

Dear Rev'd Carter

Thank you for your sermon on Sunday about loving each other. I wholeheartedly agree with you but found myself nearly exploding with frustration during your talk.

I have 2 children and a husband who works long hours. I work part time myself and always feel like I am spinning plates that are about to crash down round my ears, trying to balance housework, family, churchlife and paid work.

As I sat listening to you telling me to be more loving, I ran through a list of what I need to do this week: Bake cakes for the school jumble sale, attend the mission prayer meeting, drive my children to cubs, ballet, football and brownies and visit my elderly mother - not to mention work, shopping, cleaning and washing. "Being more loving" towards the church just feels like one more thing on my "to do" list. Where am I supposed to find the time? Please advise me.

Yours sincerely

Julie Watkins

All Involved: All Ages Week beginning 30th Jan

QUESTION: WHAT DO THE MEMBERS OF YOUR CELL DO TO HELP THOSE OF DIFFERENT GENERATIONS FEEL AT HOME IN THE CHURCH FAMILY?

DO YOU EVER HAVE AN "ALL AGE" SOCIAL?

Cell Outline - None provided for this week since it is anticipated that this will be your social.

Cell Members Notes for January: ALL INVOLVED

A World Wide Church Week beginning 2nd January

Welcome - Have you had any experiences of church in different countries. Share them with the group.

EG. TIME SPENT ABROAD, BEING A PRAYER PARTNER OF AN OVERSEAS MISSIONARY, REGULARLY SUPPORTING "TRADCRAFT", BEING AN ACTIVE MEMBER OF "CHRISTIAN SOLIDARITY WORLDWIDE" FOR CHRISTIANS PERSECUTED FOR THEIR FAITH.

Word - What comes to mind when someone mentions the word "Church" - Brainstorm and write all your ideas on a large sheet. Are any of these ideas challenged by your experience of church in other countries. What would do the members of the group feel are the essentials of church and what are the optional extras?

(How closely do your answers correspond to the cell values?)

Read Ephesians 2.11-3.6

- ◆ *The earliest Jewish Christians had a rather limited idea of who could be part of the church - What was the "big secret" (v.3) that came as such a surprise to them?*
- ◆ *Can you think of ways in which we are tempted to narrow down who can be in the church today?*
- ◆ *Read the passage again, choose one verse that strikes you. Share with the group what it is that made this verse stand out to you?*

Worship - Read Ephesians 2.18. Listen to some worship music from another culture. Praise Jesus that he can bridge every cultural gap.

Witness - Agree to go away and identify one or two people that you would like the group to pray for

Begin to pray about a simple social event to which each member of your cell could invite one or two people.

Pray for your group, especially for anything you don't yet feel comfortable with, pray that you will receive a common vision for the future. Especially, pray for your leader, thanking God for their willingness to serve and ask that they may be especially encouraged this term

We've All Got Something to Give Week beginning 9th January

Welcome - If you were a chocolate bar, what would you be and why?

Worship - Ask everyone who feels able to share the best thing that God has done for them in the past week or so. Then say prayers thanking God for everything he has done

Word - Read Ephesians 4.1-16 and each identify

- ◆ A question you have about the passage or something you don't understand
- ◆ Something in the passage that strikes you as interesting or important
- ◆ Something that you could put into practice

Share your answers with the group and explain your choices.

- ◆ What gifts has God given to the people within your cell - make a list.

Witness -

- ◆ Each share one or two people for whom you would like the group to pray for this term
- ◆ Plan a simple social event to which your group could invite one or two people
- ◆ Talk for a few minutes about how you can share responsibility for the overall running of your group
- ◆ NB If you are going to wash one another's feet next week, come prepared!

Personal Challenge - IF YOU HAVE NOT ALREADY DONE SO, IDENTIFY ONE ACTION THAT YOU WILL DO AS A TEAM-PLAYER WITHIN THE CELL, USING YOUR ABILITIES / RESOURCES TO HELP THE CHURCH DO SOMETHING FOR OTHERS THAT COULD NOT BE DONE BY ONE CHURCH MEMBER ALONE - OR - FOR THOSE ALREADY DOING TOO MUCH - PRAY ABOUT AND DECIDE WHO TO ASK TO SHARE IN SOME OF THE MINISTRIES WHICH WE BELIEVE GOD WANTS US TO DO AS A CHURCH

Servant Ministry Week beginning 16th January

Welcome - Think of a time when you received really excellent service eg. at a shop or garage - tell the story to the group

Worship - Play some quiet music. Read John 13.1-17. Wash one another's feet.

Word - Read Mark 10.35-45

1. If you had been one of the disciples, how might you have been tempted to react to James and John? eg. jealousy, hurt pride, feeling overlooked?
2. Would you agree that our gifts can sometimes be undervalued? under the surface? unfairly categorised? unclaimed?
3. How can someone lead and be a servant at the same time?
4. What is the difference between being a servant and being a doormat?

Witness

- ◆ Continue to pray for friends and each other as last week
- ◆ Make arrangements for social if not already done
- ◆ Are there any practical acts of love and service, which you feel it would be good to do as a group?

Loving Each Other Week beginning 23rd January

Welcome - David Beckham has his wife's name in Hindi tattooed on his arm, his son's name on his back and a guardian angel tattooed between his shoulder blades - signs of love for his family. Share one thing that someone has done for you that has made you feel loved.

Word - Read John 13.31-35

- ◆ How will people know we are Jesus' disciples?
- ◆ How does love show itself in action in the cells and congregations of the Tas Valley. Give as many examples as you can.
- ◆ Read the letter from Julie Watkins. If you were Rev'd Carter, how would you respond? What could the church do to help her with the pressure she is under?
- ◆ List the demands that are made on your time. How do you balance them all? Who controls how you spend your time?

Worship

Thank God for his love shown to you through other people

Then take 4 paper chain links or strips of paper and a pen and pray for 4 people in the Tas Valley group of churches:-

- ◆ Thank God for one close friend and ask God to bless them
- ◆ Pray for one person who you'd like to know better
- ◆ Pray for one person in church who is in need.
- ◆ Pray for one friendship that needs healing.

Write the names of the people on the paper links. You don't have to tell anyone what category they come into. Make your links into a chain and then join it with the others making one long chain for your group.

Witness

- ◆ Continue to pray for friends and each other as last week
- ◆ Make arrangements for social if not already done
- ◆ Is there anyone who needs "love" from your cell this week - a phone-call, a prayer, a visit, a meal or a lift?
- ◆ Did you identify any practical acts of love and service last week, which you feel it would be good to do as a group? If so continue to make plans together