

- 6 *1 Corinthians 1*
Are there divisions in your own church?
How are they (or aren't they) dealt with?
- 7 *1 Corinthians 5*
Is sin simply a matter of where you draw the line?
And is the 'line' dependent on who is committing it?
- 8 *1 Corinthians 9*
Paul gives up his apostolic 'right' to remuneration (v.15).
Why did he do this?
More generally, do you think Christian ministers should be paid? Can it lead to them becoming compromised both spiritually and financially? In any case, can the wider church as a whole really afford to pay them?
- And do you think there should be set rules about whether they are single or married (see chapter 7)?
- 9 *1 Corinthians 10*
What are the modern day parallels to the idol feasts of Paul's day? Are there things we might be invited to which might lead us, or others, astray?
- 10 *1 Corinthians 15*
Do you fear death?
Do you find Paul's words here comforting?
What do you hope for in heaven?

Closing

Be still for a minute or two, silently reflecting on issues or challenges that have been raised for you by the discussion, and inviting God's Spirit to bring a sense of wisdom and peace. Close by say together the Lord's Prayer.

SACRED

Group Resources

Month 21

Opening Prayer

Lord, open our eyes,
that we may see you in our brothers and sisters.
Lord, open our ears,
that we may hear the cries of the hungry,
the cold, the frightened and the oppressed.
Lord, open our hearts,
that we may love each other as you love us.
Renew in us your Spirit,
Lord, free us and make us one.
Amen

(Mother Teresa of Calcutta, 1910-1997)

General Questions

- 1 How have you found this month's readings?
- 2 Has God spoken to you in any specific way through them?

Activity

This month's activity focuses on probably the most well-known chapter in the New Testament, outside the gospels – namely Paul's beautiful treatise on love in *1 Corinthians 13*.

Find several versions of this passage from a variety of translations ranging from the quite traditional (e.g. the *King James* or *Revised Standard Versions*) to the very contemporary (e.g. *The Message*). Read them out, one after the other, and discuss together which words and phrases from them struck you as you listened.

Which translation of this passage do you prefer?

Further Ideas

As usual, the intention is not to work through all of these ideas, just to take on some of them as the group chooses.

- 1 *Proverbs 31*
What qualities particularly stood out for you in the epilogue in praise of a wife of noble character?
Is there any difference between how the men and the women in the group answer that question?
- 2 *Psalms 80*
This psalm describes God's active involvement in the lives of his chosen people. For example; he "brought, drove out, planted, cleared" (vv.8-9).
If you were wanting to describe God's active involvement in your own life, what words would you choose and why?
- 3 *Psalms 81 (& 1 Corinthians 11)*
The notes liken the structure of the psalm to that of many church services. Is a familiar structure important in the way we worship? Why? Does it matter?
And how about Paul's comments on proper preparation before partaking of the Lord's Supper? Does this matter?
- 4 *Lamentations 2*
We see scenes akin to those described here disturbingly often on TV – a result of some conflict or catastrophe. Do we care? Do we care to the extent that Jeremiah does when he declares, "I am in torment" (v.11)?
Or are we anaesthetized from it all by its 'over-exposure' and our own self-absorption?
- 5 *Psalms 84*
Do you miss being at your church when you are away?
What is it that you miss?