

Parish of Ferndown

Study sheet for week commencing 5th October 2008

St Mary's Core Values (5) "CALLED TO UNITY"

John 17:20-23 & Rom 15:1-13

This week we touch upon a subject very close to the heart of God: the unity of his Church. If any of you still have your books, "The Purpose Driven Life" I strongly suggest you read chapter 21, "Protecting your Church."

OPENING DISCUSSION

1. When you see TV reports of Christians in disagreement (often the Anglican Communion sadly) how does it make you feel?
2. Now read John 17:20-23. How must Jesus view the Church when it fights against itself?

BIBLE STUDY & APPLICATION

We're going to look at Romans 15:1-13, and split it into chunks.

1. Read verses 1-3. When we think of our fellow Christians at St Mary's what attitude should we have towards those who we judge to have failings?
2. Read verses 4-5. When Christianity gets costly, because of relationships being strained, what has God given us to help us endure? And secondly, what should the scriptures produce in us?
3. Read verses 5-7. What does Paul pray God will give the Christians in Rome? If we are not united in the love and truth of Christ, can we bring Glory to God?
4. Read verse 13. What does Paul pray God will fill the Christians in Rome with? For him to produce these things, what does verse 13 say we need to do?

PRINCIPLES TO PRACTISE AND PRAY ABOUT!

To promote unity, we can consider the following points. You might like to take it in turn as group members to read a point, or look up a bible verse. How well do you match up?!

1. Begin by focussing on what we have in common, not our differences (read Rom 14:19)
2. Be realistic in your expectations of others. You are imperfect, so why do you expect perfection from others? We are on a journey to being made whole, in the image of Christ
3. Choose to encourage rather than to criticize (read Rom 14:4). A critical spirit is very harmful to the church. Rev 12:10 says it is the Devil who accuses Christians. Do we want to do the Devil's work for him?
4. Refuse to listen to gossip (read James 5:3-6 for the deadly results of gossip!)
5. Practise God's methods for conflict resolution (read Matt 18:15-17)
6. Support your leaders (read Hebrews 13:17)

NOW PRAY For an outpouring of generosity in spirit, and an ongoing commitment to unity in our Church.