



1 Peter series beginning January 12th 2014 - Everyday Church

Overview

For 5 weeks, commencing January 12th 2014, the preaching and small group studies will be looking at the book of 1 Peter as follows:-

January 12th Life at the margins

January 19th Everyday Community

January 26th Everyday Mission

February 2nd Everyday Sharing of Jesus

February 9th Hope at the margins

The message of 1 Peter

1 Peter is a letter of encouragement for Christians helping them to find their bearings in a society that does not necessarily understand them and which presents them with many problems.

Throughout the letter there is a paradox:

- **Christians must maintain their distinctiveness** - even at the cost of being misunderstood (for example 1.6-7; 4.12-19).
- **Though they are to be distinctive they are not to opt out of society.** Everything must become a practical demonstration of the gospel (for example 2.9, 12, 15; 3.1, 15). They will have to recognize your good deeds and so praise God.

Applying 1 Peter to today

Our grandparents may well have known church or chapel to have been like a second home, with memories of church concerts, teas, outings, as well as very busy Sundays. For many church was one of the few activities going on on a Sunday. What a different world we now inhabit, where a choir recital cannot compete for most people with the Xbox or X Factor!

Christians do now find themselves on the margins of our culture. We live in a post-Christian culture. The majority of people have no intention of ever attending church. Many only use Christ's name as a swear word. We can often think though that the way to share the Good News is as if we were still in Christendom. Ring the bells (nothing wrong with that, all ringers!) and people will come, or put on a brilliant service and we can share our faith. At St Peter's that does happen but that shouldn't lull us into complacency or blindness to reality. The majority of the population are disconnected and changes we make in church will not reach them. We need to meet them in everyday life.

The church's increasingly marginal position gives us a fresh opportunity to reconnect with our Bibles. Isaiah was written for those on the margins and so was the first letter of Peter. Indeed the New Testament is a collection of missionary documents written to missionary situations.

1 Peter gives us an opportunity to explore what the Holy Spirit wants to say to the Western Church, to us in Woolton, about everyday church, as part of everyday mission on our frontlines.

It will affirm what many Christians are doing – being good neighbours, work colleagues, family members, doing good in the face of hostility and being witness to Christ in the context of ordinary life. This will give us the opportunity to celebrate that and put mission at the centre of our lives. But perhaps this time with 1 Peter will also give us more direction and help us to be more intentional.

Recommended reading

Kip recommends two books:

- 'Everyday Church - mission by being good neighbours' by Tim Chester and Steve Timmis on which the study notes material and some of the above is based.
- 'Everyday God' by Paula Gooder. This book is on everyday discipleship. It's not on 1 Peter but has daily readings.

Guidance for facilitation

As always you are receiving a facilitator's guide and Small Groups Notes for all 5 sessions of this series so that you can view them holistically and assess how they can be best used for your particular group.

NB You will have the master copies for your group. You can e mail them onto group members or print off as many extra copies as appropriate and as you deem necessary.

For discussions

- You will know when to lead, develop and challenge the discussions if they feel superficial and you will recognise the opportunities to allow discussion to travel on the occasions where you feel that it will be fruitful, without feeling any pressure to complete all the questions.
- **Please take this series as an opportunity to explore the word, to wait on God in prayerful obedience and to put our faith into action. God has plans for us all but we all need more practice in listening to Him.**
- We aim to be whole life disciples and this series is an opportunity to explore how we can be more intentional. Let this series be life changing for us! Enjoy it and let our wonderful God continue His work within you and within the lives of your group members!

A prayer (please share this with your group)

Gracious God,
help your Church not to dwell on the mistakes of the past,
holding us to the pain of Golgotha
and keeping us from meeting you afresh in Galilee.
Let us share instead in the renewal of your Church,
sent and strengthened by your power and love,
that we may go forever and wherever in your company
and delight in your new day,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.