

## Time for God – Take 2

Purpose: To assist the congregation with further reflection on the theme of the Sunday service/passage.

### Week beginning Sunday 16 February 2020 Salt and Light

Pray Praise God that he gives us a part to play in Jesus' mission and that he provides us with the means of carrying it out. Thank God that he isn't remote or aloof but is interested in the world in which we live and concerned for its people. Ask him for his help so that we might play our full part in being salt and light for him in our community.

Read Read the passage (preferably in an easy to understand version). Matthew 5: 13-20.

Background Remember that Jesus did not live in a world of freezer, fridges and long-life produce. Salt in his context was much more to do with preservation than flavour, though of course, flavour can be a helpful point to get from the passage. Probably also need to be aware of the long history of salt being a taxable product (sometimes highly taxable and even a monopoly) – Jesus by contrast points to the freely available benefit of the Christian community to the world at large. Light, is more easily understood, but again remember that we are talking flame lanterns not electric light bulbs! The main point is that lamps need to be placed where people can see them, not hidden away.

Possible questions/points to consider

1. We've probably moved away from daily grocery shopping because we've become accustomed to food keeping fresh for longer as long as it is kept in the fridge. Add to that the fact that many people in this country have access to a freezer where can keep produce for longer still means that there will be few things that will require us to shop more than once or twice a week for our food. How important is preserving food/ keeping it fresh? How does this illustrate the importance of the preserving qualities of Christian people?
2. To what extent do you see a) yourself b) the christian community where you live as having any preserving influence? How might people act differently if you/we weren't around? How might we play a greater role in this for public benefit without becoming a marginalised clique?
3. We are probably more aware of salt's impact on flavour though modern medicine suggests that most of us use too much salt, which is bad for us. People have sometimes criticised Christians for having too much influence. How would you respond? What good effects have you noticed through the witness and influence of Christian people in your community? How might we do more? Be as practical as you can.
4. We don't like the dark – will soon comment on how early dark it is, or how dull a day it has been. We don't like it when street lights aren't working or when there are power cuts. Generally, we prefer the light. Jesus suggests that we are to be lights to our community. What does he mean by this? How may we have a role in "lighting" our neighbourhoods? Where best could we be and what steps might we take to do this job better?
5. We are not to hide our lights under a bushel or bucket! Can you think of times when you haven't been as open about your faith as you might have been? If so, what hindered you or got in the way? Would being convinced that we really have got good news to share help? To what extent do our perception of people's view of faith/God/Jesus really square with reality? If Church gets in the way what can we do to sort things? Sometimes people are more ready to accept "light" than we are to offer it. How do we redress matters.
6. Frankly, no one in their right mind would put a lamp under a bucket yet we can be very reticent at being open with our faith. Without instilling additional guilt how do we address this difficulty?
7. Do have a think about anything else that might have prompted a thought on Sunday.

Prayer: Lord, thank you that you want us to flavour our community with loving kindness and the gospel and illuminate it. Help us not to shy from this task and to use your provision to shine for Jesus. Amen.