

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

1 John 4:7-16

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1 Love

Purpose: To help those in the group to seek another's highest good whether they feel warm about the person or not, and so to obey God.

Love in the New Testament can refer to sensual, brotherly or divine love, depending on the word used. Here Paul speaks of divine love, which reaches out to others in sacrificial service.

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

Perhaps you can remember the peanuts cartoon, “love is”. How would you describe love? It might be, “Love is sharing you last piece of toberlone.” What would you say? Love is?

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 yous” to God

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

The word *love* is often abused these days. It is used in the context of close, cozy feelings; of ecstatic, exuberant sexual passion; and of conditional commitments (“I’ll love you if you live up to my expectations”). From the Christian point of view, what is this thing called love? How do we get it and how can we give it away to others who need it? The word *love* (or some form of it) is mentioned sixteen times in 1 John 4:7–16.

1. Why does the search for love dominate so many songs, novels and the lives of so many people?

2. Read 1 John 4:7–16. John says that true love comes from God. How do Christ’s incarnation and death show us God’s love (vv. 9–10)?

3. How does God’s love motivate you to love others?

4. Since we cannot see God with our eyes, how can we perceive his presence among us (v. 12)?

5. How have you seen God’s love demonstrated through other Christians?

6. Verse 16 says we can “know and rely on the love God has for us.” How does such assurance come about (vv. 13–15)?

7. What do you think John means when he says, “God is love” (v. 16)?

8. Because God is love, what do we know about those whose lives are full of love (v. 16)? Explain.

9. Think of someone you find it especially hard to feel warm toward, someone you are thrown together with regularly. Why is it difficult for you to love that person?

10. Recognizing that love is not based on feelings, what are some practical ways you can show the fruit of love to that person?

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