

ST. BARNABAS CHURCH, SWANLAND

SMALL GROUP NOTES

Sharing Christ through friendship

3rd Sunday of Epiphany, w/beg 20 January 2013: Readings: 1 Cor. 12:1-11; John 2:1-11

Welcome/ icebreaker	Who's got the best story about a funny or embarrassing thing happening at a wedding?
Worship	<i>Suggestions:</i> 439 One shall tell another; 593 What a friend we have in Jesus; "Water you turned into wine"
Word (refs.↓)	
1 Cor. 1:1-11	Look at the list of gifts in vv.7-11. Where do you think there might be gifts in your group, or in the wider church, that could be used more, and 'for the common good' (v.7)? How could they be encouraged and exercised in the group, or in specific ministries in the church? Be prepared this week to ask God to give each other the gift(s) that He has for each of you. Commit to pray for opportunities to use these gift(s), and to put them to use this week. Prepare to share answers to prayer next time, if you wish. Remember <u>who</u> is the giver of all these gifts (v.11)
John 2:1-11	(v.1-4) Weddings in 1 st Century Israel could last up to a week; it was a social disaster not to provide enough food and drink for the guests. How do you understand Jesus' response to his mother when she told him the wine had run out? What does 'my time has not yet come' (v.4) mean? (hint: see ch.7 v.30) (v.5) Mary accepted Jesus' answer. How good are you at accepting God's response when it's not what you asked for? How prepared are you to 'do whatever he (Jesus) tells you to do'? Pray this for yourself/ group/ church. (v.6-10) The gospel writer John carefully records that the water that Jesus turned into wine came out of 6 stone jars used for purification. What significance do you see in this? Read 1 John 1:7 – what is the only true way of being purified? What might Jesus be indicating by replacing the 'old' ritual water, with new, 'best', wine? (v.9-11) Is it important that only a few people knew where the wine came from? (v.9). Why? What is in this story that prompts faith (v.11) amongst Jesus' disciples?
	Consider individually or in 2s and 3s: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where would you like to see the 'water' turned into 'wine' in your life at present? (e.g. family/ work/ school/ health / spiritual life/ church/ relationships, etc.) • If one area springs to mind, pray how you would like Jesus to intervene and then simply bring the problem to him and entrust it to him. If appropriate, break into small groups/ pairs to pray about these areas.
Group life/ Witness	➤ Pray for insight to be led to those who are struggling with the 'water' of religious ritual, without tasting the 'new wine' Jesus can provide. Pray for a chance you talk to them (sensitively) about what you have learnt this week. ➤ Make a note of the <u>Pancake Party</u> in the village hall on February 12 th (5.15 – 7.15pm) – come to help, or – just as important - come to 'eat and greet'.