

1 TIMOTHY

'how to build our church'



freshchurch
term 1 2009

Growth Groups & The Real Thing

In 2009 at freshchurch, we have a theme, 'the real thing'. This is all about wanting people to enjoy the real thing of real relationships and be connected with each other.

The theme of the real things means as a church this year, we're going to:

- Make the space to relate;
- Focus more on people rather than programs;
- Do less *as* a church so that we can be more *of* a church;
- Work at being more of a community through the week rather than just a congregation on Sunday mornings.

Because of this, we're not going to have a busy church calendar with big events. But this means in 2009, our growth groups have become more important than ever. It's in growth group where we'll meet with others to explore the bible, ask questions, discuss, learn and encourage each other to grow as followers of Jesus. It's in growth group where we can talk, pray, help, serve, have fun and grow our friendships.

Along with this focus on 'the real thing' in 2009, we're also providing a 'tighter' structure to the way growth groups will work. The study series will go 6 weeks in each term. That means you'll be meeting less times throughout the year. But because that's the case—as best you can aim to be consistent in your attendance. That way you'll get more out of it and to be of encouragement to others. And as we would like people to enjoy 'the real thing' through doing hospitality of Sunday lunches together, start with the people of your own group to have over and get to know them more.

In 2009, growth groups are such an important part of our church life at Eatons Hill Presbyterian Church. It's through growth group we're we want people to enjoy 'the real thing'.

Garnet Swann.



1 Timothy: How To Build Our Church

For our first study series this year, we will be looking at the book of 1 Timothy. 1 Timothy is all about practical issues to do with the sort of church we should be building. In an age when we can focus on all sorts of marketing strategies in order to grow a church from a mini-church to a mega-church, it's important to go back to God's own desires for church. But we need to be aware—we shouldn't take 1 Timothy as a timeless church manual – it's a personal letter from Paul to his dear friend Timothy in the first century AD. Timothy is a leader in the Ephesian church and in this letter, Paul is urgently telling Timothy what he must do in order to protect his church when it is under threat from false teachers.

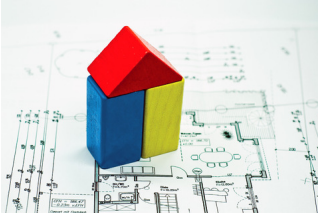
One important thing to realise is that right through this letter there is a mission goal that guides everything that Paul says. The mission is neatly expressed in 1 Timothy 2:3-4,

'This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.'

If Timothy is to protect and guide this church, he should share God's passion for people becoming Christians and growing as Christians. If Timothy has this passion, it will shape the church's prayer life (chapter 2), the appointment of leaders (chapter 3) and what leaders are expected to do (chapter 5). All these aspects are still so relevant for us today. The six studies we will do are:

- 1. 1 Timothy 1: Knowing God's Grace**
- 2. 1 Timothy 2: Sharing God's Passion**
- 3. 1 Timothy 3: Being Led Into God's Truth**
- 4. 1 Timothy 4: Training in Godliness**
- 5. 1 Timothy 5: Honouring God's Family**
- 6. 1 Timothy 6: Knowing God's Contentment**

Enjoy 1 Timothy. It's a letter that will definitely challenge us about what it means to build our church at Eatons Hill.



1 Timothy 1: Knowing God's Grace, 11-12 February

Personal Preparation 1

1 Timothy is a letter in which Paul urges Timothy to stay in the city of Ephesus. Ephesus was a coastal city in 'Asia Minor' or modern day Turkey. See the map below.



During Paul's travels, which are recorded in the book of Acts, Paul visited the city a number of times. In fact it was a city close to Paul's heart and, before a city riot forced him to leave, Paul lived there for 2 years (Acts 19). On his way back to Jerusalem, where he would later be arrested and sent to trial, Paul made a special effort to see the leaders from the Ephesian church. He wanted to speak to them one last time and it is a conversation full of emotion.

Read Acts 20:25-38

What does Paul particularly want the Ephesian elders to be on the look out for? v29-31

Read 1 Timothy 1:1-20

1 Timothy was written a few years after Paul spoke to the Ephesian elders and as we read, we discover that Paul's warning to the Ephesians has now come true. From everything that is written about these 'certain men' in 1 Timothy 1, write down what we know about them. The 'profile' of these savage wolves would include:

- v3 – they teach false doctrine
- v4 –
-
-

What Paul warned the Ephesian elders about came true. What does this say about what our church needs to be careful of today? What different doctrines/world views/beliefs do we need to be conscious of that go against true biblical Christian faith?

Group Discussion



1 Timothy is a letter by Paul, the apostle to his 'true son in the faith', Timothy. It's a personal letter full of friendship and affection. But it's a letter with an edge of urgency. Paul wants Timothy to respond courageously to those in the church who want to take things in an utterly destructive direction. With this danger as the backdrop, Paul wants to remind Timothy that he must remain true to the gospel of Jesus Christ. It's the gospel that cannot be compromised. And it's the gospel of Jesus Christ that needs to be the motivating force behind prayer, the appointment of leaders, and compassionate care within the church. If Timothy can keep the church focussed on the gospel, the church will be protected. With our look at chapter 1 today, let's

try to understand what these false teachers were on about, and be reminded what the gospel actually is.

1. In Personal Preparation, you worked on developing a profile of these false teachers in the church. What can we say about them?

Like so many other times in the New Testament, these false teachers seem to be 'Judaizers', that is those who insist that to truly belong to God, gentile Christians must uphold Jewish practices. The fact that Paul mentions their 'endless genealogies' seems to be a reference to Jewish writings of the time that spent a lot of time establishing the pure Jewish pedigree and lineage throughout the history of the Old Testament. Obviously there was a lot of pride that came with being Jewish.

2. What is the result of all this focus on genealogies v4?

3. What does Paul want to see happen in the church instead v5?

Another thing about these Judaizers is that they had a big focus on the law. But they were using the law improperly. Read the 'English Standard Version' (ESV) below of verses 8-11 to help bring out the meaning of some of the words:

8 Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, *9* understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, *10* the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, *11* in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.

4. What is the purpose of the law?

5. Do you think people can misuse the Old Testament law in the church today? If so, how?

It should be noted that the gospel is not anti-law. Those sinful things listed in verses 8-10 that are against the law also are against the gospel. See verses 10-11. It's just that we don't reform people by simply heaping the law on them. Rather, their hearts are changed by knowing the gospel.

6. To make the point that the law does not bring change, rather it's the gospel, Paul points to the example of his own life. See verses 13-16. What does Paul say about his own life, before he came to know Jesus?

7. How has Paul come to receive eternal life?

8. How does Paul's personal testimony work to correct any false-thinking and pride about the law in the church?

9. Why is the gospel an amazing message?

10. Why is the true gospel so surprising for people today?

11. This passage talks about how God's people should be on about love. Why does knowledge of the gospel produce love in God's people?