

## WHITFIELD PARISH

St James' Church † St Luke's Church

### LIFE Group Notes w/b Sunday 4 January 2009

#### *Good News for God's people - Luke 2:21-40*

On behalf of the parish may I wish you a very happy New Year and God's blessing as you serve Him and others as part of His church.

With Christmas passing we are now entering the season we know as Epiphany, which starts on the twelfth day of Christmas – 6 January – and ends on Ash Wednesday, a date affected by the date of Easter. This year it's on 25 February.

Did you know? The celebration of Epiphany, the adoration of the Magi, is marked in some cultures by the exchange of gifts, and Twelfth Night, as the eve or vigil of Epiphany, takes on a similar significance to Christmas Eve.

**A. Start your time together by sharing your experience of receiving a gift and pool ideas of how you could use it – this could be fun.**

Just like today, not all people appreciated the significance of the gift of Jesus but some did and had even been waiting for it.

Our study today helps us see why two people in particular were waiting in anticipation for this gift - the Saviour of the world. **As you read the passage be prepared to answer the question, 'What is the big picture in this story?'**

#### **B. Read Luke 2:21-40**

- a) **What is the big picture in this story?**
- b) **This reading has two 'seniors' involved in welcoming Jesus into the temple in Jerusalem. Who are they, what did they say and what is significant about them?**

- c) **I have used the term 'welcoming', what does this term say to you about how the church responds to newcomers?**
- d) **This passage has the marks of infant baptism - how do you react when you see a child come to baptism or dedication and what does it make you feel like doing?**
- e) **Both these people could shortly be going to their grave. What sort of spiritual state would you expect them to be in as they face the 'eternal future' all Christian believers hold as waiting for them?**
- f) **How does this hope remain steadfast and even develop in a believer?**
- g) **What are your hopes for your eternal future?**

Mary and Joseph not only receive good news and a welcome there is a challenge too.

#### **C. Reread v. 33-35**

- a) **Life on this earth is full of challenges. What is the challenge these verses put before Mary in particular?**
- b) **How would you react if you were told someone you love has to face such painful challenges?**
- c) **What do you think were the specific challenges that Jesus himself would face?**
- d) **Why were they important?**

This passage of scripture leads us to pray for our own faith, for each other and for perseverance and endurance for ourselves and those we love. **PRAY NOW!**