

The Parish Church of St. Barnabas, Swanland - 'Sharing Christ through friendship'

CELL GROUP NOTES: 5/12/10 - Advent 2

Readings: **Matthew 3:1-12.** Theme: **The King's Messenger**

Welcome / icebreaker	Who are the best (and worst) people in your household at being "ready"?
Worship ideas	Advent/ pre-Christmas carols would be appropriate this week.
Word (refs. ↓)	<i>some suggestions for discussion here</i>
Matthew 3:1-8	Look back one verse from v.1 to v.23 of ch.2. How much time has passed between these two verses? Given John's uncompromising message (see v.7) why do you think people flocked to hear him (read 2 Kings 1:8 and Malachi 4:5 for clues)? If the Pharisees and Sadducees came to 'repent' and be baptised, why do you think he was so harsh on them?
Matthew 3:9-10	As Christians do we sometimes fall into the same trap that John warns us about in vv.9-10? Read Luke 12:35-38. Does 'readiness' in these two passages only apply to being ready for Jesus' arrival (or return)? Or can it also apply to 'keeping short accounts with God' and being ready to meet him when our own time comes? How confident are you that you are 'ready' for that? Why? How would this passage make you feel about someone who readily admits that they have not 'made their peace with their maker'.
Matt. 3:11-12	What else do John's words here suggest will be a key mark of God's people, apart from being baptised to denote repentance? Can you speak from your own experience about being "baptised with the Holy Spirit"? And "with fire"? How essential are these experiences to the 'normal Christian life'?
Witness	<p>Pray – for an opportunity to share any insights you have gained from this week's group to witness to someone who is not sure of their salvation. For example, a death being described as 'untimely' could lead to a discussion about what would make a 'timely' or 'good' death.</p> <p>Plan – if you have arranged a Christmas social to invite friends, relatives or neighbours who don't yet know Jesus, discuss how your invitations are going. Did you challenge each other over the last 2 weeks about inviting someone new to a church event or service over Christmas? Share how you got on, or plan how you might do that this week.</p> <p>Contact – why not check that your neighbours/ friends in the community (especially any elderly residents) have all they need at home (eg bread, milk, matches, heating working, drive/paths clearing, etc.). Could you make contingency plans as a group to rally round to help anyone in need?</p>
Reminder	There is a collection box in the church foyer for gifts for the Ark (see notice-sheet). Gifts will be welcomed up to and including next Monday 13 th Dec.