

## WHITFIELD PARISH

St James' Church † St Luke's Church

### LIFE Group Notes w/b Sunday 2 November 2008

#### God's rest

Hebrews 3 v.7 – 4 v.11

St James' Sunday morning sermons are currently following the topics of Colin's *Priesthood of all believers* course. At St Luke's we are approaching Christmas through the lens of the Old Testament prophet *Isaiah* and the theme of *Jesus the King*. So instead of running a third and different series for LIFE groups, the five studies in November and December will be one-offs written for you by different people. A little different to the usual sermon-then-study format but I pray that you get a lot out of these next five studies. *Terry*

1. What is the most effective way you know to obtain *rest*... this side of Paradise?

God's covenant people were to enjoy rest in the promised land (Josh 1:13). They were to enjoy rest during Solomon's reign (1 Chr 22:7-10).

#### **Read Hebrews 3:7-4:11**

The Old Testament verses quoted are from Psalm 95 which was written 'Today' (3:7) i.e. in King David's day (4:7).

2. Why didn't God's people in Old Testament times fully enter into God's rest, i.e. what went wrong?

#### **Read Matthew 11:28-30**

3. Reading these verses, along with the verses from Heb 3:7-4:11, piece together what it means for God's people today to be in God's rest, and in what sense *rest* refers to the life to come in Paradise.

Stephen in his sermon recorded in Acts 7 speaks of how the Israelites setting out for the Promised Land "*in their hearts turned back to Egypt*".

4. How might we turn back and miss out on God's rest in our lives today?
5. Heb 4:1 speaks of the possibility of people *falling short* of entering God's rest. What does that mean?
6. Heb 4:11 speaks of *making every effort to enter that rest*. Making every **effort** to enter **rest** may sound like a contradiction (... or is it a paradox?). What does the verse mean?
7. How might the concept of God's rest appeal to unchurched people today who we are seeking to reach for Christ?

#### **For early finishers:**

- (i) For centuries, Psalm 95 (the 'Venite') has been said at Morning Prayer each Sunday, even each day in some churches and in cathedrals, in the Church of England. You might like to use it as a way into prayer.
- (ii) To think about: **Jesus is better!** Heb 1&2 *Jesus is better than the angels*. Heb 3 *Jesus is better than Moses*. Heb 4 *The rest Jesus offers is better than the rest provided by the Promised Land*. Heb 5&7 *Jesus' high priesthood is better than the Levitical priesthood*. Heb 8 *The New Covenant over which Jesus presides is better than the Old Covenant*. Heb 9&10 *Jesus' officiates over a better sanctuary than the tabernacle, exercises a better ministry and offers a better sacrifice. Jesus is better!*

**Copies of Philip Hacking's book *Opening up Hebrews (Day One Publications, 2006. £5)* are available on the bookstall at St Luke's.**