

Dear all

I had intended sharing a bible emphasis on 'one another' but I'll leave it to a second page for your own bible study - or even just a quick read so that an impression is made on this biblical pattern. Perhaps it's because I have now completed 40 months of my intended 60 months commitment to the role of pastor that I have been thinking much about 'one another'. But I think I should share some other things.

Our TCF Reading Scheme is now centred on Deuteronomy. The book is a retelling by Moses of some of the lessons and events of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers but essentially it is about a new generation of God's people listening to a valedictory speech. The people are on the brink of a significant transition and they are going to realise the fulfilment of God's covenant promises. The reading comes at a significant time for me because I have voluntarily and amicably stepped down from my role as a Trustee of Echoes International.

As I read the scriptures, my habit is to write reflective notes - and sometimes a summary of the chapter or any obvious repetitions or structure - in a private journal. In Deuteronomy, Moses emphasises that God was a giving God. See Deuteronomy 2 vv9, 19, 24, 29, 30, 31, 33 and 36) and Deuteronomy 3 vv 3, 18, 20. As I reflect on my time with 'Echoes' I have seen how He has been faithful for so long and He never changes. I have been touched also by the faithfulness of the servants of God and it seems that Divine faithfulness begets a similar response from those who serve a generous God.

What struck me most about Moses' language as I launched into Chapter 3 is that he begins very inclusively by saying 'the LORD **our** God gave' (3:3) and moves to 'the LORD **your** God has given' (3:18). From 'our' to 'your'. Is there any indication here of Moses being slighted or slightly disgruntled? I don't think so! He has come to accept that his journey is closing and that he will walk from Mount Nebo and leave the people under Joshua's leadership and instead of walking into the Promised Land, he will walk to his own funeral. He has accepted the purposes of the Lord who refuses Moses' plea to 'Please let me go over and see the good land...' (3:25). Now, in case you think I am thinking about a departure to the Lord's immediate Presence, this has never occurred to me. But it seems to me that He has signalled that my priorities should now lie elsewhere. I have been challenged by the burden of pastoral ministry - not just the systematic teaching and preaching of the scriptures but that this is done in a pastoral context where I have been privileged to get to know some of you at a fairly intimate level. The scriptures are therefore so much more precious as I see them speaking into real - and often difficult - situations. It is so much more difficult to be prepared and to be available to God when the need is known and also so great. The largely unseen work of meeting with individuals one-to-one is so enriching but when the time taken to prepare is taken into account - such as reading a book or a passage - it consumes quite a lot of the week. I want to spend more of my time in this work though. As I devote more of my time to the TCF family it is with a sense of renewed priority. I have removed some ministry and look forward to only one replacement task. This means that I invite you again to meet up for a coffee and even better, to look at a longer period of commitment to develop spiritually. I still very much feel that, with you, we serve '**our** God'.

I have retained an interest in the European Leadership Forum and I am off to Poland on Friday 17-Friday 24 May for my annual week of intensive ministry. I would value your prayers as I Chair the National Leaders meeting; deliver a programme of teaching to a new group of European Pastors whom we begin to mentor and also bring to a close the previous year's programme with pastors who have now become friends. I have ceased delivering on the Disciple-making Leaders Network and won't be doing the training of mentors. I have limited my other mentoring time to two sessions outwith the Pastors Group. One additional request has come to me though - to help in the design of curricula for the Forum but I don't know what scale this may have. I am interested in helping the Forum develop and it seems that given my previous career that this opportunity may be relevant. It also has the feel of something I could continue in post-Pastor of TCF.

One final update is that I have found Jacob's advent at TCF to be of huge benefit. We enjoy bible study together but especially a committed and systematic time of prayer for you all on Thursday mornings. He has started visiting the TCF Family and he has already made up for where I have been lacking. He is available for visiting and meeting up and also getting alongside you in your Christian walk. Between us we are here to serve and we are both committed to doing this at an individual and personal level.

One another

“One another” is two words in English, but it’s only one word in Greek: ἀλλήλων (ah-LAY-loan). It’s used 100 times in 94 New Testament verses. 47 of those verses give instructions to the church, and 60% of those instructions come from Paul.

One third of the one-another commands deal with the unity of the church.

1. Be at peace with one another (Mark 9:50)
2. Don’t grumble among one another (John 6:43)
3. Be of the same mind with one another (Romans 12:16, 15:5)
4. Accept one another (Romans 15:7)
5. Wait for one another before beginning the Eucharist (1 Corinthians 11:33)
6. Don’t bite, devour, and consume one another (Galatians 5:15)
7. Don’t boastfully challenge or envy one another (Galatians 5:26).
8. Gently, patiently tolerate one another (Ephesians 4:2)
9. Be kind, tender-hearted, and forgiving to one another (Ephesians 4:32)
10. Bear with and forgive one another (Colossians 3:13)
11. Seek good for one another, and don’t repay evil for evil (1 Thessalonians 5:15)
12. Don’t complain against one another (James 4:11, 5:9)
13. Confess sins to one another (James 5:16)

One third of them instruct Christians to love one another.

1. Love one another (John 13:34, 15:12, 17; Romans 13:8; 1 Thessalonians 3:12, 4:9; 1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 3:11, 4:7, 11; 2 John 5)
2. Through love, serve one another (Galatians 5:13)
3. Tolerate one another in love (Ephesians 4:2)
4. Greet one another with a kiss of love (1 Peter 5:14)
5. Be devoted to one another in love (Romans 12:10)

About 15% stress an attitude of humility and deference among believers.

1. Give preference to one another in honour (Romans 12:10)
2. Regard one another as more important than yourselves (Philippians 2:3)
3. Serve one another (Galatians 5:13)
4. Wash one another’s feet (John 13:14)
5. Don’t be haughty: be of the same mind (Romans 12:16)
6. Be subject to one another (Ephesians 5:21)
7. Clothe yourselves in humility toward one another (1 Peter 5:5)

Here’s the rest:

1. Do not judge one another, and don’t put a stumbling block in a brother’s way (Romans 14:13)
2. Greet one another with a kiss (Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12)
3. Husbands and wives: don’t deprive one another of physical intimacy (1 Corinthians 7:5)
4. Bear one another’s burdens (Galatians 6:2)
5. Speak truth to one another (Ephesians 4:25)
6. Don’t lie to one another (Corinthians 3:9)
7. Comfort one another concerning the resurrection (1 Thessalonians 4:18)
8. Encourage and build up one another (1 Thessalonians 5:11)
9. Stimulate one another to love and good deeds (Hebrews 10:24)
10. Pray for one another (James 5:16)
11. Be hospitable to one another (1 Peter 4:9)

These commands come from Jesus, Peter, John, Paul, and James, and they’re scattered across the New Testament.