

Up: developing our relationship with God

discussion guide

based on Ephesians 1.15-23 (Linked to sermon of 11/9/16)

which can be accessed at www.stjamesbythepark.org

These suggestions and questions are only a guide. Feel free to add, chop and amend as is most appropriate for your group!

Dan opened the series on 'developing our church vision'. He explained the triangle of Up (loving God), In (loving each other), and Out (loving our neighbour) relationships involved in Christian discipleship.

Please see the attached handout that Dan gave out after the service which is an excerpt from the vision document the PCC have put together.

1. What are you grateful to God for at the moment?

The heart of Paul's prayer (Ephesians 1.15-23) is that God would give his Spirit so they would know God better (v17)

2. Draw a timeline of your life, showing how well you feel you've known God. Bear in mind what Dan said about 'knowing God' (v17) not referring to an academic knowledge, but a relational experience. On the timeline, draw peaks when you've known God more, and troughs when you've felt further away. If you feel able to, talk people through what you've drawn.

3. The timeline you've drawn is very subjective. Many saints down the ages have realised that it's through times of suffering or struggle that they've come to know God more. Can you relate to that? What events or people have helped you know God more?

4. In v18-19, Paul expands on his prayer of v17. How might knowing the hope of your calling, the glorious inheritance awaiting you and the power at work in you help you know God more?

5. Look at the 6 areas that the PCC (church council) have identified as areas we want to grow in individually and together over the coming years, as part of developing our relationship with God. Get everyone individually to write down which one or two of these six they feel they might be strongest in already (no false humility, please!). Next, get everyone to write down which one or two of these six they feel weakest in.

6. Share your lists with each other. How might you be able to help one another (or other Christians you know) to grow in these ways? (Although remember that what works for you in terms of Bible reading or prayer might not work for everyone else – different personalities and lifestyles often need different approaches.)

7. Knowing God better doesn't just come by our human effort – it comes by God's Spirit at work in us (v17). Would you be willing to commit to praying v17 for each other every day for the next week / fortnight / month? Start praying now!