

**Word Notes Sunday 21/10/2012 Tony Hodge**  
**God of Relationship**

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

**Key Text: John 15:13-17**

The whole Bible tells the story of the relationship between God and His creation – and especially His relationship with Man – made in His likeness. The grand story-arc spans from creation, the determination of God to express Himself through His Word, up to and including making mankind in His image, through the rebellion and fall and various preparations towards the salvation of that relationship and the establishment of a new and perfect order.

From the beginning there is a special quality to the relationship, as the story moves on it is likened to a marriage and marriage held up as symbolic of God & Man relations until finally there is triumph and a joining together that is for eternity. Jesus confirms God's intent that we be friends and that those who are his friends obey his commands.

In order to get the relationship right there are some things we need to grasp hold of some important things:

- 1, God made us we didn't invent Him. Getting this wrong leads to all kinds of errors, which reduce God to eg, a family doctor, a watchmaker or a Santa Claus figure.
- 2, God describes the relationship in family terms – Love is at the centre.
- 3, There is a contract – just like a marriage this doesn't demean the relationship but establishes and enhances it.
- 4, When man couldn't keep his end of the contract Jesus came to fulfil it for us.
- 5, We are invited to enter into the deal through accepting Jesus as Christ and Lord.

And now the Good News – in Christ the Law is fulfilled, not at all set aside so we can be confident of welcome into God's family through Jesus our Lord.

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

What words can you think of from the Bible that describe the family relationship between God and His people? Find the relevant scriptures. NB some are positive eg "Bride" others are negative eg "harlot" showing the effect of broken relationship.

Thinking of the human relationships of these types in your life, which have been positive, constant, affirming etc?

How do the equivalent relationships with God – Father, Son and Spirit – compare to earthly ones? Which have you needed to grow in?

Some of you will have completed the Freedom in Christ course – how does knowing who you are in Christ help with earthly relationship?

Is your heart intent on keeping relationships - in marriage, how do you fulfil the promises to love, comfort and protect and honour?

What about your relationship with Jesus, how do you maintain and grow in it?

### **Witness**

How important is unity and love in the church for effective witness? Jn 13:35 & Jn 17:20-23 will help. Commit yourselves to this and pray for unity and love to characterise the church across the town.