

A community that cares - study 5

Reading - Matthew 25: 31 – 46

We all as individuals want to be seen as someone who cares, and we want to belong to a church which is caring, and importantly, demonstrating that care.

In what ways would you say St James church (as a church) demonstrates that it cares for the surrounding community?

Does the community think the church cares?



Matthew has arranged this parable in his gospel as the final in a series of five parables (beginning Matt. 24), delivered as private teaching to his disciples (see Matt 24: 3). Jesus uses sheep and goats in this story because the disciples would be familiar with sheep and goats grazing together, but each night the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats (even today middle eastern goats are less hardy than sheep, less able to withstand cold temperatures).

Read Matthew 25: 31 - 46

1. If you were tasked to update the list of good deeds for relevance to today's modern audience,

1a Would you omit anything in the list?

1b. What would you deem important to add?

1c. Would you need to change your answers in any way if today's modern audience comprised only families with young/teenage children?

2. Continuing the analogy of community comprising sheep and goats, and rather than thinking of goats as being less hardy, we should perhaps see them as needing extra support, extra care and understanding to get them through the night. Using the list of updated good deeds your group produced answering questions 1a + 1b, take each good deed individually and ask

2a. Is there anything the church can/should do to provide the extra support/care/understanding? Perhaps the church is already doing this?

2b. Is there anything on the list that your group (as a group) feel moved to do? If so, what's stopping you?

3. The parable of the sheep and goats is clearly also about final judgement, and in this parable, those who are condemned are those who have failed to respond with love and support to those in need.

3a. With a myriad of distractions and numerous commitments affecting us all, talk through how we should respond to this teaching?