

## **A Bible Study series on Vision and Mission**

During this year as a Parish we will be forming a **Mission Action Plan**. It will involve special meetings and occasions and a process of listening to God and to each other. Looking at our parish and neighbours we will try to discern the needs and challenges of the age in which we live.

In our Home Groups we will look at a large number of Bible passages describing the missions given to groups and individuals in history. We will try to understand them and see how they can help us to understand and establish our own mission and calling.

We will ask ourselves the same questions in each case and try to establish the rich teaching of scripture which describes the way God raised up and inspired men and women to serve him in their own time. I hope we will find inspiration for our own mission and that of our Church.

I hope that group leaders will note down and report their findings and opinions and so feed them into the decision making process of the church.

In the studies I have alternated Old Testament and New Testament passages so as to balance the teaching. I have not selected them in order to lead to a preconceived conclusion and I would be very happy for groups to study other texts if they think they have something to offer, or to change the order in which they approach the chosen passages if they wish.

As there are 28 studies this will be a long series but it will take us to some favourite Bible passages and, I hope, throw new light on them. It will be important for the leaders to keep things fresh and interesting -- creative use of the Welcome and Worship will help.

*Stephen Leeke*

### **Bible Passage for each week:**

1. **Adam & Eve's Task.** Genesis 1 v26-31, 2 v15-25, 3 v20-24.
2. **Jesus' Great Commission.** Matthew 28 v1-20.
3. **God's Covenant with Noah.** Genesis 8 v20 – 9 v17.
4. **Paul's Ambition.** Romans 1 v1-6 & 15 v13-21, (esp. v16).
5. **God's Promise to Abraham.** Genesis 12 v1-9.
6. **The Macedonian's invitation.** Acts 16 v1-15.
7. **Moses' Calling.** Exodus 3 v1 – 4 v18.
8. **The Saviour's Suffering.** John 12 v23 – 33.
9. **The Law – 10 Commandments.** Exodus 19 v16 – 20 v21.
10. **Our Lord's Summary of the Law.** Matthew 22 v34-40.
11. **Isaiah's Initiation & Prophecy.** Isaiah 6 v1-13 & 61 v1-11.
12. **Christ's Teaching – The Beatitudes.** Matthew 5 v1-16.
13. **David's Desire.** 2 Samuel 7 v1-17 & 1 Chronicles 22 v1-19.
14. **Mary's Vocation.** Luke 1 v26-56.
15. **Elijah's 'Gentle Whisper.'** 1 Kings 19 v1-18.
16. **The Life of John the Baptist.** Luke 1 v11-17, and Matt 3 v1-10 & 14 v6-12.
17. **Hosea's Experience.** Hosea 1 v2-11 & 3 v1-5.
18. **Paul's Exhortations.** Ephesians 4 v1-6, 1 Timothy 6 v11-16.
19. **Nehemiah's Project.** Nehemiah 1v1 – 2 v9.
20. **Peter's Description of the Church.** 1 Peter 1 v24 – 2v12.
21. **Jonah's Mission.** Jonah 1 v1-12 & 3 v1-6.
22. **Mary Magdalene's Message.** John 20 v1-18.
23. **Jeremiah's Advice.** Jeremiah 29 v1-14.
24. **Called in weakness.** 1 Corinthians 1 v20 – 2v5.
25. **Daniel's Example.** Daniel 1 v14-28 & 6 v1-28.
26. **Life in the Early Church.** Acts 2 v1-6 & 38-47.
27. **Ezekiel's Vision.** Ezekiel 36 v24-28 & 37 v1-10.
28. **John's Vision of Heaven.** Revelation 7 v9-17.

## Each week:

**Welcome** members with a question about the people they know or meet, the things in the news, the problems people face or the signs of faith or apathy we see. It could be a thought provoking newspaper article, a quote from a book or TV, an example from work or family, or even something from Sunday's Service. Ideally it should help to relate members lives and experiences to the issues which are likely to come up in the study.

**Worship:** Pray about the needs of members, any discoveries made in the Welcome, and the needs of the church. If significant issues have arisen in the discussion pray about them. Ask for open minds, guidance and insight from the Holy Spirit.

**Word:** Review last week's discoveries. Read the passage given and apply *some* of the questions below, as appropriate, each week. Allow discussions to develop and make sure suggestions are practicable, noted and respected.

**Wonder:** It may help to have a period of silence. Not too short. Occasionally it could be interspersed with unanswered questions like: 'I wonder what it felt like for ...' 'Would I have been able to ...' 'What do you want us to do, God?' On other occasions a phrase or two from the reading could be read slowly for meditation.

**Witness:** Ask members to think of ways they can apply the things they have learnt. Be direct, practical and down-to-earth.

**Work:** What specific **action** can they recommend, take or plan?

**Write:** Is there something arising from your discussions that should be communicated to the church leadership as we develop our Mission Action Plan?

## Questions:

1. **Describe the mission or purpose in this Bible passage?** Note the different words I've used in the titles to describe a 'mission.'
2. **Who gave it, in what circumstances, with what priority?**
3. **Who was to undertake it and did it matter?**  
**Did they do it?**
4. **Who accepted it and when? Was there opposition?**  
**Were there 'alternative' courses which could have been chosen?**
5. **Who would benefit from it and how? Would anyone suffer?**
6. **What resources were needed? Were they provided? How?**
7. **What was the time scale for the mission? Was there an endpoint?**  
**How will they know when it is achieved?**
8. **Which contemporary factors influenced the mission? How?**
9. **How does this example compare with others you have studied?**  
**Is there anything new or unique in this one?**  
**What excites you in this study?**
10. **What can you as an *individual* learn from this example of a mission?**  
**How will you apply it? Is God challenging to you?**
11. **What can *your group* learn and apply?**  
**Is God teaching you something (positive or negative)?**
12. **What can we as a *Church* learn from this example of a mission?**  
**Is God speaking to us? What is the Spirit saying?**
13. **Should this example influence our *Church Mission Statement*?**  
**Would your group like to propose something? If so, What?**