

Feltham Evangelical Church *Newsletter: July 2009*

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A Bible-based church making known the Christian Faith

Calendar

w/c 28th June

28th 9.30.a.m. Lord's Supper (Peter Court)
28th 11.00.a.m. Morning Service (Philip Venables)
28th 11.15.a.m. Sunday School
30th 5.45.p.m. Lighthouse
1st 7.30.p.m. Prayer / Bible Study
3rd 9.30.a.m. Open House
4th 10.30.a.m. Open Air

w/c 5th July

5th 9.30.a.m. Lord's Supper
5th 11.00.a.m. Morning Service (Philip Venables);
refreshments afterwards
5th 11.15.a.m. Sunday School
7th 5.45.p.m. Lighthouse
8th 7.30.p.m. Prayer / Bible Study
10th 9.30.a.m. "Open House"
11th 7.00.p.m. Feltham Bible Focus (Daniel Webber;
Loved with Everlasting Love)

w/c 12th July

12th 9.30.a.m. Lord's Supper
12th 11.00.a.m. Morning Service (Daniel Webber)
12th 11.15.a.m. Sunday School

12th 1.00.p.m. Fellowship Lunch
12th 2.00.p.m. Afternoon Service (Daniel Webber)
14th 9.30.a.m. Prayer Meeting
14th 5.45.p.m. Lighthouse (Parent's Evening)
15th 7.30.p.m. Prayer / Bible Study (Malcolm Evans)
17th 9.30.a.m. "Open House"

w/c 19th July

19th 9.30.a.m. Prayer and Praise
19th 11.00.a.m. Morning Service (Philip Venables)
including Lord's Supper
19th 11.15.a.m. Sunday School
21st 5.45.p.m. Lighthouse
22nd 7.30.p.m. Prayer / Bible Study
24th 9.30.a.m. "Open House"

w/c 26th July

26th 9.30.a.m. Lord's Supper (Paul Loosemore)
26th 11.00.a.m. Morning Service (Philip Venables)
26th 11.15.a.m. Sunday School
29th 7.30.p.m. Prayer / Bible Study
31st 9.30.a.m. "Open House"
1st (August) 10.30.a.m. Open Air

News

Lillian Kerr is presently being cared for in Abbeychase Nursing Home in Chertsey.

Notes

Open Air On the first Saturday morning of the month we continue to take our stand for our God in the town centre. Through preaching, personal conversations and leaflets we long that people would hear of the love of God in Christ Jesus. Pray that these times would be effective for the Lord's glory. Come along and support if you can.

Feltham Bible Focus Daniel Webber, Director of the European Missionary Fellowship (EMF), is due to be with us on July 11th. His subject, Loved with everlasting love, focuses on God's great interest in His people. Let us pray that we will all be affected by God's great love as we hear of these things together.

Fellowship Lunch Mr Webber is also due to be with us on the following day, July 12th. On that day we plan to have a fellowship lunch together. This is to be on a bring-and-share basis. Please note that in the afternoon Mr Webber will tell us something about the work of EMF.

Lighthouse Another year of Lighthouse is due to draw to a close on July 21st. On July 14th the end of year parent's evening is due to take place. Pray for God's hand on this occasion. Also pray God's continued workings through this ministry.

Spiritual Notes *Family and faith*

Fred Cundick was a Christian man and he passed away to be with his LORD in heaven in 1975. When Mr Cundick was nearing death he said to his son, Allan, a fellow-Christian, "... *the eternal bond is strong enough*". In saying this he was asserting that spiritual relationships are stronger than physical relationships. This statement by Mr Cundick follows the emphasis of our LORD when a multitude said to Him "**Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you.**" "**Who are my mother and my brothers?**" he asked. Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "**Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother**" (Mark 3:32b-35). We have to be clear here that Jesus is not denying his physical relationship with Mary and his brothers; he is not even denying that they might have true spiritual relationship to him. What he is claiming though is that to have spiritual relationship, which is demonstrated through obedience to God's Word, is to have a superior and stronger relationship with Himself.

This has implications for how we view the situation as it relates to our families and faith in Christ. There

are three issues we need to focus upon. They are priority, responsibility and fellowship.

Priority. True faith always puts God first. We put God first because it is logical to do so, but also because we love to do so. There are intellectual reasons and emotional reasons. When we reason it out we always conclude that God is the One who has ultimate claims upon our lives. He is the one who has created us; He is the One who has redeemed us. This is summed up by Paul when he says to the Corinthians **You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body** (1 Cor. 6:19b-20). In fact, God should be honoured with our whole beings; that is God's reasonable claim upon us.

However, as Christians, we do not grudgingly give Him the first place. Rather there is a passion which drives us to prioritize Him in our lives. We want him to have the pre-eminence because he loves us so much. John puts it like this when he says: **This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins** (1 John 4:10). His love for us, expressed most deeply at Calvary, compels us to give Him the pre-eminence.

This whole teaching is summed up in the words of our Saviour in Luke 14:26-27. **If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.** We can easily mis-interpret the words of our LORD here. Essentially He is saying that our love for Christ should be so overwhelming that every other loving relationship is as hatred in comparison. This interpretation must be true otherwise his statement is a flagrant contradiction of the Holy Spirit's call for husbands to love their wives (see Eph. 5:25), and this can never be..

Responsibility. Having stated what we have concerning right priorities one of the key ways in which we demonstrate our priorities is in how we treat our families. Paul says **If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever** (1 Tim 5:8). The sixth commandment is **Honor your father and your mother** (Ex.20:12a). And for the Colossian congregation there are these words: **Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them. Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged** (Col 3: 18-21).

Our passion for Christ then is to be worked out in the relationships that God has set us in in the family. To neglect these relationships out of a professed commitment to Christ is a denial of that profession. Moreover it is only when we have Christ as King in our lives and we are truly working out the implications of Him being LORD that we inject into our families that which is good and wholesome. Self-sacrificing living benefits our families. And this kind of lifestyle is only found when Christ is the overwhelming passion and priority of our lives.

Fellowship. Nevertheless we must assert that the Christian ultimately has a stronger relationship with others in the family of faith than they do with their natural family. Paul says to the Corinthians **Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?** (2 Cor. 6:14). If we have non-Christians in our families then they are in darkness. However, along with our fellow Christians in the church we are children of light. We have fellowship on a spiritual and eternal basis and so that is far stronger. Our bonding with fellow Christians is then ultimately nothing to do with natural ties. Rather it is everything to do with us being “in Christ” together.

So we ask the question why is it that we are not closer to our fellow Christians in the church. The answer to this question surely focuses on how much each of us is knowing Christ in our lives. The more we are passionately following Him then the more we are drawn to others who are passionately following Him. Contrariwise, when we are on fire for the LORD then we sense the coldness of a non-Christian environment even when that includes our parents, children and other nearest and dearest.

Let us remember then that “eternal bonds are stronger”. It is such a privilege to have those eternal bonds. We are a blessed people. So let us make Christ our priority, let us fulfill our responsibilities and enjoy fellowship with one another. And thereby may all be for the glory of our God.

