

Weekly Bible Study for Highcliffe and Bransgore Methodist Churches

Acts 6: 1-7 Norman Bonnett w/c 10th May 2020

My dear friends in Christ,

I have many times challenged a congregation to “remember the Jewish effect”. We need to remember that Christianity was born into the country we now call Israel, the home of Judaism.

Some of the ways of the traditional church were influencing the practises of the new church and one of these was the caring for needy folk, in particular widows. There was much work to be done in supplying regular meals to these people and the apostles were not coping with this matter in a lively, growing church.

There were two groups of Jews in the church; those with a Greek and those with a Hebrew background, so it should not be a surprise that tensions arose especially from the inefficient supply of food to some of the widows. The apostles decided therefore that work needed to be shared.

Make two lists, (perhaps on the back of this paper) one headed “pastor” and list the things that it is reasonable to expect that role to fulfil. The second list will be headed “members” and contain those things that they should or could fulfil. If you need some help look up Ephesians 4: 11-16, especially verse 16. Using your hand as an illustration, do you see the relationship between the thumb and the fingers, each needs the other and represents a “whole body” – they need each other, the same may be said about the things on the two lists.

Somewhat understandably, there are those who are drawn by preference or background to the many tasks of: maintenance, music, finance, childcare etc. but is that where the need of the church is? Equally, there are those in our church who are, commendably, the first to jump into situations to help needy people who present themselves at church, however as church we also need to see and support those of our church who are perhaps the quiet needy (spiritually), “the needy in plain sight”. How would you personally have responded to the daily serving of food to the widows?

Please pray for all those who contribute in a helpful way to the life of our church, that they may feel called, motivated and Christ-centred in their approach to any task that may require to be done. We must also pray regularly for our pastor that he may have the courage and wisdom as he leads the church in the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, particularly in these very challenging days and weeks ahead. Pray too that all members and attenders will realise that their contribution, wherever it may be is valued and is a vital part of the complete ministry of our church, called by Jesus to “make disciples” (Matt 28:19).

May God richly bless us.