



St Mary's Woodford
Home Group
Study Notes
Ephesians 5:21 - 6:9

Introduction

These notes are meant to be your servant and not your master. The aim of your group meeting should be to understand God better, and to get to know one another better, through your study of the text and discussion.

Background

Verse 5:21, 'Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ' can be seen as the conclusion of the previous section of advice on Christian behaviour - or as an introduction to this section about relationships.

This part of the letter has three sections:

- 5:22-33 husbands and wives. NB v31 echoes Gen 2:24 and Mt 19:5
- 6:1-4 parents and children
- 6:5-9 masters and slaves (the Greek *doulos* can also mean servant)

Starter activity

Read the passage out loud. Divide into three groups: with each of the three groups being allocated one of the three sections to work on for ten minutes.

EITHER:

Each group prepares a short improvised drama which could be used in an All-Age service to illustrate the teaching in their section.

OR:

Each group finds other relevant biblical teaching or examples relevant to its section.

THEN:

After the ten minutes each group presents its work to the other two. Discussion should follow when all three presentations are complete.

Issues and questions

The starter activity may lead you into discussing any of the issues overleaf. Don't try to tackle them all, but do cover those marked with *.

Husbands and wives

- a) According to the Bible, who invented marriage, and what is marriage for? Does the modern world see marriage differently?
- b) Does the Ephesians passage imply that husband and wife have identical responsibilities in a marriage?
- c) * In what way should a wife 'submit' to her husband? If a husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the church, when will he ask her to submit to something that she does not like?
- d) In what ways has the world changed since Paul wrote to the Ephesians, so as to challenge his teaching?

Parents and children

- a) * Is there a difference between 'obey' (v1) and 'honour' (v2)? Does the requirement to obey cease when we become adults?
- b) Is the promise attached to the commandment supernatural, or is it simply a natural consequence to be expected?
- c) What advice would you give new parents on v4?

Masters and slaves

- a) Can we apply this teaching to modern-day employers and employees?
- b) * In what circumstances could it be right to disobey an earthly master?
- c) How does this teaching about 'rewards' fit with what the Bible teaches elsewhere about God's grace which do not deserve?

Suggestions for prayer

EITHER:

Spend some time in open prayer for people in each of these categories.

OR:

Light six candles, inviting people to name (without details) husbands after the first, wives after the second, parents after the third, and so on.

CONCLUDE:

by saying the Lord's Prayer together, in either the old form or the new:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name;

your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever.

Amen.