

## Home group notes - w/b 6<sup>th</sup> Jan 2014 - Epiphanies

*Use as much or as little as you wish. Do not rush through to answer all the questions; if you spend the time on just one area, that's fine.*

**Share** the ways in which God has revealed himself to you in the past. How do you find out what his will is for 2014?

*'Christianity is a revealed faith. It is not something which can be deduced by logic or observed from the natural world'. Do you agree with this?*

*'Epiphany' means a manifestation of God; God revealing truths about himself.*

**Read** Matthew 2:1-12. Notice that several things come into play. Can you distinguish all of these?:

- A clue in the natural world
- Wisdom to interpret that clue
- Knowledge of the political system – ie where is there a king?
- Science to be able to discern and follow something in the sky
- Experts in Bible knowledge and prophecies
- Financial means?
- Dreams and the ability to discern God in them (*Do you ever do so??*)
- Modest civil disobedience? Were they scared as they went home?

Then - who chose the gifts? How and why? There don't seem to be any cultures where myrrh is a suitable gift for a child.

This seems to be a great example of how God interacts with faithful people (*were the wise men Jews? Probably not, or they could have had advisors to look up the prophecies...*), using human wisdom and intellect to reveal himself, while being fully aware also of the power of evil / fallen human nature.

How should we react when someone says 'God has told me...'?

**Read** Matthew 2:13-23. What do you think of these incidents? *What or who gave Matthew the insights into prophetic verses he quotes? Who told him about these events? Why did the other gospel writers not know or not include them?*

### **How about other epiphanies?**

If there is time think what these events add to our knowledge from God. Read:

Matthew 3: 11-12; 16-17

Matthew 4:1-4

Matthew 11:25-30

Matthew 17:1-9

*Pray: for each other; for things which have come up in the study; for specific needs or anxieties about the future or about faith. Ask God to give you the necessary faith / wisdom / knowledge to experience his epiphanies to you.*