

Back to the Future

discerning God's purpose for our life as His church

Every so often it's important to pause and take stock. How are we doing? What are we seeking to accomplish? Are we growing, making progress?

Such seasons of 'reflection' are as important in our communal life as a local church as they are in our individual lives.

This series of studies aims to provide a focus for such a season, a chance to let the Word of God inform our understanding of all that he calls us as His church to be and to be doing in these days of great turbulence and change.

You can find the background to this short series [here](#).

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5. 'Christ formed in you'

(Acts 11.26)

[w/b Sunday 9th February 2020]

".. The disciples were called Christians .."

This study concentrates on the teaching ministry of Barnabas and Saul at Antioch. The year or so which they spent teaching the church in Antioch was a hugely formative time which effected a significant change in the disciples there and prepared them for a future they could never have countenanced.

By looking at a variety of other passages in the Bible we'll see why a teaching ministry is so very important for the health and growth of Christ's church.

[Although there are 7 questions as ever, your Community Group may choose to concentrate on just some of them. Key questions in this study are probably 3, 5 and 6. As always try to leave good time for shared prayer!]

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1. **Read Acts 2.42-47.** These verses give us the first 'snapshot' of the early church living her communal life in the power of the Holy Spirit.

What stands out for you in this picture of the early church?

Their devotion to the apostles' teaching wasn't the only feature of their life: why do you think it is stated first?

2. Read Deut.31.9-13. Israel was to be an example to the nations of what true freedom looks like in the living of our lives: Deuteronomy comprises Moses' teaching to that end.

Why do you think Moses insisted on this same 'core curriculum' being taught every 7 years?

In what ways do *you* benefit from the teaching of the Word of God every 7 days?

3. Read 2 Tim.1.3-5; 3.10-17. The apostle Paul rehearses the ways in which the teaching of the Word of God had been so very formative in the life of this young man Timothy.

How would Timothy have been taught the Word of God 'from infancy'?

Paul had taken Timothy on his missionary journey (Acts 16.1-3): from your reading of 2 Tim.3.10-17, what would Paul's teaching of Timothy have involved?

Who have been the people whose teaching of the Word of God have shaped your living?

4. **Read 2 Tim.2.1-9.** The apostle Paul was concerned that the ministry of faithfully and fearlessly teaching the Word of God should be continued by succeeding generations of leaders.

What is it about a ministry of teaching the Word of God which requires the teacher to 'be strong' (v.1)?

What is the point Paul is making by using the three illustrations in vv.3-6?

How does that apply to, and challenge you?

5. **Read Acts 20.17-35.** Timothy was the pastor at Ephesus when Paul wrote that second letter to him: in these verses Paul describes his own, earlier teaching ministry at Ephesus.

From your reading of these verses what would you identify as the core elements of Paul's teaching ministry?

What do you think he meant by saying he'd proclaimed to them 'the whole will of God' (v.27)?

Why is it important that as followers of Jesus we are taught the 'whole will of God'?

6. **Read 2 Tim.3.16-4.5.** Paul exhorts Timothy to persist in faithfully teaching the Word of God in Ephesus in the face of the challenges there will be.

In what ways did Paul understand the teaching of the Word of God to be so very formative?

In what ways are you able to pinpoint the teaching of the Word of God as having been formative in your life?

What pressures do those who teach the Word of God have to face, according to what Paul says here?

7. **Read Acts 11.26.** The teaching of Barnabas and Saul which the church at Antioch received clearly effected a change in the new believers which was noticeable to those around them.

What do you think it was about these believers in Antioch which prompted those around them to call them 'Christians'?

What would you say were the most marked impacts of the teaching of the Word of God on you?