

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**

Wives and Husbands

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Ephesians 5:21–33

Purpose:

To consider how the relationship between Christ and the church can be a model for wives and husbands. Hang onto your hats; there's a good chance this will be your most controversial study. But don't be afraid of controversy itself or of strong differences of opinion. Try to present an atmosphere of openness and willingness to hear all sides. However, don't be afraid to ask people to root their contentions in the passage. Your purpose is to see what Paul says here and not to bring in a myriad of outside resources and opinions. You may want to remind everyone before you start to stick to the passage!

WELCOME (Aim for 10 minutes)

What has someone else done for you that has made you feel loved?

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)

A lot of emotion and misunderstanding surrounds the word *submit*. So try to come to this text as if you had never seen it before. Try to set aside your own biases and see what Paul really has to say on the subject of submission.

1. Read Ephesians 5:21–33. How does verse 21 preview this passage?
2. Paul says wives are to submit to their husbands as to the Lord (v. 22). What does it mean to submit to the Lord?
3. Why is the church's submission to the Lord a helpful illustration of a wife's submission to her husband?
4. If you are a wife, how could your submission to your husband grow more like your submission to Christ?

As a Christian, how can you grow in your submission to Christ?

5. Does submission mean putting your mind in neutral? Explain.
6. In verse 25 Paul instructs husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the church. How has Christ shown his love for the church?
7. The word *love* in 5:25 and 28 is used to translate the Greek word *agapa*, meaning totally unselfish, sacrificial love. How are husbands to show love for their wives (vv. 25–30)?
8. If you are a husband, how could your love for your wife grow more like Christ's love for the church?
9. Why do you think Paul calls on wives to *respect* their husbands while he calls on husbands to *love* their wives (v. 33)?

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