

Feltham Evangelical Church *Newsletter: January 2009*
A Bible-based church making known the Christian Faith
Calendar

w/c 28th December

28th 9.30.a.m Prayer and Praise
 28th 11.00.a.m. Morning Service (Norman Wells) with Lord's Supper
 28th 11.15.a.m. Sunday School
 3rd 10.30.a.m. Open Air

w/c 4th January

4th 9.30.a.m Lord's Supper
 4th 11.00.a.m. Morning Service (Philip Venables); refreshments afterwards
 4th 11.15.a.m. Sunday School
 4th 6.30.p.m. Prayer Meeting
 5th 7.30.p.m. Prayer Meeting
 6th 9.30.a.m. Prayer Meeting
 6th 5.45.p.m. Lighthouse
 7th 7.30.p.m Prayer / Bible Study
 8th 7.30.p.m. Church Members Meeting
 9th 7.00.a.m. Prayer Meeting
 9th 9.30.a.m "Open House"
 10th 9.00.a.m Prayer Meeting
 10th 10.00.a.m. Leaflet Distribution
 10th 7.00.p.m. Feltham Bible Focus; Bernard Lewis (Tell me about the Holy Spirit).

w/c 11th January

11th 9.30.a.m Lord's Supper
 11th 11.00.a.m. Morning Service (Bernard Lewis)
 11th 11.15.a.m. Sunday School
 11th 1.00.p.m. Fellowship Lunch
 11th 2.00.p.m. Afternoon Service (Bernard Lewis)
 13th 5.45.p.m. Lighthouse
 14th 7.30.p.m Prayer / Bible Study
 16th 9.30.a.m "Open House"

w/c 18th January

18th 9.30.a.m Prayer and Praise (Tim Whitton)
 18th 11.00.a.m. Morning Service (Tim Whitton) including Lord's Supper
 18th 11.15.a.m. Sunday School
 20th 5.45.p.m. Lighthouse
 21st 7.30.p.m Prayer / Bible Study
 23rd 9.30.a.m. "Open House"

w/c 25th January

25th 9.30.a.m Lord's Supper
 25th 11.00.a.m. Morning Service (Philip Venables)
 25th 11.20.a.m. Sunday School
 27th 5.45.p.m. Lighthouse
 28th 7.30.p.m Prayer / Bible Study
 30th 9.30.a.m. "Open House"

News

May Lin Venables is due to have an operation on February 17th to remove one of her kidneys.

Maria and Fabio de Campos returned from Portugal on December 6th. It is great to have them back and we trust God's blessing upon them for future days.

Notes

Recorded Messages from preaching at the church are now available on CD. If you would like to listen again to any message or you missed a message then tell Daniella and she can seek to deal with your request.

Week of Prayer A New Year gives us a new opportunity to seek the presence of our Father as regards to the life of our God in Feltham Evangelical Church. Accordingly the first week of January sees us with extra prayer meetings arranged for us to meet together to pray. Please come to one or more of these meetings if you can. Alternatively, make a point of praying at home for all the people and activities of the church.

Feltham Bible Focus starts its third year on January 10th. Bernard Lewis from UFM (previously known as Unevangelised Fields Mission) is due to be with us on that occasion. He will be speaking about the Holy Spirit under the title; "Tell me about the Holy Spirit".

Fellowship Lunch. The visit by Mr Lewis also coincides with our monthly bring-and-share fellowship lunch. All regulars and visitors to the church are welcome on these occasions. Further, at the afternoon service following the lunch Mr Lewis is due to inform us of the work he is presently involved in.

Leaflet Distribution On January 10th we plan to give out in the locality special leaflets for the new year. Please come and lend a hand if you can. And let us all pray that we might see many coming to find Jesus as Lord and Saviour this year.

Flowers Does anyone want to contribute towards the flowers in the church? If so, please put your name in the church entrance hall next to your chosen date(s) and pass your money to Trish at the appropriate time.

Spiritual Notes *Euthanasia*

"Assisted Suicide", "Living Wills", "Death with Dignity" and "Mercy Killing" are all terms with which are becoming increasingly familiar. Euthanasia is very much an issue which is on the public agenda. The showing on TV on 10th December of the death of Craig Ewert who arranged for his own pre-planned death to be recorded has also brought this issue to our attention. And so how do we as Christians respond to this matter? Many of the arguments for euthanasia seem to be full of compassion. But our authority is not found in feelings, but in scripture.

We must though be clear straight away what we are referring to. Medical progress would now make it

possible for many people to have their lives prolonged after the onset of the processes of death. In such circumstances life, we might say, has become artificial. Where the processes of death are working it is the Christian's duty to alleviate any consequent suffering, but not to artificially prolong life. Allowing someone to die in such a situation is not euthanasia

Rather, euthanasia is when the processes of death are brought into the life of someone unnaturally. Either the person themselves or someone else desires that their life be brought to an end. As a result means are arranged whereby someone can "die well"; which is what euthanasia means. What are we to make of this?

We can very soon "lose the plot" in seeking to evaluate this issue by focusing on the cases where terrible suffering is relieved by a life being taken. In such situations we can soon allow emotions rather than scripture determine our viewpoint. What we must remember is that **God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them** (Gen:1:27). Life is given by God. The implication is that He has full rights over us. He gives life and He takes life. This is underlined by the sixth commandment which says "**You shall not murder** (Ex 20:13). It is wrong for humans to unlawfully take the life of humans. This prohibition includes self-murder. We have no right to take away our own lives. Suicide is wrong.

This hostility of God to the wrongful taking of human life is also seen in the statement of God to Noah in Genesis 9:5b-6: **from each man, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of his fellow man. Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man.** God has stamped His image on mankind. And He is angry when life is wrongly taken.

Whereupon the argument is made that if someone is subject to immense suffering then they are effectively no longer human beings. This merges in with the whole debate about "quality-of-life". Someone might say that my whole life is so afflicted by suffering that I no longer have any quality of life therefore my life should be ended. But who is to be the decider of what is an acceptable quality of life and what is not. Moreover someones mental condition comes into play here. Someone undergoing a bout of depression or severe mental affliction may well say that "enough is enough". However, the passing of the period of melancholy may well leave them well able to bear any physical affliction. Joni Eareckson Tada, the well-known Christian, exemplifies this. Paralyzed as a teenager from her neck down, she would have initially been very happy to bring her life to an end. However, the passing of this period has led on to her living a triumphant life for the glory of God full of faith and good works.

Once the "quality-of-life" argument wins the day, in our attitude to the continuing of life, then we are on a very slippery slope. This is because children, with ulterior motives, can soon decide that dear old Mum has no longer got any quality-of-life as Alzheimer's starts to set in. "Let's save ourselves a lot of money on care fees and end it all for her" they decide. And then others say "Dad's broken leg means he can no longer get around. Life's no good for him. Let's call it a day". And the potential examples go on and on.

The Christian response is completely different. James makes this statement: **Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.** (James 1:27). We care for those who can give nothing back to us. Christians give with no strings attached.

We do need to be aware though of the real issue of suffering. We have a responsibility to make sure that people live well. Scripture urges us **as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers** (Gal.6:10). It is not good enough for us to stand on a spiritual high horse just condemning euthanasia. Rather, we must get off and help alleviate suffering through our own personal involvement, giving of resources and encouraging others particularly those in respite care. Moreover, we should be careful to respect those who are more elderly. Our society tends to dismiss older people. We, as Christians, should rather respect the wisdom of older ones. God says "**Rise in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere your God. I am the LORD**" (Lev.: 19:32).

Finally it is sobering for us to consider where euthanasia emanates from and some of the consequences of this thinking. Two terms that come to mind when we are thinking of artificially shortening the lives of those in physical pain are "survival of the fittest" and "natural selection". And where do those terms come from? They come from the anti-God evolutionary teaching that pervades our society. Hitler got hold of these teachings and started to eliminate the unwanted such as Jews, Gypsies etc. Are we in a society which is also subtly getting hold of these teachings and eliminating our "unwanted" such as the elderly and infirm? We are possibly shocked by such a thought and very possibly we should be!

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