

'SAINTS ON THE MOVE' Homegroup Notes

Week 2 - September 2016

Freedom from the Past

Note: *This week we have our first church-wide Freedom Prayer Gathering, at 7.30pm on Tuesday 13th September. We would love as many people as possible to be there, so some homegroups may be going there instead of their usual meetings. However if you do meet with others this week, or have a chance to do some thinking on your own, here are some suggestions that can be used as flexibly as you want. Please do be open to God and to receive the freedom he is offering. These notes go with the sermon from Sunday 11th September which is on the website, www.allsaintsripley.org.uk. More information on the whole series is on the Saints on the Move September leaflet in the church or on the website.*

WELCOME

Something to think about and maybe share in a group:

If you were to put a soundtrack to your life so far, what song(s) would you choose and why?

INTRODUCTION

This week in our series on Freedom we are thinking about finding freedom from the past, where things in our history are still having a bad effect on us or holding us captive as individuals and as a church. There may be hard things that have troubled or hurt us, or good things that we find it hard to let go of to face new possibilities. In Jesus we can find freedom and a new way of being and looking at things.

WORSHIP

Spend some time focusing on God and praising him - either quietly or in words or song.

Some ideas, as suggested in last week's notes:

- You could light a candle and spend some time thinking quietly about Jesus saying, 'I am the Light of the World', or have a cross to look at and spend some time thinking quietly about Jesus saying, 'I am the Resurrection and the Life'. Then a few people could express praise and thankfulness in words.
- You could use some verses from a Psalm as a starting point eg Psalm 145:1-9 or Psalm 139:1-14 - and then use your own words.
- You could write the word 'GOD' in the middle of a large piece of paper and then, within a time limit (no more than a few minutes), come up with as many names or characteristics of God as possible and write them around it. If you are a large or competitive group, you could divide into 2 and see who can come up with the most! When you have finished, spend some time in quiet giving people time to look at all the names and characteristics. Then pray inspired by the name or characteristic that speaks most to you at the time.

WORD - Looking at the Bible together

Before listening to the passage, some context: This Psalm would have been written and first used at a time when the people of Israel were struggling. But they still hold firmly to God's goodness and blessing that they have known in times past, remembering his promises and faithfulness..

Reading: **Psalm 126** - if you are in a group get someone to read it aloud.

Spend some time quietly thinking about the reading and looking back though it. What strikes you particularly? Are there any words or phrases which stand out to you?

If you are in a group, share your thoughts briefly with the others there, giving everyone a chance to share something - even just a word or phrase. Then listen to the passage again, perhaps with a different person reading.

Have a time of thinking or discussion using these questions:

Do you have times that you can remember when God felt particularly close and you were full of joy, as the psalmist does?

How easy do you find it to remember those times? Are they an encouragement to you when things are more difficult?

How easy do you find it to turn to God when things are tough? Is it hard to pray? Where do your prayers focus - on God's goodness and faithfulness or your situation and its difficulties? Does it matter whether it is one or the other or both?

What experience do you have of 'sowing in tears' but 'reaping with songs of joy'?

The sower has to let go of treasured seed and trust it to God's creative hand in order to later reap a harvest - how easy do you find it to offer your gifts and the things of your past to God?

If there things from the past that you know you need to give to God - good or bad - for you to be free to follow him today, make a decision now to do that. Without giving details if you don't want to, maybe you could tell someone you plan to deal with it, to encourage you to stick to it.

Is there anything to share from Sunday and the sermon?

PRAYER

Spend some time praying for each other and for the church as we seek God's freedom through this month.

If you, or anyone you are aware of, would like to spend an hour talking and praying with either John, Rachel or Marian about anything that comes up through this September, please get in touch. Details are on the 'September - Freedom' leaflet.

*** DON'T FORGET ***

Saturday 1st October from 10am to 3pm
'Saints on the Move' Church Day Together

Sunday 2nd October at 10am - Harvest Thanksgiving
& Freedom Celebration followed by lunch together

*Pick up your
 invitations now!*

*Revd John Wigram
 11th September 2016*