

Being family in Christ's Church

Week 10: Ambassadors for Christ

WELCOME

Spend time relaxing and sharing together.

As you think about your own journey of faith, share encouraging examples of when the actions of someone else have caused you to take a step towards having a deeper relationship with God. Maybe something someone said to you, maybe something they did, maybe the values they lived to or perhaps the way that they lived their lives.

WORSHIP

Read Psalm 96 and then spend a few minutes quietly dwelling on its themes of worship, witness and salvation. Share any verses that particularly speak to you and explain why.

In a time of prayer, praise the Lord for what he has done, for his gift of salvation, and for the witness of Christians, both down the ages and now.

WORD

Read 2 Corinthians 5:11-21

1. What does Paul mean by 'we know what is it to fear the Lord' in verse 11? (You may find it helpful to look at the earlier verses 6-10 and also 1 Corinthians 3:12-15).
2. Paul channels his 'fear' positively and it becomes a motivation for his witness. What other motivating reasons does he give?
3. Some in the Corinthian church had been critical of Paul and hence in verses 11-13 he defends his ministry, particularly the accusation that he 'was out of his mind'. How passionate should we be about God and Christ? (You may find it helpful to look at Acts 26:24-25, Mark 3:21 and John 10:20).

Growth Group Notes

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4. In verse 15 Paul says that believers no longer live for themselves but for Christ, but what (verses 16-20) does that mean in practice?
5. In verse 20 Paul describes us as “Christ’s Ambassadors”. What characteristics come to mind when you think of the word ‘ambassador’ or the related word ‘envoy’? (You may find it helpful to look in a dictionary if you’ve got one available, or else Numbers 20:14 and 1 Kings 5:1).

How do you feel about being described as “Christ’s Ambassador”?

As Christ’s envoy, what message are we entrusted with?

Read Romans 12:14-21

In this series we’re looking at what it means to be family at Christ Church through Romans 12. In earlier verses Paul’s focus has been mainly inwards looking but in this passage he shifts to a more outward perspective, about the behaviours that we should have as Christ’s Ambassadors in the world.

1. In verses 14-21 Paul highlights many ways in which we are to behave differently to the world’s norms. Are there any that particularly catch your attention and why?
2. In what ways might we experience persecution (verse 14) in this country? If you were to experience such things, how do think you would respond? If you’re comfortable talking about a particular example of persecution you’ve experienced, how did you feel and how did you respond?

How does Paul tell us to respond to persecution and how might we do it in practice?

3. Watching the news it can feel like there’s nothing that everyone can agree on any more, so what do you think Paul means when we says that we are to do what is right in the eyes of everyone (verse 17)?

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4. Paul calls us to live in harmony and peace with others. Given that we are not all the same (verses 4-5) this is not easy! Why do you think Paul places such importance on this? How, in practice, can we live this way?
5. Verse 20, referencing Proverbs 25:21-22, can seem problematic to our ears. If you have time you may wish to use Google to explore the (hopefully helpful) idea of carrying burning coals on a head being a sign of repentance.

WHAT NEXT?

Truly living as an Ambassador for Christ is a challenge for all of us.

Give each GG member a piece of paper and a pen and ask them to first think about being a true Ambassador for Christ, and what it involves both individually and as a church. Then to write down one thing that they do during the week where, as Christ's Ambassador, they aim to show Christ to others, together with a similar thing that we do at Christ Church. After that, write down something that they could start to do, or do more of (a 'personal challenge' that ideally is reasonably readily achievable), together with a similar thing for Christ Church.

Get people to encourage each other as they share the things that they already do and also the things that we already do as a church.

After that ask people to share their thoughts about how Christ Church could be better Ambassadors for Christ. Could one of these be taken forward by the GG working together?

The 'personal challenge' is to be kept private but please encourage each member to take their piece of paper home and to commit to doing it over the next few weeks. Sensitively check on how people have got on at the next meeting.