

Word notes Sunday 2/5/2011 Helen Parker
Proud to be Christian – making a difference

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

Key Text: Philippians 2:12-18

Helen wants not just to live as a quiet Christian but also to be an “influencer” – someone who makes a difference in her situation and to those around her. Paul wrote this letter from his imprisonment to a special church, the first to be planted in Europe, encouraging them to continue in the way he showed them. Helen made 6 points from the text:

1. v12 It's our responsibility to work this out – not just while with friends or in church but in the world. Don't stop half-way even when it's not easy (“in fear and trembling”).
2. v13 But don't “strive”. It's about allowing God to work in us – to be ready to ask God to do in & through us what He wants to do in & through us. Listen to the still small voice – what is God saying for you, something new or something He's said before that you need to pick up again?
3. v14 Do it without complaining or grumbling – there's no place for that either in the church or in your secular life & work. Actions and attitudes speak louder than words.
4. v15 Be pure and blameless and without fault. Non-Christians are watching you whatever you may think. NB we can't **make** ourselves pure (see v13) but can want and work to **remain** pure.
5. v16 (a) Hold fast both believe and follow: do the good stuff. (b) “hold out”: be ready to hold out the hope of the gospel to others. Live for God and talk to friends – a two pronged attack! Be proud of being a Christian and not ashamed of the Gospel.
6. vv17,18 Paul talks elsewhere (Romans 12:1) of living your life as a living sacrifice. Paul knew what he was doing and the consequences, yet being fully committed to God his sacrifice became joy.

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

This was not just a word for Sunday – it applies to our life throughout the week.

How would you respond to the question: “What difference has God made in your life?” Would your mind go blank or do you have a ready answer?

Is being a Christian solely a personal thing between you and God or should it touch others around you? In what ways can you demonstrate the difference God has made in your life?

Think of a car gear-box. Which gear are you in concerning the things God has called you to – 1st, 2nd 3rd etc or idling in neutral or possibly reverse? Paul's intent was to run the race and finish the winner – what would it take in your life to shift-up and emulate him?

Mumbling, moaning etc brings destruction to any enterprise – including building the Kingdom. What is the key to dealing with this? (*hint: like any other sin - repentance, possibly with prayer and ministry*)

What do you find it tough to sacrifice? Is giving of time, money, home or other possessions a chore or a joy?

Pray for people and things they have shared – for us to be ready to give a joyful sacrifice, based on a decision of the will, allowing God to work through us, empowered by the Spirit and being effective in sharing the Gospel too.

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

In light of the answers above what is the Cell doing together to “make a difference”?