

COMPASSION

Life groups notes - week beginning 31st January 2016

(4) GIVING WITH COMPASSION

The next day he took our two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. "Look after him," he said, "and when I return, I will reimburse you any extra expense you may have." Luke 10.35

- Prayer

'Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path.' (Psalm 119.105)

*Loving Father God,
as we open our Bibles, we also open our hearts,
that these words of truth may draw us closer to your heart of compassion,
and so may your Spirit make us more like Jesus,
for your glory's sake. Amen*

- Read Luke 10.25 – 37

As this passage is read each week, be open to the Holy Spirit drawing your attention to different parts of the story, week by week. Different versions of the Bible can help us to see the passage and words from different angles.

Has anyone responded to the invitation to find a modern version, or to write their own, or learn it by heart? If yes, enjoy – if not, enjoy moving on!

- Question (to be explored briefly. Each group member is invited to share.)

Is there a sentence, phrase or word that stands out for you that relates to anything you have heard, seen or experienced this week?

- Exploring the parable

The service that the Samaritan gave was very costly. He laid aside any plans he may have had, risked his own safety, cared all night for the man and probably paid for a few week's lodgings. In Deuteronomy, God's people are called to be open-handed and generous towards the poor and needy (Deut.15.5-8). The whole of the scriptures show God looks for a willing, generous heart which freely helps those in need (2 Cor. 9.7).

The example of the Good Samaritan suggests that he was a good and generous steward of his resources. This ties in with the Bible's teaching about lifestyle, which is counter-cultural in many ways:

- there is encouragement to be content with what we have (Matthew 6.19-23)
- to live a moderate lifestyle (Hebrews 13.5; 1 Tim 6.6-9)
- to share each other's burdens (Galatians 6.2)
- to discern God's unique call for us following Jesus' example (2 Cor. 8. 8,9)
- to care for our own families (Proverbs 6.8; 1 Tim. 5.8)
- to love our neighbours, including enemies (Luke 6.27-36) exercising God-like generosity
- to have a godly view of wealth (1 Tim. 6.6-10, 17-19)
- to trust God (Matthew 6.19-34)

- Discussion
 1. You may not agree with the above exploration, or you may feel some important points have been left out, or under-developed, so here's an opportunity to share and discuss.
 2. As a group, what lessons do you learn from the Good Samaritan's generosity with his time, talents and treasure as he reaches out in compassion? Is there perhaps one challenge he gives that you could apply to your own life and discipleship?
 3. It's often said that our society and culture celebrates consumerism, materialism and individualism. What values do you think this parable celebrates?
- Closing prayer

Turn your discussion into prayer for each other. Pray for those in need and for our response to people's needs.

You may like to use the words of the following hymn:

*Take my life and let it be, consecrated, Lord, to Thee.
Take my moments and my days, let them flow in endless praise.*

*Take my hands and let them move at the impulse of Thy love.
Take my feet and let them be swift and beautiful for Thee.*

*Take my voice and let me sing, always, only for my King.
Take my lips and let them be filled with messages from Thee.*

*Take my silver and my gold, not a mite would I withhold.
Take my intellect and use every pow'r as Thou shalt choose.*

*Take my will and make it Thine, it shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart, it is Thine own, it shall be Thy royal throne.*

*Take my love, my Lord, I pour at Thy feet its treasure store.
Take myself and I will be ever, only, all for Thee.*

(Frances R. Havergal)