

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 overflow of the blessings of the presence of the kingdom of God may fall upon you. **Amen**

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

2 Chronicles 20:1–30

7

7 Faithfulness

Purpose: To gain a fresh awareness of God's faithfulness and how we can develop this fruit in our lives.

Faithfulness in Galatians 5:22 means to be trustworthy or reliable. Because God is faithful, his Spirit desires this quality in his children.

WELCOME – Breaking the ice *(Aim for 10 minutes)*

What would you like written on your tomb stone?

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 – Applying the truth
(Aim for 40 – 45 minutes)

Our society is becoming increasingly self-centered. People quickly discard spouses, friends and promises if they outlive their usefulness. Faithfulness applies to only one person—*me!* But when the Spirit develops this fruit in our lives, the results are quite different. Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, learned about faithfulness the hard way. He began his reign by faithfully obeying God's commands (2 Chron 17:3–9). But he entered into a military alliance with Ahab, king of Israel, against God's will. The results were disastrous and God was displeased. No wonder Jehoshaphat was anxious when invading armies approached his kingdom! In his desperation, he cried out to God. God's answer, recorded in this passage, is an amazing illustration of faithfulness.

1. Read 2 Chronicles 20:1–30. Use your imagination to fill in the details of verses 3–5 and verse 13. Now describe what you see (the setting, the mood, the people and so on).
2. Examine Jehoshaphat's prayer (vv. 6–12). On what bases does he appeal to God for help?
3. How would Jehoshaphat's view of God encourage him and the people to trust God in this crisis?
4. Think about those areas of your life that are hard to hand over to God. How can God's power and his faithfulness in the past encourage you to trust him in these areas?

5. Now consider God's response to Jehoshaphat's prayer (vv. 14–17). How would the prophet's words have required faith from the people?
6. What evidence is there that they believed his message (vv. 18–21)?
7. Do you ever praise God right in the middle of a problem—*before* the answer comes? Explain why or why not.
8. How would you have felt as you “came to the place that overlooks the desert and looked toward the vast army” (v. 24)?
9. Describe the effects God's faithfulness had on the people (vv. 25–30)
10. What can we learn about faithfulness from the example of Jehoshaphat and the people of Judah in this passage?

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