



In response to God's generosity and immense love for us, we seek to be God's people in sharing the good news of Jesus, growing in faith, being with people in need, challenging injustice and respecting God's creation. John 10.10; Luke 4.18; Matt 25. 33-40, 28. 19-20

For the next ten weeks we will unpack the vision of the church concentrating on the following three themes: **Encountering** God, **Growing** as followers of Jesus and **Participating** in the life of the Spirit.

Read **Isaiah 49.1-7**

In Isaiah, we hear about the calling of Israel to display God's splendour. Remember that Israel was the name of an individual before it became a national name. The call to Israel was always to express God's salvation.

- In the passage, find elements of that salvation, God's intention for the world.
- How do we carry God's intention for his World today as Christians?

With the nation of Israel failing to accomplish that, God sent his true Servant, the one who will fulfil Israel's calling.

Read **1 Corinthians 1.1-9**

Here also we hear about calling: (Paul's calling and the calling of the Corinthians which also represent our own calling as St James church.

- Note the calling of Paul and the church (v 1,2,9)
- Note the equipping (v 5,7,8)

The last verse speaks of being called into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ. Encountering God is the first theme of our church vision:

- Share with each other some of the ways you encounter God (spend time with him, become aware of his presence) during your week

Not only are we called into fellowship with God himself, we are also called to be his holy people (v2). To be a holy people basically means to be set aside for a purpose.

Read the following quote from Robert Warren (developing healthy churches)

We need to sharpen our perception to identify what we are about – Church today needs to be clear about its core vocation/calling and avoid getting distracted in to other matters, however attractive and enticing.

- Discuss how the mission statement (top of the page) and the three themes can help us focus on what our calling is.
- Are there activities/events/services we should be revisiting or stopping?
- How do you see your place at St James?

Start praying for the life of the church at St James and end with the following prayer

Heavenly Father, increase in number your Church at St James as you deepen us as followers and learners of Christ. We ask for your Holy Spirit to guide us into the future. Help us to show uninhibited reliance on your grace and power as we seek renewal of our lives, our church, our community and our world.

Give us courage, imagination and generosity in order that your kingdom may come and your abundant life be known by all. We make this prayer in the name of you Son Jesus Christ.

NB. Please send any helpful feedback to the vicar. You might also have received a picture or an idea while praying, please share that with the group and, if relative to our journey, with the vicar.