

Word notes Sunday 16/1/2011 Tony Hodge
No Favouritism! – James 2

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

Key Text: James 2:1-13

Favouritism shown to an individual or a social, ethnic gender group or class does not fit in the Kingdom. James writes to Christians not just to warn them but to tell them to stop. The Gospel is not restricted to one group of people because Christ died for all, Paul teaches how there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free in the Kingdom and to show favouritism is to judge and not show mercy.

In the UK we now have one Equalities Act 2010, which brings together all previous discrimination law adding new categories such as ageism. I had to look it up on the Internet to see what it covered even though I'd been involved in implementing it in my last employment two years ago. The Good News is that the "royal law" in James 2:8 is not written down on paper but in our minds and hearts by the Spirit, if we live by the Spirit we will fulfil Jesus' great commandment.

James also makes it clear that we can't pick and choose which part of this law to obey – a stumble in one area means failing in all. Thankfully it's easier to recover from a stumble than a complete fall and the grace of God is available to us as we repent, as for forgiveness and to be healed of worldly attitudes.

Above all remember – mercy trumps judgement! (v13)

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

James refers to the "royal law" in verse 8

- Q1, Which scripture is he quoting? (Hint: Old Testament)
- Q2, Why does he call it "royal"? (Hint: quoted in the New Testament)

Judging others in a wrong way can so easily slip into our lives – through what we think, say or do.

- Q3, In this passage, what does James tell us should guide how we speak and act?
- Q4, Which word in v 12 (NIV) takes James' teaching out of legalism? (Hint: Gal 5:1)

Are there any hindrances to us welcoming any whom the Lord would bring to us, do we stumble into "institutional middle-classism". Probably not but it could easily look that way.

- Q5, What can individuals do to make sure no-one feels unwelcome or unwanted?
What can NCC do to make sure visitors don't feel they do not fit?
(Cell Leaders report back to Tony on this).

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

Where is the cell going to cast its net this year?