**HOLY SAVIOUR, BITTERNE BIBLE STUDY – WEEK BEGINNING JULY 26th**

**PHILIPPIANS 1.27-2.11 – UNITED WE STAND**

*Paul is concerned that the Philippian Christians honour Christ in the way they live. One of the key ways of doing so was by working together in sharing the Gospel message. Their unity was important but unity often needs to be worked at. In this passage Paul encourages them to stand firm, united in the faith. Humility can be a key to unity and Christ is set before them as the supreme example of such humility.* ***As usual you may find it helpful to jot down your thoughts about the questions in the spaces provided*** *–* ***and it would be really good to share them with others.*** *Phone, Skype, email some members of your homegroup or a friend and/or email me your thoughts (* brianparfitt@btinternet.com *).* ***Brian Parfitt***

List the sorts of things which cause Christians to fall out with each other? Which of them are big issues, which are small? Why do we become divided?

**READ Philippians 1.27-2.11.**

**STRIVING TOGETHER (1.27-30)**

How is a good Christian life described in verse 27? Why is unity amongst Christians important?

Paul had faced opposition when he founded the church in Philippi and now, while he is in prison, the Philippians are facing opposition too. How does Paul encourage them in verses 28-30 to respond to the opposition they face?

***In what ways can we support each other in facing the challenges of living and witnessing for Christ?***

**WORKING TOGETHER (2.1-4)**

What things are listed in verses 1 and 2 which should prompt our working together as one? How have you received encouragement from the fellowship of God’s people?

How, according to verses 3 and 4, can we show humility in our dealings with other Christians? How would such behaviour promote unity? How can it be challenging to do so?

***How might Paul’s encouragement about unity shape relationships and behaviour in our church?***

**LEARNING TO SERVE (2.5-11)**

The song says of Jesus, ‘From heaven you came helpless babe, entered our world, your glory veiled, not to be served but to serve, and give your life that we might live.’ How is that pictured in these verses? Why did Christ take this path? How should we respond to a Christ who is now exalted as Lord?

The song also says, ‘So let us learn how to serve and in our lives enthrone him; each other’s needs to prefer, for it is Christ we’re serving.’ What can we learn from Christ’s example about humility and serving others? How can such service strengthen our witness as Christians?

***What might serving and preferring each other’s needs look like in practice in church life and daily life at work or at home?***