

**ST. BARNABAS CHURCH, SWANLAND**

**'Sharing Christ through friendship' - SMALL GROUPS NOTES**

Wk/beg 17 Feb. 2013. Bible passages: **2 Cor. 4:1-6; Matt. 4:18-22**

'Generous Churches' (1). Christ-likeness: **Following Jesus by becoming more like Jesus**

<b>Welcome/ icebreaker</b>	What is the best change that has happened to you in the last 6 months or so? Why?
<b>Worship</b>	<p>Suggestions: <i>Songs of Fellowship</i> 120 From heaven you came, 305 Jesus take me as I am, 311 Jesus you are changing me, 418 O Jesus I have promised</p> <p>Pray the prayer of Richard of Chichester:  <i>"Thanks be to Thee, my Lord Jesus Christ, For all the benefits Thou hast given me, For all the pains and insults Thou hast borne for me. O most merciful Redeemer, friend and brother, May I see Thee more clearly, Love Thee more dearly and Follow Thee more nearly, day by day. Amen."</i></p>
<b>Word</b> (refs.↓)	NB 9am Sermon available to listen to on <a href="http://www.stbchurch.org.uk">www.stbchurch.org.uk</a> (click on the 'downloads' tab).
2 Cor. 4:1-6	<p>Paul describes Jesus as "the image of God". In what ways does Jesus reflect the character and person of the Father?</p> <p>If we are made in God's image, how can our following of Jesus reflect God's character to others?</p>
Matt. 4:12-22	<p>Jesus' call to the first disciples is, 'Come, follow me and I will show you how to fish for people' (NLT).</p> <p>For the disciples, what did 'following Jesus' mean from that moment?</p> <p>Was it more about imitating his character, doing as he did, a bit of both, or something else?</p> <p>Did they always have to wait for him to tell them where and when to 'fish for people' after that, or did they have to learn how to do it for themselves?</p> <p>What about after his ascension - how did they get on 'following Jesus' as the early church grew?</p> <p>What lessons does all this have for us today?</p>
<i>(General information)</i>	<p>We are looking through Lent at the current focus in our Diocese (the Diocese of York) on being 'Generous Churches, Making and Nurturing Disciples', and how we can grow as churches in ways that help bring this about.</p> <p>The five marks of Growth being highlighted on each of the 5 weeks of this series are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>† Christ-likeness – becoming more like Jesus</li> <li>† Commitment – to God, to God's ways and values, to one another</li> <li>† Partnership – working with other Christians and groups in our communities</li> <li>† Influence – seeing God's kingdom transform society around us</li> <li>† Numbers – seeing more people come to faith, friends becoming worshippers and followers of Jesus Christ</li> </ul> <p>Here are some notes from the Diocesan material on part 1 ("<i>Christ-likeness</i>"), for discussion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Becoming like Christ is the fundamental call of Christian discipleship. It is not always easy to assess, but we often recognise the flavour of a life becoming more godly. How we pray and worship is a key element in this mark of growing.</li> <li>• As disciples, we are called to follow Christ, which is a picture of becoming more like him, day by day. (e.g. Matt 4:19, 8:22, 9:9, 16:24 and more)</li> <li>• St Paul write movingly of imitating Christ (e.g Gal 4:19; Eph 1:3-14; Phil 2:5; 1 Thess 1:6)</li> <li>• In Christian history, there are many spiritual classics which encourage growth in Christ-likeness. For example, Thomas à Kempis, "<i>The Imitation of Christ</i>" (<i>can you name others?</i>)</li> </ul>
<b>Witness</b>	<p>Pray - for your mission links; for your own growth in Christ-likeness; for new groups starting up this half term (especially the 'Cygnet's' pre-school group on Tuesdays)</p> <p>Action: How can you as a group seek to help one another to follow Jesus more closely/ grow in Christlikeness?</p>