

Being family in Christ's Church

Week 7: Encouragement

WELCOME

Spend time relaxing and sharing together.

Can you think of a time when you were particularly encouraged by something that someone said to you? How did you feel? What did you do?

Can you think of a time when you were particularly discouraged by something that someone said to you? How did you feel? What did you do?

Have there been times when you regretted what you said? What did you do about this?

WORSHIP

Give thanks for people who have encouraged you in your life and praise the Lord for putting them in your path.

Take time to privately confess words that you should not have said.

Pray for those who have hurt you with unhelpful words.

Listen to or sing a hymn or worship song.

WORD

Romans 12:6a and 8a, says, "We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is... to encourage, then give encouragement."

Some people are clearly gifted evangelist, but we are all called to evangelise – to share the good news of Jesus Christ. In the same way for some people encouragement is their key gift, but we can all encourage each other.

Read Acts 4.32-37, 9.19b-31

What examples of encouragement do we see in Barnabas?

Growth Group Notes

Autumn 2019



Throughout his life as a Christian Barnabas lived up to his name, which means “son of encouragement”

Use the following summary to ensure you pull out the main points:

Barnabas was one of the first members of the Jerusalem church formed after the Day of Pentecost. He set an example of selfless generosity in keeping with his name (Acts 4:36). Barnabas’s life became interwoven with that of the apostle Paul. Barnabas was the first person in the Jerusalem church to risk contact with Paul after his miraculous conversion on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:27). Barnabas teamed with Paul on the first missionary journey reported in Acts (Acts 13).



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Luke reports that the first Christians in Jerusalem were bound together in such love that they not only met and prayed together, but also made sacrifices to meet each other's needs. Our first introduction to Barnabas is as one of those who "having land, sold it, and brought the money" to the apostles to be used to care for the destitute. This was necessary because, while Jewish widows and orphans were cared for by a fund established at the temple, those who became Christians were quickly cut off from this major source of support.

Around 46 AD, approximately a decade after his conversion, Paul set out with Barnabas to carry the gospel to the major cities of the Roman Empire (see map above). For the rest of his life Paul would plant churches throughout Asia Minor and into Europe.

The team that set out from Antioch on the first missionary journey (Acts 13) was initially led by Barnabas, since his name was mentioned first (Acts 13:2). Soon, however, Paul's great gifts made him the accepted leader of the team (13:46).

SUMMARY

Barnabas, a man who had the gift of always seeing the best in people – what they could become, even at his own expense. Barnabas could have been jealous. He could have longed for Paul's status. Instead, he rejoiced in it. His joy was in developing greatness in somebody else. Barnabas' encouragement of Paul was needed to, to first enable Paul to be sent on mission and secondly to see him step up as the main leader.

WHAT NEXT?

Andrew's challenge in his sermon was:

What it would mean for our church if each one of us aspired to be more like Barnabas? On the face of it he was an ordinary person, but one who put everything at the feet of God (his time, his skills, his money) to serve the Lord Jesus. It was risky; it was costly, but he remained faithful – encouraging without failing, looking to see the good in others and build others up.

Barnabas lived these words from Hebrews 10:

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, 25 not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. (Hebrews 10:24-25)

Encourage each GG member to share some encourage words about another GG member. Ensure that everyone receives an encouraging word.

Encourage each GG member to think of some encouraging words to share with a work colleague, a friend, a neighbour, someone in the church family or their own family. Get them to writing it down and commit to doing it before your next meeting. Check how they got on at the next meeting.