

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**

We Are One **Ephesians 2:11–22**

4

Purpose: To see that Christ's death not only reconciled us to God but also to each other, and to consider the implications of this.

WELCOME (Aim for 10 minutes)

When you disagree with somebody, do you go quiet or fight it out?

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)

Many of us have sung, “We are one in the Spirit; we are one in the Lord.” But we also continue to find ourselves at odds with Christians who believe or live differently than we do. Such problems were just as common in Paul’s day as in ours.

1. Read Ephesians 2:11–22. Paul uses vivid imagery in this passage. What are some of these images?

What are they intended to communicate?

2. What name-calling do Christians engage in today—perhaps even using biblical terms?

3. Besides some superficial differences between Jews and Gentiles, there were also some very real divisions. What are some of the things that divided Gentiles from Jews (v. 12)?

4. How does the bond we have in the blood (death) of Christ supersede all that divides us from other Christians (v. 13)?

5. According to 2:14–18, what two reconciliations does Christ achieve?

How are they related?

6. There was a literal “dividing wall of hostility” (2:14) in Jerusalem. The Court of the Gentiles was separated from the Temple proper by a stone wall. This wall had a sign on it forbidding entrance to any foreigner on pain of death. Paul says Christ destroyed this barrier “by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations” (2:15). In what sense did the cross abolish the law?

What rules and requirements do we enforce which might hinder people from coming into the kingdom?

7. We still see divisions among Christians today even though Christ himself is our peace (vv. 14–18). How can those who are united in Christ still be divided?

8. How is the reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles to each other and to God (2:11–22) one fulfillment of God’s will and purpose in Christ (1:9–10)?

What practical first step toward unity can you take in the next week with Christians you differ with?

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