

WHITFIELD PARISH

St James' Church † St Luke's Church

LIFE Group Notes w/b Sunday 30 November 2008

Christian Friendship

Romans 16

Sometimes, as we engage with the majestic doctrine of Paul's letters, we can lose sight of the Apostle, and the people he wrote to, as ordinary people like us.

Chapters like Romans 16 give us an insight into something as human and needful as friendship. We all need friends and different people conduct friendships differently. However, Christian friendships, apart from being vital, should have an extra special dimension to them because God himself is involved.

1. Describe one of your long-standing Christian friendships. Why is it special and what have you gained from it?

Read Romans 16

2. Looking at Romans 16 v.1-16, what does this list of 26 people reveal about the way Paul conducted his friendships?
3. What phrases does Paul use to describe his friends? What are some of the ways he gives a sense of dignity to his friends even in a mere greeting?
4. What indications do you see of diversity among the people Paul felt close to?
5. What indications are there of an under-girding unity within that diversity?

6. What do you see in the relationships, implied by Paul's greetings, that you would like to incorporate in your own friendships?
7. Interestingly, 9 out of the 26 people greeted are women. What does Paul commend these women for? What does this say about Paul's attitude to women?
8. A recent survey about why people attend church came up with a surprising result. It was found that friendship was the main reason people continued to attend church. Does that surprise you? Why / why not?
9. Does Christian friendship differ from other friendships?
10. Before your time of prayer, go around your group saying what you appreciate about each other. How does that appreciation encourage you and how does it enhance a sense of friendship?