

Parish Church of **St. Barnabas, Swanland** *Sharing Christ through friendship.*  
 Small Group notes for week beginning Sunday **9/6/12 (Trinity 2/St Barnabas).**  
 Acts 4:32-37 & 9:23-31 *“Encouragement to be generous.”*

<b>Welcome</b>	Can you share something encouraging, that was said to or about you when you were at school, which has stuck with you to this day? Why was it so memorable?
<b>Worship ideas</b>	<i>Suggested songs: Songs of Fellowship 218 I just want to praise you; 633 You laid aside your majesty; 851 I will offer up my life; 2034 Strength will rise          (NB: 20 files containing about 30 newer songs are available to borrow from the office for groups)</i>
<b>Word (refs.↓)</b>	<i>some suggestions for discussion here – you might prefer to focus on just 2 or 3 questions</i>
<b><u>Read</u></b> Acts 4:32-37 and Acts 9:23-31	<p>This week: character study of Barnabas – whose life was marked by both generosity of spirit and spontaneous giving in response to the needs of the church.</p> <p>In <u>Acts 4</u> Barnabas is given as an example of how the early Christians responded to the needs of the church family. What was their attitude to possessions in general (v.32) and how did this affect their willingness to give (vv.34-5)? Do you think Barnabas was given his nickname <u>before</u> or <u>because of</u> his giving recorded in these verses? <i>(no right answer!)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “...distributed to anyone as he had need” (v.35). Are we sufficiently aware of the needs of the local / wider church? If so, what is our response? If not, how can we rectify this?</li> <li>• What is your understanding of giving to God? – should it all be channelled through the local church? do you feel giving to charity is part of your stewardship? does your ‘regular giving’ include secular charities/ sponsorships/ one-off collections?</li> <li>• What methods have you found helpful in seeking from God what it is right for you to give, and in reviewing this periodically?</li> </ul> <p>In <u>Acts 9:26-28</u>, in what ways do we see Barnabas encouraging Saul (Paul)? Do you have cause to be grateful to someone who has stood by and supported you in the past? In what ways could you encourage and support others this week? (for example: a new Christian whose initial enthusiasm may be waning; someone who has experienced disappointment; someone who feels God is far away? - some of these verses might help in such situations: Hebrews 10:25; 1 Corinthians 15:58; John 15:4-5; Hebrews 12:2)</p> <p><i>If time: read Acts 11:19-30</i> – Later, Barnabas was sent by the church in Jerusalem to join the leadership of the church in far-away Antioch (in Syria). When the church grew substantially (v.24b) what was Barnabas’ response (v.25-6)?</p> <p>Eventually Barnabas and Saul were singled out by their church (as directed by the Spirit) to take the gospel west towards Europe (13:1-3). What can we learn from Barnabas’ willingness to follow God’s lead as revealed to the churches where he was a member?</p> <p><i>Acts 11.24</i> – Barnabas was not perfect (see e.g. Acts 15:36-39) but he will always be known as someone who was ‘full of the Holy Spirit’. Could this be said of us? In what ways can we seek to be ‘full of the Holy Spirit’ in what we say and do and in who we are?</p>
<b>Witness</b>	<p><b><u>Pray</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ for your mission link person(s) or project</li> <li>❖ for opportunities to be ‘Barnabases’ in your place of work, friendship groups, family or neighbourhood; for people to invite to the Father’s Day service this Sunday and to the bring-and-share BBQ afterwards.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Plan</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ to be an active encourager this week for someone you know who needs it!</li> <li>❖ an activity as a group during June or July to which you can invite those who are not yet Christians (eg summer barbecue, garden party, etc.)</li> </ul>