

Feltham Evangelical Church

A Bible-based church making known the Christian Faith
Newsletter October 2007

Calendar

w/c 30th September

30th 9.30.a.m Lord's Supper
30th 11.00.a.m. Morning Service (Philip Venables)
2nd 5.45.p.m. Lighthouse
3rd 7.30.p.m Prayer / Bible Study
5th 9.30.a.m "Open House"

w/c 7th October

7th 9.30.a.m Lord's Supper
7th 11.00.a.m Morning Service (Philip Venables;
refreshments afterwards)
9th 5.45.p.m. Lighthouse
10th 7.30.p.m. Prayer / Bible Study
12th 9.30.a.m. "Open House"
13th 10.00.a.m. Leaflet Distribution
13th 7.00.p.m. Feltham Bible Focus; Ken Morey

w/c 14th October

14th 9.30.a.m Lord's Supper (Ken Morey)
14th 11.00.a.m Morning Service (Ken Morey)

14th 1.p.m. Lunch
14th 2.p.m. Afternoon Service (Ken Morey)
16th 5.45.p.m. Lighthouse
17th 7.30.p.m Prayer / Bible Study
19th 9.30.a.m "Open House"

w/c 21st October

21st 9.30.a.m Prayer and Praise
21st 11.00.a.m. Morning Service with Lord's Supper
(Philip Venables)
24th 7.30.p.m Prayer / Bible Study
26th 9.30.a.m "Open House"
27th 12.30.p.m. Church Members Agape

w/c 28th October

28th 9.30.a.m Lord's Supper
28th 11.00.a.m. Morning Service (Phil Symes)
30th 5.45.p.m. Lighthouse
31st 7.30.p.m Prayer / Bible Study
2nd (Nov) 9.30.a.m "Open House"

News

Chuks and Chinwe Onwuemena were formally received into the membership of the church on September 16th. We wish them every blessing from the LORD as they commit themselves to the fellowship. Further, they are both presently studying for exams. So let us pray the LORD'S hand upon them for good.

Notes

Feltham Bible Focus continues this month on October 13th when Ken Morey, formerly pastor of the church here, is due to be the preacher.

Fellowship Lunch The visit of Ken Morey with his wife, Bep, coincides with our celebration of harvest. Accordingly, on Sunday October 14th we are planning to have a fellowship lunch together. The lunch will be on a bring-and-share basis. So bring some food or drink and then come and share in this time together.

Harvest If you would like to bring some produce to be displayed in church for harvest then please make sure it is at the church by 9.30.a.m. on 13th October. All the collected provisions will be distributed to the local Age Concern operation. The collection / offering on October 14th will be passed to the Slavic Gospel Association.

Church Members "Agape" On October 14th, if God wills, Philip will have been pastor of the church for three years. In order to show thanks to the church members for their support Philip invites all the members to an "agape" (fellowship lunch) at the church premises on October 27th at 12.30.p.m..

Flowers If you would like to contribute towards the flowers which are displayed in the church then please write your name on the list in the entrance hall and then make sure you pass your money to Trish at the appropriate time.

Elders / deacons The loss of Jerry means that Philip is the sole elder of the church with no deacons. This is not an ideal situation! Let us pray for the Lords' provision of elders and deacons to be provided in the church.

Jerry's possessions There are many of Jerry's possessions which need to be disposed of. Whether it be furniture, crockery, cutlery or whatever, there are many things available. If you are interested in obtaining any of these then please, at a reasonable price, contact Ken Jousiffe, the executor directly on 07816 058548.

Spiritual Notes Is Sex outside marriage wrong?

What a question to ask? This is after all 2007 and we have passed beyond all of those restrictive ways which held us back. And after all what I do in my private life is nobody else's business; just so long as I don't hurt anybody. To which we answer. God's holy standards stand eternal and are always unchangeably up-to-date and He is interested in all the personal affairs of everyone and that includes the bedroom!

God's word is very clear in this realm **Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.** Hebrews 13:4. Sex is for marriage and for marriage alone. Such is the command of God Similarly the seventh command of the ten is **You shall not commit adultery** (Exodus 20:14).

At this point we must define what marriage is. Marriage is the formal commitment between one man and one woman for life. Thus, all sexual activity between those of the same sex and between those “living together” is considered wrong in the sight of God. In fact as we noted in Hebrews 13:4 such activity places the culprits under the judgment of God.

In response to such statements there is a great hue-and-cry from those who live according to the course of this world that we are now free from such binding requirements. But what is true freedom? The answer to such a question is not just crucial in the sexual realm; it has universal implications. God is a God who desires freedom for His special creation, mankind. In John 8:36 the Lord Jesus says **So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed**. Spiritual logic determines that if we are set free we love the one who sets us free. And, our LORD, who sets us free says **“If you love Me, keep My commandments”**. Those who are truly free love God and keep His commandments. In fact this is the essence of true freedom; it is found in obeying our Creator.

Such thinking is totally at odds with that which is around us. The thinking of the world is *“I am free to do what I want as long as it does not hurt anyone”*. Such statements sound very nice, but they reveal a thinking which has completely “lost the plot” as regards to true freedom. The fundamental issue is that man is a creature specially created by God in the image of God. As His creatures we owe everything to our Maker. Accordingly true freedom is found when we do what our maker requires. Failure to do this always leads us away from true freedom and into bondage. So the world promises freedom, but only delivers bondage.

We do not have to look hard to find corroboration of this conclusion. The epidemic of sexually related diseases, the broken relationships, the rebellious children, chaotic family arrangements and unsafe streets are all indicative that the freedom so loudly trumpeted around, leads to bondage. Examine your own life! If you are harbouring sin then you know that all is not well; you know you are not free.

But how wonderful is the contrast. If we have asserted that sex is only for marriage we must similarly and unashamedly assert that sex is for marriage. Sex is truly a gift of God to be enjoyed, celebrated, prayed over and freely participated in by married couples. God is not prudish or shamefaced when it comes to these things. Read the Song of Solomon and see what it is for a man (bridegroom) and a woman (bride) to openly celebrate their attraction to one another.

In fact, we can go a stage further and assert that those who have only engaged in sex outside of the marriage bond have never appreciated the fullness of the experience which sex can be. As always God's way is best. And when His creatures obey His commands then fulfillment and freedom is found. Oh how kind is our Father who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment and that includes sex.

The society around us proclaims that fulfillment comes through lusting and getting. Yet people know in their hearts, if they are honest, that this does not lead to true fulfillment. Rather, true fulfillment comes through hearing and doing God's Word. The image is conveyed by our LORD in Matt 7: 24-25 of how those who do God's Word are building their lives on a solid foundation. These are the people who have fulfilled lives.

If our lives need to be established on the right foundation, as we have shown, then such is also true for our relationships. God has ordained that the physical bonding entailed in engaging in sex is the “icing-on-the-cake” for a relationship. Wholesome human relationships are based around shared fellowship with God and compatibility of character. A couple who have these things and proceed to commit to one another in marriage then enjoy the sealing of their commitment in giving of their bodies to one another in sex.

1 Cor 6:12-18 shows something of the destructive consequences of sexual immorality when this pattern is not followed. **Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body** (v18). Furthermore, the consequences of people building relationships on selfish lust is only too obvious in the society all around us.

For the unmarried, then, keep yourselves from sexual sin and you will know God's blessing. For the married, prayerfully give yourselves to your spouse for the glory of God and you will be blessed. And for those who have gone astray we declare that the great message of the grace of God is that Our God is the God of new starts. For the contrite sinner there is a way back to God from the dark paths of sin. If you have gone astray return and commit your way to the LORD.

We need to remind ourselves at this point, though, that the problem with sexual sin is not just bound up with the act it is also bound up with the heart. Our Lord says **“You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart”** (Matt 5:27-28). So before we start patting ourselves on the back for refraining from shameful sin in the sexual realm let us look into our hearts. To lust in the heart is as sinful as lusting with the body. Let us then watch our hearts lest we sin.

And finally remember God's word is always up-to-date. We need not be defensive or sheepish about God's requirements in the sexual realm. These requirements are right and bring all of the very best to his creatures.

