

Small group notes – Living Like Jesus - Week 5

Enjoying God's Generosity

WELCOME - Connecting with each other (TIMING: suggest 10 mins)

Each person shares with the group the best present they ever had – and why - (or one special present that comes to mind).

WORSHIP – Connecting with God (TIMING: suggest 10 mins)

Read Psalm 103 1-5 and then use each verse in turn for either silent or brief spoken prayers

v1 - praising God for who he is.

v2 – thanking God for his daily provision.

v3 – praising God for his forgiveness in Jesus dying for us and the wholeness that he brings us by his Spirit.

v4,5 – thanking God for his help, care and strength.

WORD – Connecting with God's thoughts: (TIMING: suggest 20-25 mins)

Ask someone (or better still a few people) to read: Malachi 3.6-12; 2 Corinthians 8.1-14; Mark 12.41-44.

(a) **Understanding:**

- Background to Malachi passage: Malachi speaks of 'tithing', which is the practice of giving a tenth of our income to God. The Old Testament people of God have returned from exile to a devastated land. There is a lot of rebuilding and repairs and there is little income. As they struggle with practical and financial pressures they are preoccupied with their own needs and concerns and don't bother with giving to the Lord. The prophet brings a strongly worded rebuke from God to the people: their giving to him has fallen far below the level of what is rightfully his, but along with the challenge comes a promise: by being faithful in giving, they will experience God's faithfulness. They will discover that giving is more than a duty – it is an act of worship and is actually good for them.
- In 2 Corinthians, St Paul touches on how we can feel about giving, why and how much we give, and what motivates our giving.
- Each of us will respond differently to God according to our commitment and our circumstances. For example, some may be well paid, others may struggle to pay the bills, some may be pensioners, students, singles parents or married to someone who is not a Christian, some may be in debt.

(b) **Applying:**

Questions:

- Looking at each of the Bible passages in turn, can you identify some principles and guidelines for Christian giving?
- In what way do the passages challenge you?
- How can our giving witness to the love and generosity of God?

WITNESS – Connecting with the world (TIMING: suggest 15-20 mins)

- Pray for one another, basing your prayers on what has just been learnt, so that you're giving may resource the mission of God, enabling it to go forward where you live and work.