



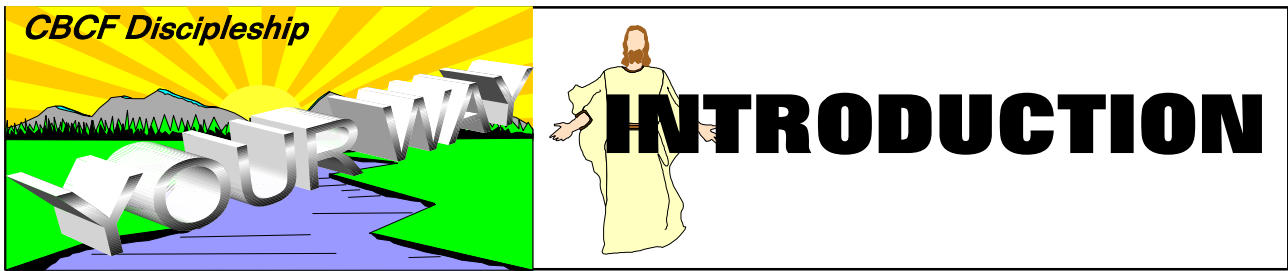
Charlton & Blackheath Christian Fellowship  
*releasing people to be the people God intended them to be*

# ***Discipleship Course***



[www.cbcf.org.uk](http://www.cbcf.org.uk)





## Discipleship Course

*“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”*

Jesus Christ

Welcome to the Charlton & Blackheath Discipleship Course. “Disciple” is the word used in the Bible to describe those who were followers of Jesus Christ. This course is designed to help you to understand and explore what it means to be a disciple of Jesus.

Each topic follows a similar pattern:

*A brief outline of the topic*

*Verses from the Bible which help to explain it*

*Questions to help explore it further and provide a thought-provoking challenge*

We hope that you enjoy following the course and find it helpful in your spiritual walk.

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### *Acknowledgements*

*Charlton & Blackheath Christian Fellowship wish to express their appreciation to the following churches for permission to draw on material produced by them*

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Rochford Community Church**

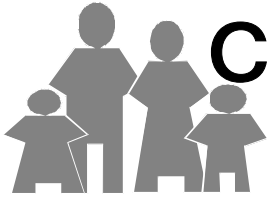
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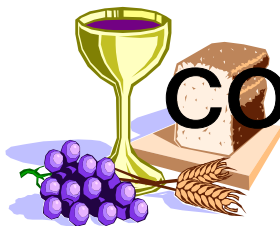
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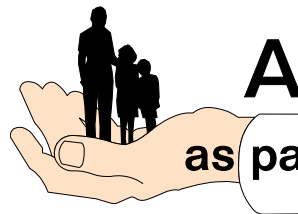
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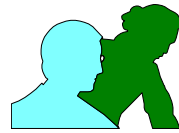
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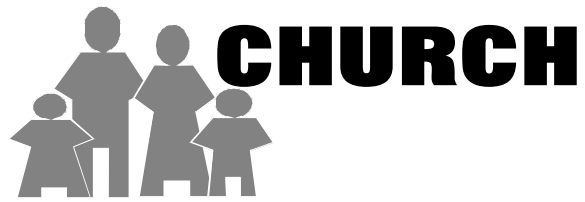
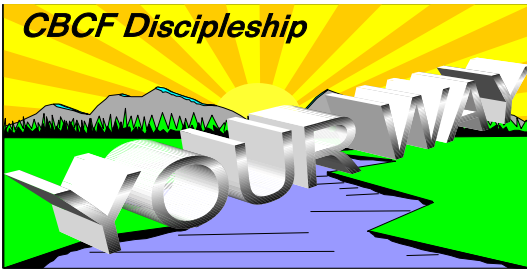
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## What is the Church?

Many people think that the Church is a building where religious people hold services. The word really means a group of people who gather together.

### Called

Jesus personally called His first disciples, fishermen by the Lake Galilee, to follow Him. They left their boats and their nets and did just that. The Church of Jesus Christ is made up of those who have responded to the call of Jesus to follow Him. This call involves repentance (*turning around from the old way of life towards Jesus and a new way*) and faith (*trusting Jesus completely*).

### Body

Another description of the Church found in the New Testament is the “body of Christ”. After His resurrection, Jesus returned to His father in heaven and now has no physical body to carry out His will on earth. The Church (*the body of Christ*) has the responsibility of acting on Jesus’ behalf.

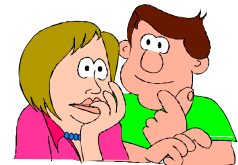
We must remember that in a physical body each individual part is important to the whole. All the various limbs need to work together so that the body functions properly. This is also true with the Church. Each individual disciple is important to the whole body.



### Word Study - Church

**EKKLESIA** (*Greek*) - literally “called out”. It means a gathering of people, assembly, congregation. It is used in the New Testament in two ways:

- 1 The universal church (catholic with a small ‘c’). All true believers wherever they are and whatever local group they belong to.
- 2 Believers who meet in local groups (*such as CBCF*)



### Pause for thought . . .

What is the implication of Romans 12:4-8 for

- *the Church*
- *You as an individual?*

Read Ephesians 5:25-27. Paul compares

Jesus to a \_\_\_\_\_

The Church to a \_\_\_\_\_

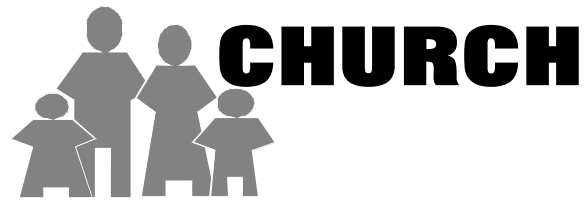
This means that the Church is the B \_ \_ \_ E of Christ. In the ideal relationship between husband and wife what would you expect to be the most important feature? \_ \_ \_ \_  
 What does this tell about relationships in the Church?

Have you responded to the call of Jesus to follow Him? If you have what difference has it made to your life? If you have not perhaps you should consider it!

### The Bible speaks . . .

Read Matthew 4:18-20  
 1 Corinthians 12:27





### Further study . . .

Read 1 Corinthians 12:14-26. Paul describes how God has made the human body of many parts, all of which play an important part in its proper working. How can we apply this picture to the Church. What might happen if some parts do not work properly? How would it affect the whole body?

*“A church that does not exist to reclaim heathenism, to fight evil, to destroy error, to put down falsehood, a church that does not exist to take the side of the poor, to denounce injustice and to hold up righteousness, is a church that has no right to be. Not for yourself, O church, do you exist, any more than Christ existed for himself.”* Charles Haddon Spurgeon



# BAPTISM

## What is Baptism?

The Church is a gathering of people, a community of disciples (those who have repented and believed in Jesus Christ). When a believer is baptised he or she is immersed totally in water as a symbol that they have died to their old life and risen to new life as a disciple of Jesus. This is a public witness to their belief and commitment.

Baptism is sometimes called a “Gospel Ordinance” because Jesus *commanded* His disciples to be baptised. (Matthew 28:16-20) In the New Testament Baptism was clearly by total immersion. Some people may have been “christened” as a baby but this is not the same as being baptised as a believer, because baptism is a sign that a person is a disciple of Jesus, someone who has repented and believed!

### The Bible speaks . . .

Read the following:



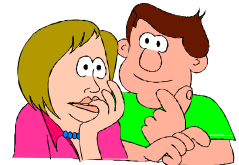
Jesus Himself was baptised - Mark 1:9-11  
The Ethiopian Convert - Acts 8:27-38



### Word Study - Baptise

**BAPTIZO** (*Greek*), to dip or immerse. Used when cloth was dipped into dye to establish its colour.

### Pause for thought. . .



- Read and discuss Romans 6:1-14
- Have you been baptised as a believer? If you have, what did it mean to you? If you have not yet been baptised, perhaps this topic has helped you to see that the Bible teaches that being baptised is not a matter of choice, but of obeying the Lord Jesus Christ. If you would like to discuss this further, talk to your group leader.



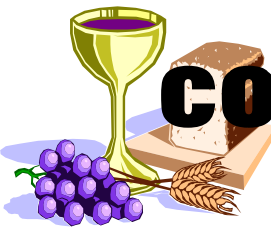
### Further study . . .

In the Old Testament there are many “types”. A “type” (Gk. Antitupon meaning ‘a like figure’) is a pictorial way of seeing New Testament principles in the Old Testament. “Types” are God’s previews of what is to come.

It is worth studying two “types” of baptism:

Noah and the Ark (Genesis chapters 5 - 9) and Israel passing through the Red Sea (Exodus 14)

In the second, for example, Egypt represents the world, the old life; the Red Sea, the waters of baptism; the other side of the sea, new life. All trace of the Egyptians is drowned in the sea and there can be no going back because the sea which had opened to let the Israelites through closes again. Can you work out what this represents in baptism?



# COMMUNION

## What is Communion?

Communion is the second of what are called “Gospel Ordinances” because both are activities that Jesus commanded His disciples to do. Shortly before He was arrested, Jesus shared a meal with his closest disciples, offering them bread which he said represented His body to be broken for them, and wine, which represented His blood to be shed for them. His command was “do this in remembrance of me.”

It is clear from Acts 2:42 that the breaking of bread was one of the regular activities of the Church founded in Jerusalem after the feast of Pentecost. Christians have continued to obey this command of Jesus through the centuries. Every Christian church remembers the death and resurrection of Jesus regularly by using the emblems or symbols of bread and wine to represent His body and blood. Many different words are used to describe this activity such as Holy Communion, The Lord’s Supper, Eucharist (*Gk. Thanksgiving*), Breaking of Bread.

### The Bible speaks . . .



Read the following:

Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

From the above passages we can discover several important points about communion. When you have discussed each point find the verse from one of the three passages above which supports it.



### Word Study - Communion

**KOINONIA** (*Greek*), having in common (koinos), partnership, fellowship, a participation.

### Communion is . . .

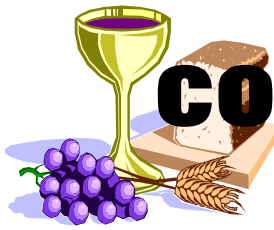
**A place of participation** in the effects of Jesus’ death, the breaking of His body and the shedding of His blood, i.e. salvation and new life.

Verse:

**A place of remembrance**, not just of Jesus’ death, but also of His resurrection and the fact that He is alive! He conquered death. When Jesus and His disciples shared the Last Supper together it was probably a Passover meal, commemorating the escape of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt hundreds of years earlier. Traditionally this involved eating a lamb which had been offered as a sacrifice in the Temple, as well as unleavened bread, bitter herbs, chutney and wine. During the meal the head of the household would say, “This is the bread of affliction that our fathers ate in the wilderness.” Jesus seems to have changed this as He gave bread to his friends saying, “This is My body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.”

The Passover meal looked back to the days of Israel’s slavery, but also forward to the coming of the Messiah. A cup of wine was set aside in case the Messiah returned during the meal. It may have been this cup that Jesus gave to His disciples saying, “This is my blood of the New Covenant.”

Verse:



# COMMUNION

**A place of covenant.** God is a covenant God. He made the old covenant with Abraham, the father of the people of Israel. A covenant is an agreement between two people. Covenants with God had to be established or sealed by the shedding of blood, usually of an animal. The Jewish sacrificial system was based on animal sacrifice, where the blood of the animal covered sin. These sacrifices were made every day in the Temple.

Communion reminds us that God made a New Covenant with His people, which was established by the shedding of the blood of The Lamb of God, Jesus Christ. Sins are removed forever by the one sacrifice of Jesus. Hallelujah!

Verse:

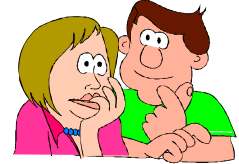
**A place of proclamation.** It is the duty of all Christians to show to the world the significance of the death of Jesus.

Verse:

**A place of fellowship.** We eat this “meal” together as God’s people and as we share from one loaf and one cup it reminds us that we belong to each other as well as to the Lord. We are witnessing to our love for each other and declaring that we will bear each other’s burdens, laugh, cry, suffer, rejoice and identify with our brothers and sisters in the Lord.

Verse:

Pause for thought . . .



- What does Paul suggest that we ought to do before participating in Communion? (1 Corinthians 11:27-29) Why do you think he gives this advice?
- What danger is there in using a symbolic act like communion? How can we practically use communion to develop and enrich our spiritual lives?

*“Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying ‘Take and eat; this is my body.’ The he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.’”*

Matthew 26:27-28



## Further study

Find out more about the Jewish Passover and how it relates to the Christian practice of communion.



# ACCEPTED

as part of God's family

## God is our Father

When we become Christians we are born of God and become part of God's family. God becomes our father and intends us to have a personal, close and loving relationship with Him. We sometimes find it difficult to accept God's fatherhood for various reasons. Some of us have been brought up with criticism or rejection. Some may not feel very good about themselves and think that they do not deserve to have God as their father. Even those of us who have been brought up in a loving and sympathetic home sometimes find it difficult to believe that God is *for* us.

### The Bible speaks. . .

Read John 1:12-13  
John 3:16  
Romans 8:31-32



It is clear from these verses that the right to become a child of God is freely given by God. (This is what the word *grace* means, a gift which is entirely undeserved, yet freely given by God.) Although we cannot earn this gift of being a child of God, there is a something that we need to do.

What does John 1:12 say about this?

We have to

1 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_



Word study - right

**EXOUSIA** (*Greek*) authority, power, right

In John 3:16 what did God do?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Why did God do it?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

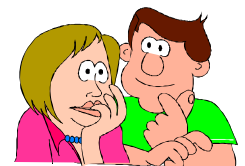
How is God's attitude and activity expressed in Romans 8:31-32?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What does Paul say is the proof of this?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Pause for thought . . .



How can we develop our child-father relationship with God?

How would you expect a good father to bring up his children. Can we relate to God in this?



### Further study. . .

Read Galatians 4:4-7. What are the full rights of sons (and daughters)? See also Romans 8:15-17



# ACCEPTED

as part of God's family


## Not perfect but accepted

The Bible tells us that we who are born again Christians are God's children, members of God's own family. (Ephesians 2:19) The way that we relate to our brothers and sisters in the family is important if our family life is to be supportive and fulfilled. As with earthly family life, good relationships do not just happen. They have to be worked at.

One of the reasons that many people have difficulty in relationships is that they do not feel that they are accepted and loved, either by God or other people, and frequently even by themselves. They feel that they have to be perfect to deserve such love and acceptance and are unable to live up to their own expectations. They also expect others to be perfect before they can love or accept them.

This is not a Biblical attitude.

**The Bible speaks . . .**



Read Romans 5:8  
1 John 4 :19


What was our condition when Jesus died for us?

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Does this mean we had to be perfect before Jesus died for us?

YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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**Word study - family**

**OIKOS** (*Greek*) house, dwelling, household, family. In Ephesians 2:19, members of the family of God.

What does 1 John 1:9 say that we need to do if we sin?

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What will Jesus do for us if we confess our sin?

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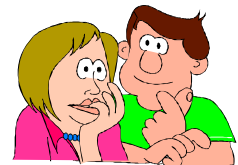
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What do you think His aim is in doing this?

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Pause for thought . . .



How should we behave towards others in the light of what we have learned?

Do you feel that others in the past have accepted your weaknesses or failures?

Have you always accepted weaknesses or failures in others?

If God accepts us even though we are not perfect, we must be prepared to accept others on the same basis.



Prayer suggestions . . .



Ask God to forgive you for any past inability to accept others who were not perfect in your eyes.

Ask God to help you accept others in the future.

Thank God because He accepts you “warts and all”.

Ask God to forgive those who have not accepted you in the past.

*Accepted in the Well-beloved,  
And clothed in righteousness Divine,  
I see the bar to heaven removed;  
And all Thy merits, Lord, are mine.*  
Charles Wesley



Further study . . .

*Note on repentance and forgiveness*

Repentance and forgiveness are very powerful spiritual actions. Repentance means changing our minds and direction. When the Holy Spirit convicts us and we recognise that there is something in our life which is not pleasing to God, we need to be prepared to change it - to repent.

When we realise that people have wronged us it is imperative that we forgive them. If we find it difficult we must ask God to give us the strength. We must not harbour unforgiveness in our lives because it will eventually turn to bitterness and is very spiritually destructive.

Read Matthew 6:9-15 and Matthew 18:21-35.

What do we learn about forgiveness from these two passages?



# BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT



## Equipped for service

Jesus promised His disciples that they would be “clothed with power from on high” and that they would be His witnesses. On the Day of Pentecost this promise was fulfilled when they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues. This experience is still very relevant to Christians today.

The Holy Spirit, who is the third person of the Trinity (the other two being God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son), has already been at work in the life of a believer. It is the Holy Spirit who convicts us of sin and shows us that we need to turn to the Lord Jesus for forgiveness and salvation.

Once we are saved we need the Holy Spirit to come and fill us or baptise us so that, like those early disciples, we have the necessary power and authority to be effective witnesses for our Lord. The use of the word “baptism” helps us to realise that we need to be completely immersed in the Holy Spirit. It is our birth right, promised by Jesus and all we need to do is to ask Him to fill us or baptise us in the Holy Spirit.

### The Bible speaks. . .



Read the following:

Luke 24:49. Acts 2:1-14, 40-41; 19:1-7. Joel 2:28-29. John 16:8. Ephesians 5:18

The prophet Joel was writing about 800 years before the Day of Pentecost. The events in Acts 2 are seen as a fulfilment of his prophecy. In Ephesians 5:18 Paul says “Be filled with the Spirit. It is a command and has the feeling of a continuous action, literally “*be being filled.*”



### Word Study - Spirit

**PNEUMA** (*Greek*) wind, breath, and especially spirit, which like the wind is invisible, immaterial and powerful. The same word is used for the Holy Spirit.

How did people know what had happened to the disciples?

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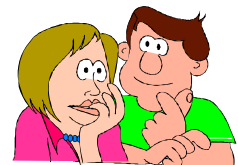
How do you think that the disciples were different before and after Pentecost?

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### Pause for thought . . .



Discuss how our lives as Christians might be different after we have been baptised in the Holy Spirit. Ask someone in the group who has already experienced baptism in the Holy Spirit to share about the difference it made in their life.

Those who have not yet been baptised in the Holy Spirit might like to consider whether they would like to be. All that is necessary is to ask God for this gift. Read Luke 11:11-13. Discuss with your group leader how best to receive this gift.



### Further Study . . .

Read and meditate on John 7:37-39 and Galatians 5:16-26



# GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT



## Supernatural equipment

Christians who have been baptized or filled with the Holy Spirit are able to receive what Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 12 as “Spiritual Gifts”. These gifts are given to individuals in the church for the benefit of the whole church. They are supernatural in that they give power and insight which is outside of our natural abilities.



### Word Study - Gift

**Charisma** (*Greek*) a gift involving grace on the part of God as the giver

The gifts can be exercised in the context of a church meeting or in individual circumstances. Wherever they are used there are two important principles to remember. Genuine spiritual gifts will always:

- Give glory to Jesus
- Bring people under the Lordship of Jesus Christ

### The Bible speaks . . .

Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-11



The Holy Spirit does not drive people into wild compulsive acts. His gentle dove-like ministry strengthens human personality. He empowers, He does not overpower. When Christians exercise spiritual gifts they remain in conscious control of their actions.

Here is a table of the nine gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:

<i>Gift</i>	<i>Supernatural ability</i>	<i>Biblical examples</i>
<b>Word of wisdom</b>	Knowing God’s will in given situations Spiritual problem solving. Knowing God’s direction Works interactively with Knowledge and discernment	1 Kings 3:16-28 Acts 6:1-7
<b>Word of knowledge</b>	Insight into people and situations without any natural means of knowing	John 4:1-26 Acts 9:11-12
<b>Faith</b>	Ability to believe God without doubt and combat unbelief in seemingly impossible situations. A mountain-moving empowering to see God move.	Matthew 14:22-32 Acts 9:36-39
<b>Gifts of healings</b>	Note plural! Healing without human aid or accelerating healing process or assisting medical treatment	Acts 3:1-10 Acts 9:32-35
<b>Working of miracles</b>	Supernatural power to intervene and counteract earthly and evil forces. Ability to go beyond the natural	Acts 9:36-43 Acts 12:1-11

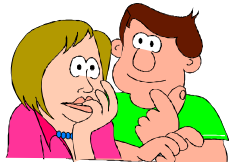


# GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT



<i>Gift</i>	<i>Supernatural ability</i>	<i>Biblical examples</i>
<b>Prophecy</b>	God speaks through members of the Body of Christ to the church or to individuals. Usually encouraging. Some prophecy may foretell future events or direction. Prophecy needs 'weighing'. Communication from God.	Luke 1:67:79 Acts 21:10-11
<b>Discerning of spirits</b>	Power to detect the realm of spirits and their activity. Ability to identify presence and origin of spiritual activity	Matthew 17:14-21 Acts 16:16-18
<b>Tongues</b>	Praying in unknown languages. May be used in the church aloud or privately. May also be used in personal worship times. Communication to God.	Mark 16:17 Acts 19:1-7
<b>Interpretation of tongues</b>	Supernatural ability to give the meaning of tongues brought in a church meeting. Not a translation.	1 Cor 12:30 1 Cor 14:5,13,27

**Pause for thought . . .**



There will not be enough time to discuss all of the gifts now. Choose two or three and share experiences of using the gifts or witnessing them in use.

How do you think that these supernatural gifts can 'build up' the church?



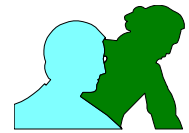
**Further Study . . .**

Read about other gifts mentioned in the New Testament:

*The gifts of the Father*  
- Romans 12:3-8

*The gifts of the Son*  
- Ephesians 4:11-14





# Relationships

## Relationships in the church

We have learned that the church is a group of people who have responded to the call of Jesus Christ. Another Biblical description of the church is the family or household of God. Within any family it is important that family members know how to relate to each other and to those outside the family

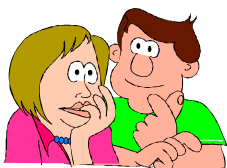
### The Bible speaks . . .

Read the following:

John 13:34-35, 1 John 3:21-24,  
1 John 4:7



John, who wrote these passages, was sometimes known as “The disciple whom Jesus loved” or “The beloved disciple”. From these verses we can learn how to relate to each other in the Fellowship.



### Pause for thought . . .

Discuss in the group the practical ways in which we can apply John’s teaching in the Fellowship.

## Love your neighbour . . . *as yourself!*

The Bible is also very clear about the way we should relate to those who are not in the Fellowship. Can you think of one story that Jesus told that helps us to understand what it means to “love your neighbour”? Find it and discuss what we can learn from it.



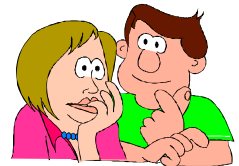
### Word Study - Love

**Agape** (*Greek*) is used in the New Testament to describe the love of God towards Jesus and the human race. It also describes God’s will for His children in their attitude to one another. It does not imply the emotion of love, but rather the decision of the will to love.

### Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine . . .

*. . .you did for me*

Read the account of the Last Judgment in Matthew 25:31-46.



### Pause for thought . . .

What does this tell us about Jesus’ expectation of the way we should treat the poor and the needy?

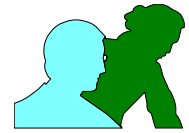
How can we put this teaching into practice?



### Further study . . .

Read Exodus 23:9-12 and Acts 2:44-47.

Compare the commands of the Old Testament with the practice of the early church.



# Relationships

## Sexual relationships

When considering how we should develop relationships it is inevitable that sexual relationships must be addressed. It will help us if we realise at the start that what the Bible teaches about sexual relationships is very different from many of the popular ideas expressed in the media and practiced in society. We should not be surprised by this. Christians, members of the Body of Christ, are called to be holy or separated from the world and separated to the Lord.

### Family

The Bible teaches that the family is the foundation of society. When a man and a woman are joined together (married) there is a spiritual as well as physical significance, and they have the privilege and responsibility of bringing up children within the family.

Sexual relations are limited by the Bible to be within marriage. The teaching is quite clear; sex between two unmarried people is *fornication*. Paul, writing to the Christians in Corinth, warns them to flee fornication as a sin against self and God, for the believer's body is the *temple of the Holy Spirit*.

The Ten Commandments teach "You shall not commit adultery." *Adultery* is sexual intercourse between a married person and someone who is not his or her marriage partner. Casual sex outside marriage not only endangers the marriage but can also have a devastating effect

### The bible speaks . . .

Read 1 Corinthians 6:18-20  
Exodus 20:14

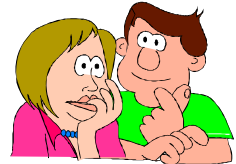


### Word study . . .

**Porneia** (*Greek*) is used throughout the New Testament for illicit sexual intercourse, including adultery.

on any children, undermining the family. While we realise that immorality is widely accepted in society to-day, it remains a sin in God's eyes which requires repentance like any other sin.

### Pause for thought . . .

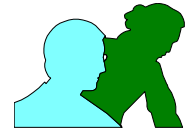


Discuss in the group how Christians can live by the standards of the Bible in the area of sexual relationships.

### Singleness

It is important for us to remember that there are many single people in the church. In the past single people have been under continual pressure to find a partner and marry. Some churches have even discouraged single people from being involved in leadership. It is worth remembering the Jesus was himself single in human terms and Paul the Apostle may well have been single.

While recognising that for many marriage is God's will, the Bible sees singleness as a calling in some cases. We must learn to value singles and marrieds alike and remember that young single people are often under tremendous pressure to find the right person to marry. In this fellowship we encourage families to help to support singles through hospitality and sharing of experience and wisdom.

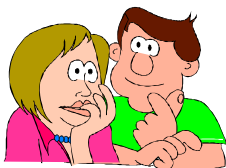


# Relationships

There is also pressure on singles to conform to the general sexual immorality in society. “Getting off”, sleeping around, heavy petting, “How far should I go?” are questions that arise regularly. The answers are found stated clearly in the Bible.

## The bible speaks . . .

Read 1 Corinthians 7:32-35  
1 Timothy 5:1-2



## Pause for thought . . .

How can we encourage and value both those who are married and those who are single in the fellowship?

What guidelines could we give to help single people to be fulfilled and righteous in their relationships with the opposite sex?

## Prayer suggestions . . .



Pray for the families represented in the group and in the fellowship, particularly for ‘Holy Spirit’ anointing in family relationships and the nurturing of children.

Pray for the singles, particularly for a sense of God’s vision for their lives and futures.

Pray for neighbours and friends outside of the fellowship.



## Further study . . .

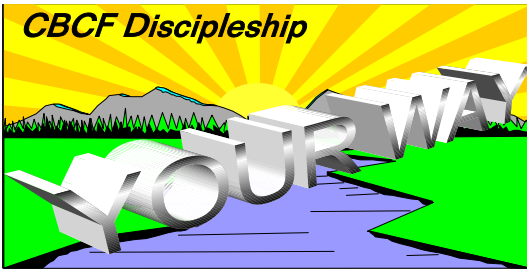
### What about homosexuality?

There is a continual pressure in society to legitimise the practice of sexual relationships between those of the same sex. Once again what the Bible teaches is very different to what is accepted ( and sometimes aggressively promoted) in society.

The Old Testament (Leviticus 18:22) calls homosexuality “detestable” to God. In the New Testament Paul shows in Romans 1:18-32 that it is part of an overall rebellion against God and in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 says that those who practice such things will not enter the kingdom of God.

It is important for us to remember that God views all sin in the same way. He is holy and cannot condone sin. Out of His love and mercy He has provided salvation for those who turn to Him and this applies to all sinners including those involved in any form of sexual sin. Homosexuality is not the “unforgivable” sin. Many people who become involved in its practice are reflecting a brokenness in their own lives, relationships or past.

In this fellowship we welcome all who are seeking the Lord Jesus. We believe that Jesus came to seek and to save the lost. For all of us it is a matter of personal choice how we live our lives and we would wish to support all those who choose to follow Jesus and live their lives in accord with biblical principles.



# Life in the Fellowship



## Life in the Fellowship

Our church is known as Charlton & Blackheath Christian Fellowship. This means we are a group of Christians, meeting in or around the area of Charlton and Blackheath, who *share a common faith in Jesus*. In church terms the word 'fellowship' has also taken on the idea of a '*company of believers*', a group of Christians who share the same beliefs and commitments to each other.



### Word study - Fellowship

**Koinonia** (*Greek*) having a share, i.e. participating in or giving a share; having in common; partnership.

In the passage in Acts 2 write down what you think are indications of this commitment to one another:-

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Read Acts 2:42-47  
Acts 4:32-37



The whole of the book of Acts tells us what life was like in the early church, but these two passages in particular show us the commitment of early Christians both to Jesus and to each other, giving us guidelines to follow.

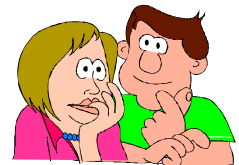
### Teaching, Communion & Prayer

We have already looked at these areas in previous studies but note that Acts 2:42 tells us the early believers were *devoted* to these things.

### The fellowship

We also note that they were devoted to 'the fellowship', which speaks of a strong commitment to each other. When we become Christians we enter into a new family with God as our Father and our fellow Christians as brothers and sisters. This means we have a responsibility to look after one another in a new and exciting way.

### Pause for thought . . .




Discuss in the group what you think are the practical implications for us today if we are to follow Acts 2: 44-45 ?

What new ideas could be implemented in our church life in view of your answers to Q 1 ?

The Bible speaks . . .

Read 1 John 3:11-24





# Life in the Fellowship



The main message of this passage is that we should love one another. Consider the following questions as to how we can practically love one another:-

Who is the prime example of what love is?

In what ways did Jesus lay down His life for us?

In what ways can we lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters? Be honest and discuss how easy this may or may not be.



### Prayer suggestions . . .

Spend time together now praying for one another. It is part of a brother and sister relationship to encourage and build one another up in prayer. You may wish to pray for ways to put into action the things you have just been discussing. If you pray in two's this will give the chance for everyone to pray and to be prayed for.

### Giving

In the passages above in Acts we saw the way in which the believers shared their belongings with each other and how they raised money (read again the verses from Acts 3).

Within CBCF we believe it is right to give money to needy people both inside the Fellowship and outside. We support overseas projects such as Andrew Fanstone's work in Brazil and schools in Nigeria and Guinea. Locally we regularly make gifts to Foodbank, Street Pastors and Winter Night Shelter.

It is also a hard fact of life that everyday church activities cost us not just in time but also financially - hire of buildings, insurance,

administration, electronic equipment.

Steve receives some regular support from the church in his evangelistic ministry with Open Air Campaigners.

There is no central funding for churches and all of the costs of the Fellowship are borne by us as an individual church. Furthermore, we do not believe that guests and people from outside the church should be asked to contribute to these costs. It therefore follows that those of us who rejoice in the fact that we have become part of the church, should also rejoice that we have the privilege of supporting the church financially.

At CBCF we take collections occasionally for special projects. We ask that where possible regular gifts are made through bank standing orders (and if eligible gift aided) Gifts may also be given to David Wilson.

The question often arises as to how much we should give. There are a number of guidelines set out in scripture. Read the three verses mentioned below and write down what you feel each passage says about giving.

2 Corinthians 8:3

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2 Corinthians 9:7

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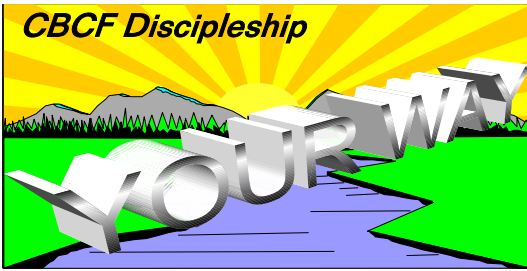
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1 Corinthians 16:2

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Now look up Luke 6:38 and see what God has promised to those who give.



# Life in the Fellowship



From the scripture quoted it should be clear that God expects us to give and that our giving should be:-

- **In proportion to our means.**
- **Willingly and cheerfully.**
- **Systematically and consistently.**
- **With faith, believing that God will supply all our needs.**

In the Old Testament the Israelites gave a **tithe** of 10% of their income, either money or produce (Lev. 27:30, Num. 18:26, Mal. 3:10). Whilst the New Testament does not specifically state that we should give a tithe, it is a good indication of the level of giving for which we should aim. If we are no longer under law but under grace does that not mean we should be even more generous in our giving?

*(If you would like to know how to give in the most tax efficient way speak to David Wilson who will give you details of Gift Aid etc.)*

## Evangelism

Returning again to the passage in Acts 2 note how the church was growing in those days (v. 47). If you want to be really encouraged and challenged read v. 41 of that same chapter! When Jesus ascended into heaven He left His disciples with the responsibility and privilege of carrying on His work on earth. God has gifted certain people as evangelists but He also calls us all to be involved in evangelising, i.e. spreading the good news about Jesus.

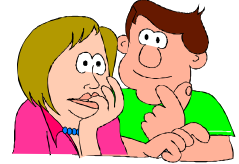
### The Bible speaks . . .

Read Matthew 28:18-20  
1 Peter 3:15-16



### Pause for thought . . .

What are the three aspects of the 'Commission' that Jesus tells His disciples to do?



Discuss how you first came to hear about Christianity. Maybe this will help you to know how to share your faith with other people. You may also like to share any opportunities you have already taken to evangelise.

The verses in 1 Peter offer three pieces of advice as to how to witness to people. Write below what you think they are.

Consider and discuss how important it is to witness with our lives as much as with what we say to people.

### Prayer suggestions . . .

Pray that God will show you someone to witness to.



### Further study . . .

Try during this week to share your Christian faith with at least two people. Maybe a friend you already know, and someone you have never met before. This may seem quite challenging, but it is very rewarding as you see God's kingdom advancing through you and He will bless you for it. Who knows, you could be the next Billy Graham!



# Prayer & Worship



## Prayer

### The gift of prayer

One of the greatest privileges in the Christian life is to be able to communicate with God in prayer. It is right that we think of God as the almighty creator of the universe, but He also wants us to approach Him as our friend and our Father. Prayer is simply talking and listening to God. It is important that we spend time with God and as with any relationships it needs working at.

### Types of prayer

There are many different types of prayer:-

**Everyday prayer** - this is your personal prayer time with God. As you mature in your relationship with God you will find that you are able to spend longer and more intimate times with God. However, when you start out life as a Christian do not worry that you do not pray for long just ensure that it is regular and that you are honest with God.

**Public prayer** - this can be praying with a few friends, in a larger group or in a church meeting. It may take you a while before you feel able to pray in the church so start by praying with people you feel comfortable with. Two helpful hints with regard to public prayer are not to pray too long (this gives opportunity for other people to pray) and to pray 'We' prayers rather than 'I' prayers (this helps people to feel included rather than somebody praying on their own)

**Intercession** - praying for the needs of others

**Petition** - praying for particular needs

**Listening prayer** - somebody once said 'We



### Word study - Pray

**proseuchomai** (*Greek*) is the most frequently used word for praying to God in the New Testament. (N.B. the English word *prosecute* is derived from this with an original meaning of persevering or pursuing.)

have two ears and one tongue'! Often we get so caught up in praying that we forget to listen to what God is trying to tell us. On our own or in a group setting prophetic praying can be very effective (you may like to discuss this in the group).

### How to pray

There are no hard and fast rules on how to pray and you will find that different people pray in different ways. However, Ephesians 2:18 is a good verse to bear in mind:-

through Him (Jesus)  
we both have access  
in one spirit  
to the Father

Pray to the Father - Jesus teaches us to pray to the Father. He wants us to have a relationship of Father to son/daughter. In week 2 we were looking at acceptance with God and this of course overlaps into our prayer lives.

Pray in the name of Jesus - It is only because of Jesus that we can have a relationship with the father. The name of Jesus gives us tremendous authority (John 14:13-14)

Pray in the Holy Spirit - The Holy Spirit helps us to pray when we do not know how to pray. In week 3 we were looking at the gifts of the Holy Spirit and it is important to pray in tongues if the Holy Spirit has given you that gift.



# Prayer & Worship



The Bible speaks . . .

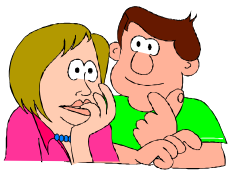
Read Matthew 6:5-15  
Ephesians 3:14-21



## Word study - Worship



**Worship** - comes from an Old English word meaning 'worth-ship'. In relation to God this means appreciating God because He is worthy to be praised.



## Pause for thought . . .

The prayer that Jesus teaches his disciples in the passage in Matthew is often referred to as 'The Lord's Prayer'. Discuss how you could use this prayer to structure your own prayer life. Do you know of any other useful structures you could use?

Read Philippians 4:4-7. What does this passage teach us about how to deal with difficult times in our lives? Discuss honestly how we can practically thank God in situations which cause us problems and pain. Discuss what it means to petition God in prayer.

In Ephesians 6:18 Paul encourages us to 'pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests'. What do you think it means to pray in the Spirit?

## Worship

### What is Worship?

1 Corinthians 10:31 tells us that "whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" and so it is correct to say that the whole of our lives should be given over to worshipping God. One aspect of worship is the time we spend at corporate meetings seeking God's presence. We often think of this in terms

of words and songs. ship in the more specific sense of words and songs used to praise God.

We must not restrict our understanding of worship to Sunday mornings or only when the church as a whole gets together. Worship is something that can be done on our own, as a small group, with the whole church (CBCF) or with the wider Church (e.g. events like Soul Survivor, New Wine and Spring Harvest).

### How do we worship?

1. We worship "*from our spirits*". This means that worship involves not just our physical bodies but our spirits as well. That is why we need to be born of the Spirit in order to worship God properly (John 3:5-6). Many people, when they have been filled with the Holy Spirit, can also use God-given language to sing with the Spirit (1 Cor. 14:15).

2. We worship "*in truth*". This is worship that comes from the reality of a life lived in fellowship with God the Father through Jesus His Son. God desires that we worship Him from our hearts (Matt 15:8-9)

3. We worship "*from our will*". We do not praise God simply when we feel like it but because He desires it.



# Prayer & Worship



## Types of worship

Sometimes people draw a distinction between 'praise' and 'worship', seeing praise as the more lively and loud form of singing to God and worship as being more sedate and quiet. Both are really forms of worship but it is useful to draw a distinction in your mind between the two.

It is also important to note the different purposes of songs. Some songs declare or proclaim about God, some adore Him, some thank Him, some are very intimate, some offer the opportunity to respond to God or allow Him to minister to us. You may like to discuss these different aspects in the group.

### The Bible speaks . . .

Read Psalm 33:1-3  
John 4:21-24  
Colossians 3:16



What do you think is symbolised by using our bodies in worship?

Discuss Col. 3:16 and the different types of worship we see in CBCF. Do you think there are elements of worship missing from church and if so, what?

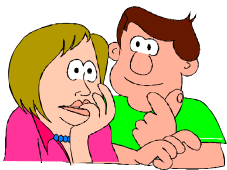
## Conclusion

If there is time spend a short while praying and/or worshipping together.



### Further study . . .

Write a song or prayer expressing what you feel towards God. If you have only recently become a Christian this could be a prayer of thanksgiving for the new life you have found in Jesus. If you wish you may like to share what you have written with the group next week.



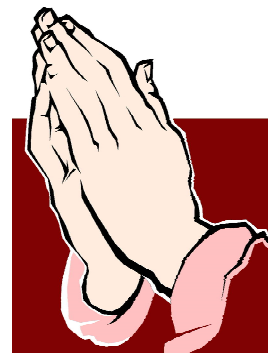
### Pause for thought . . .

What are the two key aspects that Jesus desires in true worshippers (John 4:23)? Discuss what you think it means to worship like this.

In what ways have you felt/do you feel hindered in worship?

The Bible encourages us to use our bodies in worship. Consider these verses from the Psalms and note what parts of the body we can use in worship:-

Psalm 33:1  
Psalm 134:2  
Psalm 150:3-4





# Leadership & Roles in the Church



## Roles in the church

### The body

In the first part of this course we looked at what the word 'church' means and the idea of being part of the 'body of Christ'. You may remember that we considered how a body is made up of various limbs, all of which need to work together in order for the body to function properly. Now we are going to be thinking about some of the different roles which exist in the church, and in particular the place of leaders.

### Leadership

The Bible teaches that leadership in the church should be Holy Spirit led. This means that the church is not a democracy, nor a dictatorship, but a *theocracy*, i.e. led by God using God directed leaders. Ultimately, as is included in the metaphor of the body, the head of the church is Jesus.

However, within each local church He has placed certain members to be His leaders. It is important that we remember this within our church, for if we are to be committed to any fellowship we need at the same time to be able to accept and follow the pastoral leadership.

***Fellowship Commitment  
means  
Submission to Leadership.***

The Bible speaks. . .



Read Ephesians 4:11-16  
Hebrews 13:7, 17-18, 24



### Word study - Evangelist

**Evangelistes** (*Greek*) literally "a messenger of good" (from *eu*, well and *angelos*, a messenger) A preacher of the Gospel (Good News)

Note: *evangelizo*, to proclaim glad tidings and *evangelion*, good news, gospel.

You will see that the passage in Ephesians list five different groups of leaders:-

**Apostles** - comes from the Greek word meaning 'sent out one'. The Apostles are the pioneers and foundation layers. They often have a strong inter-church ministry and spiritual covering.

**Prophets** - they have a strong ministry to the nation and can both foretell and forthtell. (See Acts 11:27-28). We looked at the gift of prophecy in a previous study.

**Evangelists** - these are God's reapers who go into the world and bring people to Christ. (See Acts 21:8). The best modern day example of an evangelist is Billy Graham. In CBCF Steve Gurnett is functioning in this role. However, as Christians, the bible encourages us all to do the work of an evangelist.

**Pastors and Teachers** - Pastor comes from the Latin word meaning 'shepherd'. The role of these two is to provide leadership in the local church. Within CBCF this is primarily the function of the Leadership Team.

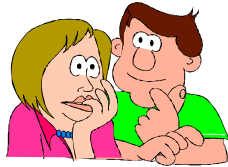


# Leadership & Roles in the Church



## Jesus

It is significant that Jesus was able to incorporate all of these areas of leadership within His ministry.



## Pause for thought . . .

Look up the following verses and list the area of leadership which applies to each one:-

Hebrews 3:1	
Luke 24:19	
Matt. 4:23	
John 10:11-15	
Matt. 7:28	

## Delegated authority

Note the process of delegated authority in scripture.

Read *Ephesians 1:22, Colossians 1:18*.  
Who is 'Head of the church'?

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Read *Matthew 4:19, Mark 1:20*.  
Who called the first disciples?

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Read *Luke 6:12-16*.  
Who appointed apostles?

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## Word study - Elder

**Presbuteros** (*Greek*) Those raised up and qualified by the work of the Holy Spirit to have spiritual care of, and oversight over, the church

In the Acts of the Apostles we find that the newly formed churches were led by 'elders', a corporate word for the spiritual leaders of the church. (Acts 14:23). Read 1 Peter 5:1-4 and 1 Timothy 3:1-7 to find out the qualification and responsibility of elders.

In Acts 6:3-4 the disciples chose men who were called 'deacons'. The word simply means 'servant' and these men were responsible for administration in the church. Read 1 Timothy 3:8-13 to find out the qualifications of deacons.

We have seen that the Lord Jesus is the head of the Church. There is no human or earthly head and we are unlikely to ever find any one person who fulfils all of the leadership roles listed in the passage from Ephesians that we looked at earlier. However, the Church is not to be a 'free-for-all', so Jesus has given authority to shepherd His flock.

Elders are responsible for the whole church, its teaching, spiritual oversight, pastoral care and discipline. They are raised up by God and recognised by the church. Although they are concerned with authority and oversight their role is that of a servant of the Lord and His people. In CBCF we have three elders - Mike, Steve and Trevor.

Deacons are those who assist the elders in matters of administration, finance and practical matters. In CBCF David Wilson exercises this function.



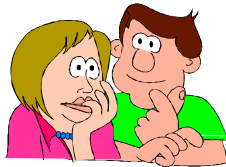
# Leadership & Roles in the Church



The CBCF Leadership Team consists of Mike Leader, Steve & Susan Gurnett, Sue Redford, Leanne Rivett, Peter Baker and Mackwin Maton

The most important thing to remember about Christian leadership is that all of us, whether or not we are leaders, have a place in the body of Christ. Leaders are not to lord it over the church but are there to serve and to build the body up. We are all equal and in submission to Jesus, the Head, 'working out our salvation with fear and trembling' (Philippians 2:12), in a way that best advances the kingdom of God on earth.

Pause for thought . . .



Returning to Ephesians 4:12 what are the two objectives of Christian leadership in the Church?

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### Word study - Deacon

**Diakonos** (*Greek*) a servant. Distinguished from *doulos*, slave.

Bearing in mind the first objective read Romans 12:1-8 and note how many of these giftings apply to you.

Returning to the verses in Hebrews make a list of what you can expect your leaders to be.

Thinking of the same verses from Hebrews what do you think Jesus expects of you with regard to your leaders.

### Local Church Contacts

CBCF works closely with St John's Church of England. Many of the people who started the fellowship came from St. John's and there has always been a close relationship between the two churches. We meet together at various times through the year.

We are friends with a number of other churches in Charlton and we support some joint projects such as Greenwich Foodbank, Winter Night Shelter, Greenwich Youth for Christ. Street Pastors and Safe Families.

### Wider Church

CBCF is a member church of **Churches in Communities International (CiC)** led by Dr Hugh Osgood. It is also part of a small network of Churches in the home counties called **River Network** and is affiliated to the **Evangelical Alliance and Churches Together in England**.

We support the ministry of Andrew Fanstone with Iris Ministries in Brazil



### Further study...

Spend some time this week praying about those areas from Romans 12 with which God has gifted you. Look for ways in which you can put them into practice in your life.



# Holiness & the Fruit of the Spirit



## Holiness

### The Holiness of God

Read Isaiah 6:1-7

In the passage we have just read in Isaiah we find the seraphs (angelic beings) calling out to each other with a song of worship about God's holiness. At the sight and sound of this Isaiah is so affected he believes he is going to die and cries out because he has become aware of how sinful he is. God cleanses Isaiah's sin by symbolically sending one of the seraphs with a burning coal to touch his lips.

One of the characteristics of God that is constantly emphasised in the Bible is His holiness. Holiness is something which is very difficult to define, particularly when it is used in relation to God. The root of the word is 'brightness' or 'separateness', suggesting that God is so awesome He is unapproachable. Holiness in God means His complete purity and absence of sin, but it covers everything - purity, separateness, 'otherness', complete moral uprightness, apart. Someone once said it is "that which makes God different from you and me".

When we are faced with God's holiness it can be so overwhelming that we just fall before Him, worship Him and cry out for mercy - similar to the response of Isaiah. The difference between us and Isaiah is that we do not have a burning coal to cleanse us from sin and make us holy in God's sight - we have JESUS!



### Word study - Holy



**Hagios** (*Greek*) holy. Separated from sin. Used to describe God and also men and things devoted to God. **Hagioi** - holy ones or 'sanctified' ones. (Saints)

### Jesus

Why did Jesus have to die? It was because of God's infinite holiness and our sinfulness that we needed Jesus to take the punishment of our sin and provide a way for us to come into a relationship with God. If we accept our need of Jesus and that he has died for us, if we turn towards Him and repent of our old sinful lives, and if we commit our future to Him, then we know that we are forgiven by God and can be born into a new relationship with God (we call this being 'born again').

When we are born again we have Jesus' holiness imputed to us. Let us consider what this means. Jesus was perfectly holy, because He is God and never sinned. Therefore, when we are born again, because we are dependent upon Jesus, we are in one sense *made holy* in God's eyes. Not only this but a change takes place in us, miraculously by God's Spirit, whereby our desires change and we begin to want to live more holy lives. Obviously, because we are still human and not perfect, we will still probably sin. Nevertheless, it is God's desire that we aim to live increasingly more holy lives.

People often refer to these two complimentary states of holiness as justification and sanctification. Justification is the process by which we are made holy and able to stand in God's presence. Sanctification is the ongoing process of our lives becoming more holy.

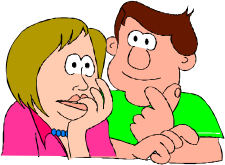




# Holiness & the Fruit of the Spirit



Fruit grows as we follow God and learn to depend upon Him more in our daily lives. As we are Christians longer we should produce more fruit and be able to bless more and more those people we come into contact with.



Pause for thought . . .

Discuss in the group areas of your life which have changed since you became a Christian. Mention any new fruit you have noticed in your own life, or encourage one another in terms of the fruit you have seen in the lives of other group members.

Discuss those areas where you know God wants you to change but you are finding it difficult. Discuss how you can increase your yield of fruit and the practical implications involved. (There may be issues you do not want to discuss with the group, or would not be helpful for the group to know about. It may be useful if you could speak to the group leader on your own at the end of the meeting)



Prayer suggestions . . .

Spend some time together in prayer. This could be spent in quiet confession, thanking God for the changes He has already done in your life, or praying for one another that God will help you overcome those difficult areas. You may also wish to ask God to grow a particular fruit in you.



Further study . . .

Read 2 Peter 1:3-8

Take some time early in the next week to read these verses. Particularly think about vs.5-7, taking a new characteristic each day and asking God to help you in applying this to your life.

*To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father - to him be glory and power for ever and ever. Amen!*

Revelation 1:5-6

