

Word Notes Sunday 25/09/16
Tony Hodge: Guidance 3 – Knowing your gifts

Summary *(read this bit out to remind cell members what was said on Sunday, listen to the podcast if you missed the talk <http://www.newmarketcommunitychurch.co.uk/podcasts.htm>)*

Key Text: Exodus 4:1-17 (Moses); Luke 22:32-34, John 21:17-19 & Acts 2 (Peter); Phil 3:4-7 & Rom 12:3 (Paul)

Understanding God's plan for your life involves knowing yourself as well as hearing from God. He made you and gave you abilities and gifts to steward and use for His glory. That might have been distorted by the world, sin or wherever but not destroyed and knowing yourself can give some clues to your calling. Having an honest understanding of your strengths and weaknesses and being prepared to do what you are able while allowing God to do what only He can do leads to a productive partnership that brings glory to Him and enriches your life.

Moses – saw himself as weak and a poor speaker, even after miraculous signs. God would provide the words. He was always a leader, from his birth and heritage. He was given Godly start, fought against injustice (on his terms). He listened to his own voice in regard to his gifts and abilities and didn't see just what God could do. But God can use this man – even if he needs help.

Peter – quite the opposite, he over-committed to Jesus out of his own strength and falls on his face. Restored by Jesus' forgiveness and love he's then empowered by the Holy Spirit to speak boldly. Peter always did speak out or speak his mind. always ready to throw himself in 100%. Dying to self and living for Christ it's the HS who now guides and prompts him – but Peter still has to do the crazy stuff.

Paul – Relied on his education and status, but though meeting Jesus he is released into grace. Saul stood on his education and self-righteousness. Paul stood on salvation by grace. His education and knowledge of the Law enabled him to see the full revelation of the Christ and establish a basis for the church. God used his gifts and education for His own glory – at great cost as Paul knew but to achieve even more that Saul might have done on his own. What lessons can we learn from these stories?

Have a sober opinion of yourself, evaluate your gifts, strengths and weaknesses honestly – but also allow God to work in and through you. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil 4:13). God has given us gifts and abilities using our abilities for His glory as stewards of those gifts – general and specific. But remember to move in grace not works. Also know that your beginnings are not your endings, God is able to equip and release us into whatever work He has for us. To help find what that might be seek God AND ask trusted Christian friends, work in team and most certainly exercise your faith.

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

How do you view Moses' response to God's call? What is realistic about it and what is negative?

What is God's initial and eventual response?

Think of the whole Exodus story does Moses' confidence grow or does he remain unsure of himself? What other mistakes does he make?

What would be your view of yourself if God brought such a clear call to your life? How would you respond?

Whom do you most resemble in responding to God's call – Moses, Peter or Paul. Explain in what way and if you have one share a testimony of how the Lord has helped or changed either your view of yourself or helped you grow into his call.

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

What is the group's response to the Lord's call to "Go and make disciples"? What strengths and weaknesses do you have and hence what might you be best at doing when "Going"?