

WHITFIELD PARISH

St James' Church † St Luke's Church

LIFE Group Notes w/b Sunday 1 November 2009

Walk the walk (7)

1. Can and would anyone in your group share about any answers to prayer that they have witnessed in recent weeks or months?

Read James 5:13-20

As we will be thinking about prayer for healing in this study, please be especially sensitive in your group discussions. Most, if not all of us, will have prayed for healing of one kind or another and the *hoped for* healing has not been forthcoming.

Some Bible commentators think that these verses are speaking mainly about healing of medical ailments. Others suggest that they are mainly about being healed from humanity's biggest ailment, sin. The fact that the 'sick' person calls the elders to him/her *might* suggest that he/she is very seriously ill, perhaps (humanly speaking) near death.

Verse 15 could be translated:

And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. (NIV)

OR

The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. (NRSV)

OR

...and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him. (NASV)

2. Carefully going through the passage again, in what ways could it be referring to healing of a medical condition?
3. And in what ways could it be referring to healing of sin, i.e. forgiveness and salvation?
4. According to these verses, what different kinds of prayer does James encourage us to be engaging in?
5. Do elders (i.e. church leaders) have a hotline to God, or special spiritual powers that other Christians don't have? Why does James instruct the sick to '*call the elders of the church*' (v14)?
6. What is the role of repentance and confession in *physical* healing, and why is this a tricky subject pastorally?
7. Some Christians seem reluctant to pray for physical healing in this world but are very happy to pray for *strength to endure* illness. Some Christians are very keen to pray for physical healing in this world, and if the healing is not forthcoming put it down to God having other plans, or that they have not had enough faith. What are the rights and wrongs of both positions?
8. This week we arrive at the end of our Autumn series on James. What have you been most encouraged or challenged by from this letter?

