

## Word Notes Sunday 04/01/15 Tony Hodge – Encouragement

**Summary** (read this bit out to remind cell members what was said on Sunday)

### Key Texts: 1 Corinthians 1:1-9

When the Apostle Paul wrote to his spiritual children, both in the churches he planted and those individuals he personally mentored and nurtured, he always starts with encouragement in the form of blessings and thanksgiving. The main text is an excellent example and a survey of all Paul's letters bear out the fact that he was keen to encourage them each time he wrote – even when it was to bring some guidance or correction. If viewed more like a modern day office “memo” it might look something like this;

**From:** Paul (and others who were with him at the time).  
**To:** The church of God at ....., the brothers at .....,  
Those who call on Jesus name  
Those who belong to Jesus.  
**Re:** Encouragement

- 1) Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 2) Thanksgiving /We always thank God for you, because of God's grace to you – His grace to build you up, for your partnership in the Gospel, for your faith, your love, your works produced by faith and love and your endurance inspired by hope.

If we stop and think there's much to be encouraged by in the life of NCC. Just reading though the list of things in the summary of Paul's words above I can see so many things going on in the life of the fellowship that encourage me and want to give thanks for just as Paul does to his readers. At this traditional time for New Year's messages from leaders of nations, churches and other high profile figures let's both hear the Lord's encouragement to us in Paul's words and be committed to encourage one another through thanksgiving, testimony, love and works that we might persevere in our aim of being obedient to the Great Commandment and the Great Commission.

**Application** (this is the bit where cell members get to participate. Lead discussions around these points)

- 1) Ask each person in turn to name one thing that would be in their list of NCC qualities to give thanks for if they were to write a letter to NCC. Keep going round the room one at a time until everyone has shared all they would include.
- 2) Paul gives thanks for their “partnership in the Gospel” through faith, love, works and endurance (1Thess 1:3), discuss these questions:
- 3) What does being a partner in the Gospel mean to you?  
What roles do each of the following play in that partnership – both as an individual and part of NCC:
  - Faith?
  - Love?
  - Works produced by faith and love?
  - Endurance/perseverance inspired by hope?
- 4) Looking forward to 2015, which of these would you most like to grow in?

**Witness** (this is the bit where the cell talks and prays about how to share the Good News)

Who can you encourage this week? Look out for opportunities to give someone a boost by heart-felt encouragement or thanksgiving, by listening and maybe some practical help too.