LEADER NOTES - Brockley Chapel

HomeGroup Feb 2025

**Planning Ahead**

**25**Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: **26** [ ] whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

**28**“Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won’t you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? **29**For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, **30**saying, ‘This person began to build and wasn’t able to finish.’ Luke 14 25 – 30 abridged

**13**Now listen, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.” **14**Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. **15**Instead, you ought to say, “If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.” James 4:13-15

Put your outdoor work in order and get your fields ready; after that, build your house. Proverbs 24:27

in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. Proverbs 3:6

One of our leadership tasks this spring is to plan ahead for the next 5 – 10 years for Brockley Chapel. We are keen to consult widely about this and welcome your thoughts and contributions. Today in homegroup, we are considering some passages that mention planning – and seeing what we can learn from them.

Q1
Do you plan ahead as a family or an individual? Have you got any examples of where you did or didn’t plan ahead and how things worked out? (Try and think of something in advance of the meeting. Homegroups only work if people are willing to speak out and share – the bad as well as the good. Humorous mishaps that work out OK in the end are always good to hear about.)

A1
We had very detailed plans and costings for our house extension. First job was dig the foundations. We got a mini digger and started. In one corner – we unexpectedly found an old soak away. The building regs man ordered that we go twice as wide and twice as deep and it ended up that we had spent about 25% of our budget and still had nothing showing above ground level.

Q2
Why do you think Jesus starts talking about building a tower in Luke 14? Does anything strike you as odd in these verses?

A2
odd stuff (1) Jesus is talking about carrying the cross a long time before crucifixion. I don’t know if this was a phrase in common use already – or if Jesus is predicting the cross as the end of all this popularity. Odd stuff (2) building a tower. Why a tower? A house or a shed or a barn – but why a tower?

The context gives the clue to why Jesus teaching veers in this direction. Large crowds were following Jesus. At certain times in his ministry Jesus was very popular. Jeus could see that many people were being swept along by the excitement of it all – but he wanted them to think about what it really meant to follow him. So Jesus talks about the cost of following him. Jesus speaks of the effort and shame of taking up a cross and the expense and embarrassment of starting something and not seeing it through.

Q3
In what ways do you think following Jesus is costly? Do you feel that following Jesus has been costly for you? How ?

A3
If I hadn’t become a Christian, I would have had a different job and I would have earnt a lot more money. But don’t worry – we aren’t short of anything we need. Jesus says that if we have foregone anything it will be repaid many times over (Mark 10:29-30)

According to the 2025 World Watch List by Open Doors, over 380 million Christians face high levels of persecution or discrimination for their faith. This includes threats of violence, unlawful detentions, abductions, and property destruction. The countries where Christians face the most extreme persecution include North Korea, Somalia, Yemen, Libya, Sudan, Eritrea, Nigeria, Pakistan, Iran, and Afghanistan.

Q4
Have you heard of a SWOT analysis? It is often used by businesses and organisations to do a quick survey. S = strengths. W = weaknesses. O = opportunities and T = threats.

Together makes some notes using the SWOT approach to Brockley Chapel. Please make some notes and email them to Simon – all your thoughts will be considered when the team gets to this topic. simonjamesladd@yahoo.co.uk

Q5
When I was a boy, all the posters that came around advertising upcoming anniversary services at surrounding chapels had DV in brackets written on them somewhere. What did it mean? And considering James 4:13-15 should we still do it? What is the main thrust of this passage for us each?

A5

DV was Latin for Deo Volente – and it meant God willing. Even as a boy I used to think why use an abbreviation of Latin – if you mean God willing? It almost seemed like a lucky charm.

In the context of planning ahead, James is reminding us that planning that ignores God is little more than wishful thinking. We need to be humble, we need to be in line with God’s will and remember that we do not know what tomorrow may bring.

Q6
What do you think is meant by “Put your outdoor work in order and get your fields ready; after that, build your house.” Proverbs 24:27

And does it have any relevance for our forward planning at Brockley?

A6
The clue here is the two words ‘in order’. Some things need to be done first. Some things have a higher priority. It’s great to have a nice house – but if the farmer spends too much time on his accommodation and doesn’t get the crop planted or harvested there is trouble ahead. It’s no good having a lovely house if there is no food in the barn.

As we plan into the future it is important to keep the main thing the main thing. God’s Word is our guide. Preaching the Gospel, sharing the gospel, showing the Gospel has to remain central. We need to be constant in prayer – depending on him, staying close to him and keeping in step with God’s Spirit. (Galatians 5:25)

Q7
in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. Proverbs 3:6

This is a well known passage on the subject of guidance. What does it tell us and what does it not tell us?

A7
You might be more familiar with this verse in other versions.

**6**In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. (King James Authorised Version)

It does say that as we plan, individually and as a church, we need to acknowledge God, ask for his guidance and submit to his will. It doesn’t say that we will be told in advance which is the right way – or that we will always know clearly what God’s will is. But it does say that if we acknowledge God, he will be in control of the pathways of our lives. Sometimes we can see this better looking back.

**Sharing, Prayer and Thanks**
Please be ready to share some of your own personal struggles and successes. Homegroups work much better if we are willing to be open with each other. This honesty and mutual support is the essence of Christian fellowship.