

Word Notes Sunday 19/01/14
Tony Hodge – Unless the Lord builds the house

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

Key Texts: Psalm 127

This Psalm is known as a Song of Ascents. These psalms were thought to be sung by the worshippers as they ascended up the road to Jerusalem to attend the three pilgrim festivals (Deuteronomy 16:16). This one is ascribed to Solomon but that might also mean “for Solomon” or in his memory. It has been proposed that it may have been composed for the building of the second temple, under Nehemiah with its references to watchmen but that was of course much later. It is a fitting song as we celebrate what the Lord has built here at NCC over the past 30 years and give thanks for His faithfulness and blessings.

The “house” referred to could be the Temple of the Lord, an ordinary dwelling or household in the sense of family. Certainly the first and last benefit from allowing the Lord to direct what and how is built through understanding scripture, through our knowledge and relationship with Jesus and through the prophetic guidance of the Holy Spirit.

We may call this physical building a “church” but we know that “church” actually means a selected group of people – an *ecclesia* or “called out ones”. We understand that, as Christians, we ourselves are temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19). Also we know that we are brothers and sisters in the family of God – members of His household (Eph 2:19). So let us continue to build this household – ourselves, and this part of the family of God known as NCC according to the Lord’s ways, directions and with Kingdom values at the centre.

Verse 2 serves to remind us that ultimately it’s not about doing things in our strength, or worrying things into being. The Lord will grant sleep to those he loves – keeping close to him is more important than all our doing or worrying.

Verses 3 to 5 encourages us in the nurturing and equipping of children in the Kingdom. They are a blessing to parents and also to the household of God. How encouraging it was to see our young people lead the service on Sunday 26th December – in all aspects. They were not “performing” as at a school concert, they were expressing their worship from the heart and using the gifts God has given them. Taking the long view of NCC history how encouraging it is to see the children of children who were there 30 years ago when we were planted out now taking up the mantle. Those who planted out and nurtured the children then are not embarrassed by how the fellowship has grown and matured, and in turn as we nurture, equip and release the current youngsters we too pray that the Lord will take them on both further than we have been and in new directions to his glory.

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

“The family that prays together, stays together” is an old adage.

1. How does it illustrate the opening of Psalm 127?
2. What practical things can we do to ensure the Lord is building our personal household?
3. What about the NCC family, how do we ensure the same for a large group of people?

Verse 2 says the Lord “grants sleep to those he loves”.

What is the context of this promise, what do you see as the relationship between work, rest and our life with the Lord?

Read 1 Sam 1:20-22, 2:18, 2:26 & 3:1-4.

1. At what age did Samuel start to minister to the Lord? When did he start his “training”?
2. Is there any spiritual thing “off-limits” to children? Why?
3. How then should we nurture children in the Lord and release them into both a relationship with him and a life of ministry?

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

Pray for the witness of NCC, of your family and of your own life. Ask for specific ways, events, meetings where we/you can be effective.