

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

w/c 25th January

25th 9.30.a.m Lord's Supper
 25th 11.00.a.m. Morning Service (Philip Venables)
 25th 11.15.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"

w/c 1st February

1st 9.30.a.m Lord's Supper
 1st 11.00.a.m. Morning Service (Philip Venables);
 refreshments afterwards
 1st 11.15.a.m. Sunday School
 3rd 5.45.p.m. Lighthouse
 4th 7.30.p.m Prayer / Bible Study (Phil Symes)
 6th 9.30.a.m "Open House"
 7th 10.30.a.m Open Air

w/c 8th February

8th 9.30.a.m Lord's Supper
 8th 11.00.a.m. Morning Service (John Lodge)
 8th 11.15.a.m. Sunday School
 8th 1.00.p.m. Fellowship Lunch

8th 2.00.p.m. Afternoon Service (John Lodge)
 10th 9.30.a.m. Prayer Meeting
 10th 5.45.p.m. Lighthouse
 11th 7.30.p.m Prayer / Bible Study
 13th 9.30.a.m "Open House"
 14th 7.00.p.m. Feltham Bible Focus (John Singleton;
 "Lord, teach us to pray.")

w/c 15th February

15th 9.30.a.m Prayer and Praise
 15th 11.00.a.m. Morning Service (David Philpott)
 including Lord's Supper
 15th 11.15.a.m. Sunday School
 18th 7.30.p.m Prayer / Bible Study
 20th 9.30.a.m. "Open House"

w/c 22nd February

22nd 9.30.a.m Lord's Supper
 22nd 11.00.a.m. Morning Service (Graham King)
 22nd 11.15.a.m. Sunday School
 24th 5.45.p.m. Lighthouse
 25th 7.30.p.m Prayer / Bible Study
 27th 9.30.a.m. "Open House"

News

Michael Loosley has had a further time in hospital during January. Happily he is now back home. Pray he might know God's grace during his ongoing weakness.

May Lin Venables is due to have her operation to remove her kidney on February 17th at Charing Cross Hospital. Pray God's merciful hand upon her.

Faustine Murawu has experienced the grief of learning that two close relatives in Zimbabwe have recently died.

Lillian Kerr has also had short spell in hospital. She also continues to experience much weakness.

Notes

Web-site The web-site for the church on the internet has been recently revised. It now has a fresher look. We trust that it would be effective in furthering the Lord's work through the church.

Bible Study We continue our studies in Genesis on Wednesday evenings. We are now moving into studying the life of Joseph. If you are able to come along it would be great to have more of us studying the Word of God together.

Feltham Bible Focus sees John Singleton from Southampton visit us this month to speak on the issue of prayer. This is on February 14th. Plan to be there if you can to learn more of this vital issue.

Extra Prayer In order to provide an extra opportunity for us to gather together in prayer as a church, from this month onwards we are planning to hold a morning prayer meeting on the second Tuesday of the month. Please come along if you can. See calendar for details.

Fellowship Lunch. John Lodge is due to join with us on February 8th to preach the Word and talk about the work of the Middle East Reformed Fellowship. On this day we are due to have lunch together. The lunch is on a bring-and-share basis. Please come and join with us if you can.

Photocopier We now have a new copier. If you would like to use it for personal copying then please feel free. Please reimburse any cost to the church funds.

Spiritual Notes

Should I do the Lottery?

We see more and more gambling in our society. The lottery is the most public manifestation of this. However, the internet, betting shops and scratch cards etc. provide an increasing number of ways through which people can bet. The occurrence of these things confirms that gambling is a legal activity in this country. However, there is a more pressing question which we need to consider: is it right for a Christian to gamble?

Faith or chance?

Do we trust in God or trust in chance? The proper ordering of a Christian's life is seen in Proverbs 3:5-6 **Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.** Some say that they can seek to escape from poverty by taking their chance on the lottery. But God says that whether we are rich or poor, in easy times or tough times we must trust God to care for us. Peter reminds us that we should **cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you** (1 Pet.5:7). Let us then trust in God, but not in the “numbers”.

God provides

At this point someone might say that I commit my “numbers” to the Lord and look to Him to provide through that. The response to that is that God's providing for us is never on the basis of chance. **The worker deserves his wages** (Luke 10:7) is fundamental principle of God's providing. Resources can also be provided through inheritance (see Luke 15:12) and the sharing of others whether that be individuals or government. But never does scripture countenance that we can gain financially from speculating money which in the vast majority of cases brings no return.

What about casting lots then?

To this we reply that the casting of lots in scripture had nothing to do with procuring financial benefit. Rather, it has to do with decision making which is a completely different issue.

Stewardship

At this point we must pick up the issue of how we look after our money. We need to remember that all that we have has been given to us by God. Paul draws on this principle when he says to the Corinthians: **What do you have that you did not receive?** (1 Cor 4:7b). Our money is given to us by God and we are to use it all for His glory. Teaching about a wise use of the resources God has been given us, by our LORD, in the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30. In this passage we are taught that we will give account to Him for how we have used all that He has given to us such as time, money and gifts. Incidentally, the passage teaches us the legitimacy of investing our money where a return is guaranteed (see Matt. 24:27).

Gambling is totally contradictory to wise stewardship because in it we use our resources irresponsibly. When you look at the likelihood of winning a substantial amount of money through gambling (especially with the lottery) you see that it is financial madness. Which leads us to ponder on the old adage: have you ever seen a poor bookmaker?!?!

Fulfillment

Participation in gambling reveals the emptiness of so many lives. The lie is sown in peoples minds that the “jackpot” will cure all their misery and transform a life of drudgery to a life of happiness. And yet the fact is that many lives have actually been ruined by “the big win”. Rather, to pick up Paul's words, godliness is the key to a fulfilled life. He says in 1 Tim 6:6-10 **But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.** Living for God and not living for possessions is the key to fulfillment.

This passage from 1 Timothy 6, though, takes us further and indicates to us how destructive gambling can be. It is not some inconsequential pastime. It is one of those ways by which people want to get rich quickly. And so it can lead to ruin and destruction. Not only is persistent gambling an indication of a Christless hell-bound life, it is the cause of devastating consequences in this life. A brief awareness of the terrible consequences of gambling addiction can be seen by considering some of the cases handled by the self-help group; Gamblers Anonymous.

So let us seek for God and not for the lottery. What we class as gambling has to be left to each of our consciences before God. Does it start with draw tickets, raffles and tombolas etc.? As regards to this let each be persuaded in his own mind. However, let us not deceive ourselves gambling is not a Christlike activity and we need to be careful.