

Home group notes - w/b 27th April 2014 – The Emmaus Road

Use as much or as little as you wish. Allow time tonight for the prayer even if you cut short some of the study.

Read Luke 24:13-16 Do you think there is ever a purpose in God keeping people from recognising him straight away? (In v16 their eyes were 'being kept' from recognising him). Wouldn't it have been quicker and easier if Jesus had declared himself immediately to save the disciples the journey to Emmaus and back? Can you describe any times when you needed time and space to discover things in your faith?

Read Lk 24:17-19a So the stranger engages with them. Finds out what they were thinking. How might we engage more meaningfully with those we meet? Notice how Jesus isn't trying to pigeonhole the people... compare with how we often start conversations with people! What could we learn?

Who were the disciples? Is Cleopas the same as Clopas in John 19:25? If so, might the two be husband and wife? [The historian, Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea (around 300AD), quotes the earlier chronicler, Hegesippus, who wrote, c. AD 180, that he had years before interviewed the grandsons of Jude the Apostle and learned that Cleopas was the brother of Joseph, husband of the Virgin Mary: "After the martyrdom of James, it was unanimously decided that Simeon, son of Cleopas, was worthy to occupy the see of Jerusalem. He was, it is said, a cousin of the Saviour." Hegesippus apparently noted that Cleopas was a brother of Joseph – but this is all speculative... and heavily bishop-centric!]

Read Lk 24:19b – 24 How would you describe the state of mind of the two disciples? What were their expectations of Jesus, and what did they make of the account of the resurrection? *Very few of us has a fully worked-out, consistent faith. Many lives have been devoted to working out the true doctrines taught in the Bible... and still there are disagreements among sincere Christians. So take heart! 'Lo, Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb...' If you could have two things explained to you by Jesus today, what would they be?*

Read Lk 24:25 – 29 How slow to understand the background from which they come! Given that people today normally have very little knowledge of the Christian faith, what do they have which you could use to lead them towards Christ? *Spirituality is widely acknowledged; some things are still seen as miracles; someone is often regarded as being there to look after them... could you put content into any of these?*

Read Lk 24: 30-32 What are the four actions of Jesus? Compare with Lk 22:19. From the earliest times the church has shared in the Lord's supper (1 Cor 11 – but don't get diverted onto a study of this). The gospel accounts were written after most of St Paul's letters, so readers/hearers would immediately make this connection. Do you find Communion helpful for recognising Jesus, or is it now too remote or stylised? What happened to Jesus as soon as they had recognised him? Any ideas why? Is there something here about having to stand on our own two feet as far as faith is concerned, once we have been converted or met with Jesus in a real way?

Notice how the disciples then reinterpret the journey they had just been on... all seen in a new light. Does that ring any bells with you? Or with anyone you thought about in the previous section?

Read Lk 24:33-35 What were their chief desires once they were convinced? Are they still valid tests of a living faith?

Use these and the following next verses as a prayer, Lectio Divina style: *Read Lk 24:33 – 45 slowly, twice over (deliberately not breaking after v35). While you are listening, put yourself into the room with the disciples and friends, and ask God to give you one or two thoughts, words or phrases which stick in your mind or you might act on. Take these away with you to ponder. You don't have to share them but you can if you want to. Sometimes they are too personal so respect this in your group.*

Next week – we start a new series of Geoff's studies on finding God in different circumstances.