

## **Bible Notes for Small Groups WB 11<sup>th</sup> February 2024**

Preacher... Rev Paul S.

As usual Paul began with a joke.....

It was Bill's Mother-in-law's birthday. He thought long and hard to find something he felt would be appropriate. When she opened it she discovered a top notch grave plot in the local cemetery. A year went by and her birthday came around again. Bill and all the family were invited to her birthday tea. This time He went empty handed. When she realised there was no present from Bill she was cross and asked him why he hadn't brought a present with him. 'Well' said Bill. 'You haven't used the one I bought you last year yet.'

The mother-in-law/son-in-law relationship is well known to be touchy at times. Paul wondered what Peter thought of his mother-in-law.

### **Read Mark 1:29-39.**

Jesus and His disciples went to Peter's for supper but found his mother-in-law sick so Jesus healed her. After supper the news got round that Jesus was there and they were swamped with people coming for Jesus to do something for them. Jesus was very busy into the night but even so He got up very early to find a quiet space where He could spend time with His Father.

When the disciples got up, they looked for Jesus but He wasn't in the house. Peter was obviously disturbed by this because instead of staying to be the host as visitors woke up for breakfast, he took a couple of his friends and they went out to find Jesus.

- What is the first thing you do when you get up in the morning?

Why were they so insistent on finding Jesus straight away? Did they want Him to do more of the things He had done the night before? Were they worried that He had gone away and left them behind? Were they worried about His safety? They certainly told Him off for disappearing. It was a very similar reaction to the one Mary and Joseph had when they lost Jesus in the temple when He was 12.

Once they found Him Jesus was insistent that they move on. He had things to do.

There are three things to consider from this reading in Mark.

1. The disciples actively looked for Jesus. They pursued Jesus and wanted to be in His presence.

Playing hide and seek with children can be such fun. They find the most interesting places to hide and there is usually laughter and excitement all round when the seeker finds them.

God loves to be found by His children. He loves it when we seek Him. He can be found wherever we are if we only look. Are we actively seeking God? Are we actively spending time with Jesus?

- What can we do to be active in spending time with Jesus individually and as a congregation?

2. Jesus spent time alone, very early when it was dark and quiet in order to pray. It's wonderful to spend time with God. How rushed are we in our morning prayers. Do we just quickly tell God we are pleased to see him and give him a quick list of things for Him to be getting on with for us? Are we too busy to sit quietly with Him for a while? Do we feel guilty if we are not doing something. Are we scared of what might happen if we are just still? We know the scripture that says 'Be still and know that I am God.' We won't find God in the hectic but in the quiet. We need to ask ourselves how much time are we spending in God's presence. If I don't spend quiet times with God do I still feel very close to Him or are we drifting apart? My aim should be to get ever closer to Him not gaze at Him across an ever widening space.

- How do you actively plan and have a special time and place where you regularly spend time with God?

3 Presence with God leads to action. It is in the quiet times we spend with Him that He is able to inspire us to move with Him. Jesus spent many times alone with God finding out what the next step in the plan was. It is the same for us. Prayer needs to end with action.

Someone once said that 'Amen' should be like the film director's word 'ACTION' as the clapperboard snaps shut and the actors snap into action. It should be the word that means 'get started' not 'goodbye'. Amen must not be the disconnect or ending but the beginning of something.

- What was the last thing Jesus told you to do? Did you do it?

Jesus prayed at all times, He never stopped. **Read Romans 8:31-34**

Jesus is still interceding for us in heaven. He is our role model and our very good example. Apostle Paul told us to pray without ceasing. The Holy Spirit is praying for us.

We have this invitation to go deeper with God, to spend more time with Him not worrying that we are wasting time. Prayer is not something we OUGHT to do but something we LOVE to do. Something, because of the privilege we have of being loved by God, that we GET to do.