

## Time for God – Take 2

**Purpose:** To assist the congregation with further reflection on the theme of the Sunday service and in particular with the Congregational Bible passage.

**Week beginning Sunday 14 May 2017**

**Jesus the Way**

**Pray** Pray that we would know Jesus with us in all the hurts and sorrows of life, able to keep us, while not just pointing to the future hope of heaven but giving us a taste now.

**Read** Read the passage (preferably in an easy to understand version). John 14:1-14. As it is very familiar you may wish to read it in a different version. Internet eg Bible Gateway.

**Background** I am the Way, the Truth and the Life” or “I am the true and living way” is often read at funerals and yes, the passage does offer hope in God’s presence after death for believers. The original context: Jesus prepares his disciples for his own death and helps them to hold firm in faith, continue his ministry and grasp the hope of heaven and fellowship with God even after he was away. Death comes to us all and bereavement is a real and constant experience of most Christian congregations. We should take encouragement from passages such as this.

**Possible questions/points to consider**

1. Last week we were thinking primarily of Jesus being the gateway, access, entrance to God and things of the kingdom whereas there is more emphasis this week on Jesus being the (ongoing) way to God in a more continual sense. How might you describe your relationship with Jesus that would help you (and others) to understand that it is more than a “one day wonder”? Eg a walk. Can you give examples of how things might have changed over time?
2. The Psalmist says (Ps 16) “I am always aware of the Lord’s presence. He is near. Nothing can shake me.” Can you associate with that sentiment? All the time? If not, what does a verse like that and John 14 say about God/Jesus being “there” for us? We all like to spend time with our friends. Where that is not possible what steps do we take to maintain/develop the friendship? Are we/they only friends when they are actually with us? So, what does it mean to be a friend of Jesus?
3. Some people are content to accept the broad brush picture whereas others really like to know the detail. It varies with context: Someone may be a keen and competent driver who thoroughly enjoys driving but have no appetite for understanding what is going on under the bonnet. Yet, they may want to know every little detail of a work project, outing with friends or recipe. How does that square with your experience? Are there any areas where you know that you want every detail? Jesus doesn’t give us every last detail of how things are going to be in heaven. What DOES he say (in this passage particularly)? What can we be sure about? What details are left for now?
4. Jesus as the way – think companion, accompanier, friend, or (in a positive sense) fellow traveller. How do these thoughts help us appreciate what Jesus wants us to experience as we “walk with him”? Jesus doesn’t wave the start flag or change a red light to green to get us going on the race of life. He walks with us every step of the way. What would you say to a new believer about Jesus being with us always? Can you share instances where a) you felt Jesus was far away b) when he was very near? What can you learn from that?
5. Jesus wept at the tomb of his friend Lazarus. It is OK even for a Christian to be upset and sad at the death of a loved one. How can we be “real” in expressing and dealing with human grief? How does the sense that “we are not those who have no hope” put a different complexion on things? Without ignoring hard to answer questions about heaven why is it more helpful to focus on what Jesus DOES tell us?
6. Anything else that arises from the passage or the service?

**Prayer** Thank you Lord for the hope that we have in Jesus that there is life after death, life in fellowship with you and all who love you, for ever. Help us to cope with our sadness, with the unanswered questions and to trust your Son who has promised never to leave us. Amen.