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| Welcome <i>(ice-breaker)</i> | When was the last time you wrote a thank-you note/ message? Are you overdue writing one – if so, what’s stopping you writing one today? |
| Worship ideas | Suggestions for songs of thanksgiving e.g. Songs of Fellowship 124 Give thanks 145 Great is the Lord 268 I will enter his gates 521 Thanks be to God 1015 Thank you for saving me 1241 Give thanks to the Lord (<i>‘Forever’</i>) (NB: 20 files of ‘newer’ songs are available to borrow from the church lounge for groups) |
| Word (refs.↓) | <i>Sunday’s 9am sermon is available to hear at http://www.stbchurch.org.uk (click on ‘download’ tab)</i> |
| <u>Read</u> 1 Thess. 5:1-11 and 5:12-28 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Background: make sure you are familiar with the background to this letter (see previous weeks’ notes and/or read Acts 17:1-9). 2. In the second part of his letter (ch.4 and 5) Paul has moved from encouraging the Thessalonians for their faithfulness under trial (chs. 1-3) to encouraging them to grow in love and holiness. In 4:1-12 he urged them to live a life of love, in 4:13-18 he turned to the theme of Jesus’ return and assurance that those who had died would not miss out on that event. Now in 5:1-11 he continues the same theme, urging his readers to <i>Be prepared</i> for Jesus’ return (vv.1-11). Look over these verses and identify ways in which you can prepare yourself for Jesus’ second coming (see esp. v.8). 3. <i>Be respectful vv.12-13</i> – Paul here urges respect for the elders in the church. How well are you (as individuals and a group) putting such exhortations into practice today? 4. <i>Be patient vv.14-15</i> – here Paul urges leaders and others to treat one another with respect. <i>‘The idle’</i> here (v.14) are those who have deliberately chosen (against Paul and the church leader’s instructions) not to earn a living because of their conviction that Jesus’ return was imminent – and who are therefore being disruptive, leading to friction (hence the injunction to ‘live in peace’, v.13). How can we avoid being disrupted by people who ‘ride their hobby horses’ in churches today? 5. <i>Be thankful vv.16 & 18</i> – note that all three instructions in vv.16-18 are controlled by the last part, ‘for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus’ (v.18b). So <i>rejoicing</i> (‘in the Lord’) always and <i>giving thanks</i> (‘to God’) in all circumstances are two sides of the same coin. Is there a difference between ‘giving thanks <i>for</i> all circumstances’ and ‘giving thanks <i>in</i> all circumstances’? Can you share examples of where, despite not being able to do the former, you have been able to do the latter? 6. <i>Be prayerful, vv.17</i> – how can we pray ‘continually’ (literally ‘unceasingly, i.e. without a break’)? Is it to do with keeping an unbroken relationship with God? What can break that relationship or put it under strain and how can we prevent that happening? 7. <i>Be Spirit-filled and led, vv.19-22</i> – here Paul is addressing ways of handling prophetic ‘words’ in the congregation. What is it important to do with these (see vv.21-22) and not to do with them (vv.19-20)? As a group, share any stories you may have of prophetic words received by you/someone you know. What impact have they had? 8. <i>Closing prayer, vv. 23-24.</i> End by praying this for one another. |
| Witness | <p><u>Pray</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan one way of demonstrating an ‘attitude of gratitude’ towards someone you know (perhaps outside of the church / your immediate family) this week • Confirm plans for a ‘social’ soon to which you can invite those in your group’s circle of friends/ family who are not yet Christians. Why not think about joining with another group to do this? |