



St Peter's Yateley Home Groups

Summer Term 2023 – Week 2 – Beginning 1st May

“Gifts’r’Us – Gifts To Encourage”

The Aim of the Session

To see that God is already working in people around us through their encouragement of us and to understand ways in which God can do more through us if we are ready to let him.

- **Welcome**

Who was your favourite teacher at School – and why?

- **Worship**

Read Hebrews 10:19-24. Recall the fact of the Curtain of the Temple being torn in two at the Resurrection and rejoice in the invitation to meet with God “face to face”. What do you want to talk to him about?.

- **Word**

Moving on from your time of worship, look again at verse 23-24.

- ❖ Why do we need to be reminded that we can “draw near to God”? What holds us back?
- ❖ How can we “spur” one another?

When one thinks of “spurs”, it often (for non-football fans) thinks about getting a poke in the ribs!

- ❖ Why do we need this?
- ❖ How would you define the word “encourage”?
- ❖ What constitutes encouragement?
- ❖ What are good forms of encouragement?
- ❖ How can encouragement go wrong and become destructive?
- ❖ Who encourages you and how?

Look at these passages (it is suggested that members are given the passages on strips of paper in advance to look up):

John 3:3-7

John 2:13-17

John 4:15-18

Luke 7:36-38

Luke 11:37-41

Mark 9:38-40

Luke 18:15-17

Luke 24:25

- In what ways does Jesus encourage people in these passages?
- How does “encouragement” differ from “constructive criticism”?
- How does Jesus do it?

Thinking back to last week's session (you may need to remind yourselves!), we talked about the way that God takes normal, natural things in our lives and does “supernatural” things (things which cut across this world and the spiritual world) in order to do his work, *through* us.

Read Acts 9:26-28 about Barnabas bringing Paul to the Disciples.

- Why were they wary of Saul/Paul?
- Was that justified?
- What did Barnabas *actually* do – what was his part in the process?
- What was the risk involved?
- What was required of the Disciples?
- What was required of Barnabas?
- What was the result?

For us, encouragement can have a cost and potential risks.

- ❖ What holds us back from being encouragers?
- ❖ Has everyone got a Gift – or is it only a few?
- ❖ How can we find out which is “us”?
- ❖ What happens if we don’t exercise our Gift or a simple call to do it?

What is really going on in the phrase “*You’ll never know how much you helped me.*”?

How can we make this a way of life in the Church, rather than as an occasional thing?

Final Thought

God wants all of us to be expressing our love for others in practical ways and that includes encouragement which aims to build others up in confidence, as well as in a manner of discipline (Rev 3:19). Knowing the difference is a key part of growing a Gift of Encouragement. But ALL of us are called upon to build each other up and exercise encouragement –some appear to have a particular Gift whereby God uses them in special ways but God can give every single one of us a word or a thought that will encourage someone beyond our own capacity to do so. The question is whether we are willing to let him do that through us.

- **Works**

You may want to spend some time encouraging each other in the issues which exist in lives within the group. Equally, there may be some who are not aware of their capacity to encourage – or need encouragement to develop the Gift! Pray for each other and be willing to take risks.

You may want to pledge to encourage someone this week.

Next session ...

Next session ... emPowering Teaching – Wednesday 10th May at 7.30pm in Church

There will be no notes for next week (week beginning 8th May) as we shall be coming together for an emPower midweek time of teaching ... with the opportunity to ask questions about the work of the holy Spirit and what this all looks like in practice.