

Word Notes Sunday 07/09/14
Tony Hodge – Joshua 1: Get ready everyone

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

Key Texts: Joshua 1

The nation of Israel stands on the brink of new adventure. Moses, their leader, is dead and God has raised up Joshua to lead them into the Promised Land. God speaks to Joshua, telling him to be “strong and very courageous” and He will give him every place where he sets his foot. The land He has promised is significant, not some small territory, and there will be opposition but none shall stand against him – victory is assured!

The Lord also tells Joshua to stay close – to meditate on the Law of Moses day and night and not deviate from it; the result would be that he would prosper. Joshua tells the officers to inform the people so that they may get ready, even the tribes that were not going in to possess the land were reminded of their promise to fight alongside the rest until all was won.

How does this passage speak to us in Newmarket 2014? It's a good story of how the Lord was with Joshua as he entered the Promised Land and Israel began to take possession of their inheritance but that was millennia ago. Well – we too are looking to move out from a place where we've “journeyed” for some years as we look to hold a Sunday meeting in Newmarket Academy in response to the blessing of growth that we've seen here – especially in the children and youth work. It's true that if everyone who comes at least once a month were to come on one day we'd not have room. When we've had all-age services together or special meetings like marriage blessings we've been crowded out – what to do? Following on from our month of prayer and seeking the Lord's direction we're having this “trial” service at the Academy. But it's more than that – we are making a prophetic statement that our building cannot contain what the Lord wants to do. If we continue to follow his command to “Go into all the world and make disciples” we need more space.

I believe these early chapters of Joshua have more to say to us than simple history – they speak to our immediate circumstances. Like Joshua I believe the Lord would like us to be “bold and very courageous” as we step out for Him, that he will do great things here in sleepy Newmarket if we would live that way. I also believe that this needs to be a joint effort – all of us need to hear the call to be ready and to take our part – even if we feel comfortable “this side of the Jordan” so to speak. It wasn't Joshua alone that was going to do this – the Lord was leading him and the people joined in. As we look to place our feet in a different place, however that turns out, let's do so together as one body as a prophetic statement of intent to take the Good News out to the town and beyond.

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

Our time at Unit 11 has been good, many people both inside and outside the church have been blessed – recount **briefly** a few stories of times of encounter, amazing things or good family life you've seen or experienced while NCC have been meeting at Unit 11 and give thanks for them.

As we've grown in numbers the Leaders have been considering and praying about what that means for NCC – especially the venue for our Sunday meetings. How does the prospect of a different venue make you feel? What would happen if we didn't consider meeting elsewhere?

What would it mean to you to be “Bold and very courageous” in your Christian walk? How might you prepare to step out in that way?

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

I think it's time to get serious – we can talk about outreach and never leave our front rooms. What activity or project will the Cell undertake this term – be realistic but also dream big.