

Parish Church of St. Barnabas, Swanland *Sharing Christ through friendship.*

Weeks beginning 10/3/13 Bible passages: **1 Peter 2:9-2; Matt. 5:13-16**

Diocesan Lent series: 'Generous Churches' (4). Influence: **Being Salt and Light in the world**

4th in a series of 5: Christ-likeness – becoming more like Jesus; Commitment – to God, to God's ways & values, to one another; Partnership – with God, with other Christians and groups in our communities;

Influence - seeing God's kingdom transform society around us; Numbers - seeing more people come to faith

Welcome	Think of someone who has had a significant influence in your life – what were the best influences they had on you?
Worship ideas	Read 1 Peter 2:9-10 and allow these verses to prompt praise. Songs: some suggestions 167 Here I am; 362 Shine Jesus shine; 1136 You have called us chosen; 1419 Light of the world; (NB: 20 files containing about 30 'newer' songs are available to borrow from the church lounge for groups)
Word (refs.↓)	<i>suggestions for discussion:</i>
Matthew 5:13-16	Look back at vv.1-12 – why does Jesus stress the importance of Christian <u>character</u> before giving his disciples the challenges of vv.13-16? vv.13-16 can be summarised as giving a definition of discipleship that will consist of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement for God – being 'in the world but not of it' (cf. John 17:14) • Influence for God – whilst retaining distinctive Christian attitudes and lifestyles. How far do you find this a helpful summary?
Matthew 5:13-14	Before refrigeration, salt was used to keep meat/ fish from rotting. What does 'you are the salt of the earth' say about our society and Christians' role in it. In what practical ways can we be 'salt' where we live, work and relate to others? What other meanings might 'salt of the earth' have here?
Matthew 5:15-16	Why might we as believers be tempted to hide our light? When people see the good deeds we do for God, what effect should it have (v.16)? Is this always the case? If not, why not? Read 1 Peter 2:11-12 – is this saying the same thing as Jesus' words in Matt. 5:16, or does it add something extra? For wider discussion: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are most or all of your friends Christians? Whether yes or no, what is God saying to you about your answer? • Can you think of a way you as a group can begin having a stronger influence as salt and light in your community (e.g. a social action project, or as the catalyst for a new outreach ministry amongst eg men, parents, families, etc)?
Witness	<u>Pray / praise</u> for one or two of the following <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ for your mission link person(s) or project and ❖ for those experiencing opposition or persecution ❖ for opportunities to make new friends and to share Christ with them as he leads <u>Plan</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ an opportunity as a group or as individuals to reach out in the weeks ahead to people who are not yet Christians (e.g. over Easter or the May bank holiday).