

WITNESS – Reaching out to others (Aim for 20 – 30 minutes)

Heavenly Father we take upon ourselves the mantle of authority that Jesus delegates to us and in His name we speak to every household in Hungerford and say to you:-

1 Relationships

We bless you in the Name of the Lord. We bless your marriages that they may be strong and whole. We bless the relationship between each marriage partner that it may be loving, forgiving, merciful and strong. We bless every intergenerational relationship within each household that there may be peace and love and understanding flowing between each one. In Jesus' name we bless every network of wholesome and supportive friendship.

2 Health

We bless your health that you may be strong and well. In Jesus' name we resist any sickness or disease which seeks to invade this parish and to every person in the parish we say, be well, be strong, be healthy. To any who are sick right now we say we bless you in Jesus' name with a speedy recovery.

3 Wealth

We bless your wealth that you may have plenty to replace poverty. We bless you to have enough to live and enough to give. We bless the work of your hands that whatever you turn your hand to which is wholesome may be profitable. We bless every wholesome enterprise that is conducted by you that it may prosper and be successful. We bless the local businesses that they may be successful and profitable.

4 Education

We bless the local schools that they may be secure, safe places for teachers and pupils alike. We bless the children's capacity to learn and develop relationships and we bless their simple trust in Jesus that their trust may grow and become enriched.

5 Church

We speak to the Church and we say we bless you in the Name of the Lord that the Holy Spirit and the Word of God may flow out from you in power. We bless the hearts of all who live in the parish that they may be quickened to hear and respond to the Voice of the Living God. We bless all who live and work here, that the overspill of the blessings of the presence of the kingdom of God may fall upon you. **Amen**

Children, Parents, Slaves, Masters

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Ephesians 6:1–9

Purpose:

To discover how Paul's discussion of parents and children and masters and slaves contributes to his theme of glorifying God through our unity.

WELCOME (Aim for 10 minutes)

How would you characterize the relationship you have had with your parents?

WORSHIP – Meeting the Lord (Aim for 10 – 15 minutes)

What has been the best thing that has happened since our last meeting?

OR

When have you felt closest to God since our last meeting?

Pray your “thank you” to God

WORD (Aim for 40—45 minutes)

How much our parents mean to us—yet how difficult they can be! How much we love our children—yet how exasperating they are at times! In nine packed verses Paul not only delves into these important relationships but those of the work world as well.

1. Read Ephesians 6:1-9. How does this passage continue the theme of mutual submission begun in 5:21?

2. What reasons are given for obeying and honoring parents (vv. 1–3)?

Explain your understanding of the promise given to those who honor their parents.

3. What are some practical ways you can obey or honor your parents?

4. How can fathers (and mothers) exasperate their children (6:4)? Why does Paul contrast exasperating children with bringing “them up in the training and instruction of the Lord” (6:4)?

5. John Stott writes, “The instruction to children to obey their parents presupposes ... parental authority. Yet when Paul outlines how parents should behave towards their children, it is not the exercise, but the restraint, of their authority which he urges upon

them.” [John Stott, *The Message of Ephesians* InterVarsity Press, 1979] If you are a parent, what can you do this week to follow verse 4 more closely? If you are not a parent, how can you put verse 4 into action as you relate to the children in church?

6. What is implied about the way slaves normally worked for their masters (vv. 5–8)? How and why were Christian slaves to be different?

7. How could the principles Paul considers in 6:5–8 be lived out in situations you have been in or are in?

8. Paul says masters should treat slaves the way he wants slaves to treat masters because both have the same Master in heaven. Why should this make a difference in how slaves are treated?

9. What implications does this have for how employers treat employees?

10. How does 6:1–9 contribute to the theme of the church glorifying God through visible unity?

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