

## ***Discipleship – Summer 2012 – Week beginning 23<sup>rd</sup> July***

### **Home group / study notes: Lost and found**

*Feel free to use as much or as little as you wish. Don't rush the discussions in order to 'finish' the study, and make sure you allow time for prayer.*

Can you describe a time when you felt further away from God than you do now, for whatever reason? What helped draw you back? Was it a difficult process?

**Quick look** at some possible causes of alienation from God:

Luke 18:22-23 Be honest: for what things or people would you be very tempted to denounce your faith? (*Remember this is not a confession of total failure: read verses 26-27*)

James 1: 12-15 In what areas of life are we liable to blur distinctions between right and wrong? Times when what was 'grey' is now seen as 'white'? (*Particularly personally*)

Romans 14:10-13 In what ways can we put obstacles in the way of others' faith? Especially with a critical spirit?

Luke 8:6-7 How can we best ensure we have deep roots and strong growth?

**Read** Luke 15:1-7

- To whom is the parable addressed?
- With whom is the hearer meant to identify?

*Cultural note: we assume this (large) flock is owned by an extended family between them in a village setting. One of the family is looking after the sheep.*

- Where were the 99 left? (We'll come back to this)
- Where was the found sheep taken?

In what ways might we seek those who have strayed away in ways we saw earlier? In what ways are we prepared to put ourselves out for them – to carry a burden on our shoulders? How might we learn to carry it joyfully?

Going back to the 99... are they brought home?

In what ways might Christians (like the Pharisees?) sometimes *assume* they are 'righteous people who do not need to repent'? In what ways might we actually be in the wilderness?

'In the same way' (verse 7) likens God being on the lookout for those who have wandered off, with the shepherd rescuing a sheep. He bears the burden joyfully (*overtones of the cross?*). Which comes first, God's grace in seeking or a person's repentance? What does this actually say about repentance (= *change of mind*)?

**Read** Luke 15:8-10 *Note:*

- *The coins may be worn like a necklace which has broken*
- *The owner **knows** the coin must be somewhere in the house and can be found*

How diligent are we in our seeking for the lost? What constitutes 'too much expenditure' of time or money, and how should we decide (*especially as a church*). Do we rejoice enough, and over the right things?

#### **Prayer time**

1) One person **Read Luke 5:17-26** really slowly. Put yourself in the scene.

2) The same person reads the passage again – slowly. Ask God to let one word or phrase or idea stick in your mind. This will be different for different people. Sometime's God's voice is still and small but persistent and can be surprising.

3) Spend a time in quiet, praying over the word, phrase or idea you think God may be giving to you.

4) Only if you want to, share it with the group or a friend. But most importantly, take it away with you and continue to ask God to speak to you about whatever it is.

*NB It won't always be significant! God may just want you to relax and hear the passage. But try to let it at least refresh you to want to hear him more through the Bible. Sometimes what seems insignificant to you might be meant for someone else.*