

# *Partners for Life*



## **exploring Philippians**

**latechurch  
2007**



Also, in the time that you have left between now and growth group – make a list of people you could give thanks for, and make it a goal to spend some time each day going through that list to give thanks to God for them.

thoughts. questions. insights.

## Study 1 - Partners for Life

### Personal Preparation 2 - Philippians 1:1-11

**Read Philippians 1:1-11** and compare the introduction of Paul's letter to the Galatians (Galatians 1:1-9) with Paul's introduction to the Philippians. This letter is special amongst Paul's New Testament letter – the overall tone isn't so much the problems going on in the church, but the close bond Paul has with this group of Christians. Let's spend a bit of time working out what Paul is saying in this opening part of the letter.

1. List the different times Paul mentions his thankfulness or affection for the Philippian Christians.
2. According to verse 4, how does Paul express his thankfulness for the Philippians in his own life?
3. In Paul's prayer life for the Philippians, what is he specifically thankful for?
4. What do you think 'partnership in the gospel' means and how can it be expressed?  
Note: the greek word translated as 'partnership' in 1:4, is what is behind the word 'share' in 2:1; 4:14, 15.

**For Today:** Continue on with the list you made at the end of the last Personal Preparation time. When you pray for individuals or families, aim to pray for their partnership in the gospel. Be as specific as you can be in your thanksgiving.

thoughts. questions. insights.

## Study 1 - Partners for Life

### Growth Group Discussion Questions - Philippians 1:1-11

In the Personal Preparation time – we've focussed on the relationship Paul had with the Philippian Christians and what this meant for them. As we look at Philippians 1:1-11, we'll continue on this theme, but spend more time talking about what this type of relationship means for us in our lives.

#### Read 1:1-11

1. In these verses, Paul mentions two types of prayer for the Thessalonians. What are they?
  
2. For the prayer in v3-6, why does Paul pray with thanksgiving for the Philippians?
  
3. Think back to Q4 from the Personal Preparation 2 – What does partnership in the gospel mean? Who are you partnering and who is partnering you?
  
4. Are there ways you could deepen your partnership in the gospel at freshchurch?
  
5. Paul has great love and affection for these Philippians. But it is not a love that's left simply as a feeling. It's a love that drives Paul to have certain hopes and desires for them. This is verses 9-11.
  - a) What is Paul's desire for the Philippians? v9
  - b) What is the purpose for this? v10
  - c) How will this be possible? v11
  - d) What is the ultimate purpose? v11
  
6. It's perhaps surprising that Paul keeps love intimately connected with knowledge and discernment. How do you think this works?
  
7. In verse 6 and verse 10, Paul mentions 'the day of Christ' twice. What part does this play in Paul's prayer life?
  
8. What are the similarities and differences between Paul's prayers and yours?
  
9. What's the challenge you've got from these prayers of Paul?

## pray.

Be specific – mention people's names. Give thanks for those around you – they way they encourage you and the opportunity you have to encourage them. Also pray that they would grow as followers of Jesus. That their love would grow and their knowledge of God would deepen so all the glory and praise would go to God.



## Study 2 - Gospel Central

### Personal Preparation - Philippians 1:12-30

1. From these verses, what do we know about the situation Paul is in at the time of writing this letter?
  
2. How would you describe Paul's emotional state in prison?
  
3. From these verses, what is the reason for this?
  
4. In v12-14, what are the reasons that Paul gives for being content (joyous even) even though he's in prison?

Six times in this first chapter Paul mentions the word 'gospel'. It's obviously pretty important to him! Paul can be thankful and joyous despite his tough circumstances precisely because the gospel is central to his life. Fill in the table below by writing the verse the word 'gospel' is found in, and also writing a sentence describing how Paul refers to the gospel.

	Verse	How does Paul refer to the Gospel
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		

**For Today:** Think about how central the gospel is to your life. How much does it direct your way of thinking, emotions, life decisions, prayer life.

Continue on with the prayer pattern you were encouraged to have last week. List some people. And pray for them in the way that reflects the centrality of the gospel.

thoughts. questions. insights.

## Study 2 - Gospel Central

### Growth Group Discussion Questions - Philippians 1:12-30

What gets you upset? What gets you frustrated? If you're like most of us – all sorts of things! But it's amazing that when you look at Paul's situation of being in prison, he's not depressed at all - in fact he's full of contentment and joy! It's all because he can see that his present circumstances work to progress the gospel. Let's look further at just how central the gospel is to Paul's life. And let's be prepared to be challenged about how central the gospel is to our lives.

#### Read Philippians 1:12-30

1. As we saw in the Personal Preparation for this week, Paul mentions the word 'gospel' 6 times in the whole chapter. In your own words, what is the gospel? (try to avoid as much jargon as possible)
2. Paul's imprisonment has inspired some to speak the gospel more and more, but in verse 15 he mentions those who do so 'out of envy and rivalry'. Does Paul mind that they have this underlying envious motive? Why?
3. Do you think motivations matter at all in the end?
4. We saw in verses 3-11 that Paul is a man of prayer. Now in v19 he mentions the Philippians' prayer. What is Paul confident about regarding their prayer?
5. What do you think is the deliverance that Paul is confident about? Verse 20 will help.
6. What are the 2 alternatives that Paul is open to in verses 20-26?
7. What would Paul prefer? Why?
8. Paul's summary of the choice between the two summaries is v21 – 'For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.' What does that mean?
9. How do you yourself think about the alternatives of life or death?
10. What does Paul desire for the Philippians in v27, and what does that mean?
11. What can you expect if you live like this? v29-30

12. For Paul, the gospel is central to everything. The gospel directs his thinking for how to live and his desires for others. What do you think it takes for you to be more and more shaped by the reality of the gospel?

## pray.

- thanking God for the example of Paul and his perspective on life (and death)
- that the reality of the gospel would shape our lives
- that in tough situations we would be able to defend the gospel and make Jesus known.