



REAL GOD, REAL CHURCH, REAL LIVES

REAL CHURCH - Week 1. The Marks of a Real Church

These notes support the current sermon series; both of which are designed to help us focus upon God and to seek His will for our future as a Church. They can be used by individuals, two to three people or within a house group. They can be read through reasonably quickly or form the basis of deeper consideration and meditation. They will be utilized during a Church reflection at Café Church on the 27th April 2014

Readings

Acts 2: 42-47; John 17: 20-26; 1 Peter 2: 4-12; Psalm 84: 1-4 & 10-12; & Exodus 19: 1-6

Prayer, Praise and Meditation. Come into God's presence with praise and prayer focusing on the reading from Psalm 84.

Real Church; a Scriptural Definition (1 Peter 2: 4-12; John 17: 10-26; & Exodus 19: 1-6)

Read the three passages and spend a few moments in silent reflection to allow God to speak to you through His Word; consider the points that by His Spirit He highlights. Within our context at St Aidan's what are your initial & prevailing thoughts about God, the Church and the world based upon these Scriptures?

In Exodus God reminds us how He acted in a mighty way to bring His people out of slavery to be His people, appointed to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation set apart for God's purposes. Compare and contrast this with the passage in 1 Peter and how He has acted through Christ to bring us out of slavery to sin. How does Christ's prayer in John link to His role as the great High Priest, how does it impact upon Church and how does it encourage us?

On Sunday we considered a fourfold definition of Church (a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and a people

belonging to God, 1 Pet 2:9), with a God given purpose (vs. 5 and 9b), which is a work in progress (vs. 5). Mediate upon/discuss each aspect of the definition, the purpose and Church development; what are the key leaning points that stand out for you and when looking at St Aidan's what are your thoughts?

The Four Marks of a Real Church: (Acts 2: 42-47)

After reading this passage consider how this early Church reflects the definition of Church given in 1 Peter, exhibits the purpose detailed therein and displays how it is being built as living stones on the foundation of Christ; what strengths and weaknesses can you identify, are they living out the definition?

We considered how this early Church was based upon Real Truth (apostolic/bible teaching), Real Fellowship (a caring Church), Real Worship (their lives were an act of worship) and Real Mission (their words and deeds were used by God to save others). Reflect on these four Marks of a Real Church by finding the evidence for each within the passage. Now consider St Aidan's and ourselves as individuals and see how we are or are not mirroring these Marks? Consider the context of that early Church (the situations they were facing) and contrast that with our context today; what might we learn and put into practice?

The members of the early Church were described as being filled with awe, being together and having glad and sincere hearts. Miraculous signs and wonders took place through the power of the Holy Spirit. What hinders this sense of oneness and the work of the Spirit today?

Future Study

Please note down an aspect of key learning or a point that you want to study further at Café Church on the 27th April:

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