

An example of a Wednesday home group to explain how the sessions work

These are part of the who or what do we believe in series.

Knowing the Father

- Nov-07 Session 1 God, the Father of creation
- Nov-14 Session 2 God, the Father of Jesus
- Nov-21 Session 3 God, the Father of the kingdom
- Nov-28 Session 4 God, the Holy Trinity
- Dec-05 Special An evaluation & social evening

Knowing Jesus

- Jan-09 Session 1 Who is Jesus?
- Jan-16 Session 2 What did Jesus teach?
- Jan-23 Session 3 Why did Jesus die?
- Jan-30 Session 4 The difference Jesus makes

If you have any other questions please contact a member of the ministry team or Pete Jarvis on 01635 867336

EMMAUS

the way of faith

GROWTH



Dear friend,

During the past two years the PCC and ministry team have spent time thinking about some of the key aspects of our church life; in particular the way in which we grow as disciples (followers) of Christ here in Thatcham.

One aim was to develop both St Mary's and St Barnabas congregations into a community of worshipers who are passionate about their faith. To that end many people went in March on the Parish Weekend Away with Bishop Stephen Cottrell to discover how we could develop community both within our churches and in the context of the wider local community.

We now have buildings fit for the 21st century and this has been a major project over the last five years or so, coming to conclusion with our celebrations on November 4th 2007. This has taken time, money and energy and now complete it puts us in the right place to think further about our spiritual journey.

At the celebration on November 4th we have asked Bishop Stephen to launch and bless the beginnings of our Emmaus home groups. This is really exciting because in these groups we will be able to discover more about each other in a fun and welcoming environment in the comfort of peoples homes. Unlike Lent groups these are to become an ongoing part of the life of the Thatcham Team Ministry week by week, throughout the year, enabling us to journey together spiritually.

Home groups are intended as a follow on from those who may already have taken part in a Start course or Alpha group. They are to bring us together in community, sharing our experiences of the Christian faith in a mixed group of those who will know only a little about their faith to those who may look to these groups as a refresher of things already discovered.

On the next page of this leaflet I have answered some possible questions you may have about these groups but please do not hesitate to contact any of the ministry team for further clarification.

On behalf of the whole ministry team I pray and trust you will be encouraged to join us on the next stage of this exciting journey.

Yours in Christ,

Pete Jarvis
Team Vicar

- **What is a session?**

Each session lasts for approximately 1 1/2 hours, one session is an individual week with its own theme but it makes up part of a short series of three, four or five weeks in total. Over time we will look at; Who or what do we believe in? How do we pray and understand the Bible? What it means to be a church? How we worship at church? What are we called to be? (see over the page).

- **How many sessions are there?**

It is intended our home groups will be ongoing although it is possible to opt in and out. However, to benefit fully the more you are able to be part of your group the more you will receive.

- **Will they meet in school holidays?**

The home groups have been established so they do not meet during half terms or other school holidays. This enables the group to remain as full as possible and time to reflect and pray in between the different series (see an example of a Wednesday group on the back page).

- **How many people will there be in a group?**

In each group we expect to have one host, one facilitator and up to ten others, making a maximum group size of twelve. This will allow people space to join in and not appear too daunting for home owners supplying chairs and refreshments.

- **Where do the groups meet?**

They will meet in peoples homes so you can relax, they are not led as teacher/pupil classes, we hope you will feel free to discuss and share with the help of some direction from the facilitator. A sign up sheet is available separately indicating where the venues, times and days are.

- **Will I be able to change groups?**

We are trying to create the home groups where people can get to know each other and grow together, if you find the group not working for you or due to other commitments you need to change the day/time please let us know and we will try to accommodate your needs.

- **Does it cost any money to be part of a home group?**

There is no charge to attend a session and you will be given free handouts to enable you to reflect and pray. However if a group has a social event you may be asked if you are able to contribute to the cost of food or drink.

- **What will I need to bring with me?**

If you have your own preferred Bible please feel free to bring it to the home group. A pen/pencil and a note pad may be useful too.