
Thou who wast rich