



ST CHRISTOPHER'S 'SUSPENDED CHURCH' NEWSLETTER

Sunday 14th March 2021

NEWS UPDATE



Mike Clayton's Licensing Service – Sunday 18th April



Arrangements are being made for Mike's licensing service on Sunday 18th April, 2.00pm at St Christopher's. Due to the restriction on numbers we will be seeking 10 guests to attend from each of the three churches represented – St Christopher's, Emmanuel, and St Cuthbert's. It may not be possible to include everyone who would like to come, but if you would particularly like to attend let Peter know, and we'll hopefully be able to fit you in.

BIBLE READING – Philippians 4: 1-9

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends!

I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

This week we have attempted a different type of communication. Peter interviewed Hilary Holderness and Christine Cam about their experience of being a mum, relating the discussion to our passage from Philippians. This is how the conversation went.

Hilary: I think that you were married before us. Did you get married at 2 o'clock?

Chris: One o'clock. You got married at 2? 2.30?

Peter: On the exact same day? That's hilarious!

Hilary: 3 o'clock. So you and Jim have been married 2 hours longer than us. That made me think that we've been mothers in the same era really.

Chris: Yes, we have.

Hilary: You know, we have both probably had a lot of the same things going on. I don't know about in your house Christine, but in our house – the grass was always greener at their friends' houses!

Chris (Nodding in agreement): Yes.

Hilary: It was always perfect at their friends' houses. At home it never was. We were never the 'Persil family,' but their friends were always the 'Persil family.' And I'm sure your kids were the same.

Chris (Laughing and nodding): Yes.

Hilary: It makes me laugh, looking back on that now because I used to get bothered about that and then I think – why? No household was perfect. Somebody else's mum or dad might do something else better than us, but we did other things.

Christine nods in agreement.

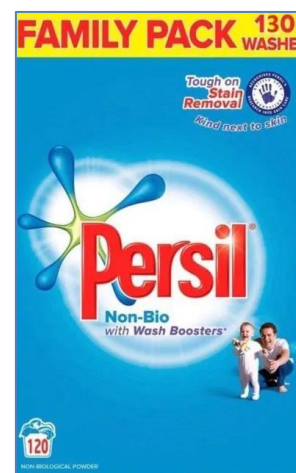
Hilary: I think a lot of it is this pressure that you've got to be the perfect parent. And I think that when you are younger you do think that. But you can't be! It's never just sweetness and light, is it? There are disagreements, I don't suppose we would be human if there weren't.

Chris: I know from things that Liz has said now, she's realising that being a mum now – things are different.

Hilary (Nodding): Yes.

Chris: She's appreciating more; my viewpoint on things, than when she was a teenager or in her early twenties.

Peter: Is that an admission that actually mum was right all along?



Chris: Yes. In a way.

Hilary: And it made me think – when I was thinking about how we all have our disagreements like you do in your house and we did here – I was thinking about the two ladies in the Philippians passage. They had their disagreement, but they had to work together to get through their disagreement. And that's a good thing for everybody.

I Plead With Euodia And
I Plead With Syntyche To
Agree With Each Other
In The Lord.

Philippians 4-2

Chris: Yes. That's right. And I also think the most important thing in the passage, was prayer. The importance of prayer. And talking it through with God.

Hilary: Yes.

Chris: But also, the other thing I picked up – we must always be thankful and joyful. There must be thanksgiving in our prayers. So perhaps we should be starting with the joy and thanksgiving before we say our requests to God?

Hilary: Yes, you should always celebrate and think about the good things.

Peter: There's a couple of things strike me. Firstly, it says "*I plead with Euodia and Syntyche (however you say it) to agree with each other in the Lord. Help these women who have contended at my side.*" I just wonder whether on Mother's Day that message of "help these women" is important. When women are stressed out or struggling with something, there's an extent to which we all have a responsibility to "*help these women,*" whatever their difficulties may be. Because mums have an awful lot on their plate, and can get stressed out sometimes.

The other thing was "Do not be anxious about anything," but pray and be thankful. As a mum what percentage of your anxieties, do you think, relate to your children?



Chris (Laughing): You are constantly worrying about them.

Hilary: No, it never goes away does it?

Chris (Shaking her head): No, it doesn't. You know that Peter with your family. But it doesn't make any difference (laughing) when you're older, you still worry about them. Even now, I'm worrying about them.

Peter: I would say, as a generalisation, with mums and dads, when it comes to children being on your mind is more a mum thing. It works like that in my marriage anyway!

Hilary: Yes. I think you're right about that.

Peter: Both parents can be anxious about their children, but it just plays on a mum's mind a bit more.

Hilary: Yes. You get hurt and upset when their upset about something. Don't you?

Chris: Yes. I think that you are more in tune to their emotions. Aren't you?

Hilary: Definitely.

Peter: This morning, both Isaac and Florence were dropped off for the first time at school, and when Florence walked off, Meredith just cried – she wanted to go with her.

Chris and Hilary: Aw!

Peter: And Louisa, as a mum, she's sensitive to a little girl's feelings. It's awfully quiet around the house today – doesn't quite feel the same! It's bliss!! (laughing)

Chris: Meredith will miss the children, won't she? She'll be glad when they come back in from school.

Hilary: Yes. I think so.

Peter: So, for me there are two things we've pulled out straightaway. One is about women needing to get on with each other and the importance of that. And others in the community helping when there is a disagreement. The second thing is prayer and how we can find peace through it, whatever we are anxious about. Which for a mum will often be her children – yes?

Hilary: Yes.

Chris: Taking our prayers to God. He is our Heavenly Father, and he will help us through with whatever help we need. It just came to my mind, and I was thinking about Andrew. He had a gap year. He went to Peru, in South America, he went for 6 weeks. He flew out there on his own to Bogota. I was absolutely terrified. Then he met up with a group of people; they were all different ages. It was an Exodus group and they travelled around in this Jeep together. We didn't have the internet or phones like we have now. One night, I couldn't sleep, and I was up ironing in the early hours of the morning, and he rang me!

"Hiya mum! Just letting you know I'm alright." It was such a relief to hear his voice and know that he had been able to get hold of a phone and he was able to talk to us. I was probably praying at the time while I was ironing, thinking about Andrew and worrying about him, especially being away 6 weeks, worrying what was happening to him.



He was there in an earthquake and he did have a tummy upset, but he didn't go into too much detail about all these things! But during that time, I just remember thinking, well praying, every day for his safety. He was a long way away!

Peter: You know, we can trust God with our children, and we can pray to God for our children when we are feeling anxious or worried. According to Paul, *“The peace of god which transcends understanding will guard our hearts and minds.”* If you can say that as a mum, then it must be true. It doesn’t always take away the issue that you’re worrying about does it? But it makes you feel better.

Chris and Hilary: Yes.

Peter: It’s actually quite hard in entrusting your children to God. Isn’t it?

Hilary: It’s hard entrusting your children to anyone!

Peter: It is. You know, you can let God have anything, but not that. My children are something I’m keeping hold of.

Hilary: Not my babies!

Peter: You know, you learn that they are not really our babies, are they? They grow up and they leave. Maybe they were always God’s to begin with...

Hilary: We’re only there to help them, really. It’s wrong if they are too dependent on you all the time – in most circumstances.

Peter: This last bit *“Finally, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure.... think about such things.”* What does that say to motherhood? Focus on the positive?

Hilary: I think that’s what it says for being a mother. Try and focus on the positives. And even when you’re going through a nightmare scenario, you will get through it.

Peter: I mean there’s always something lovely and admirable and excellent and praiseworthy with your children. Isn’t there?

Chris and Hilary: Yes.

Peter: We’ve recently have had an upset child with her maths work, and not being able to do it. There have been a few tears. And I just want to remind Florence about all the things that are pure, lovely, noble, and excellent that she possesses.

Chris: That’s it.

Hilary: That’s right. It’s about helping them build up their confidence again.

Peter: Maths is still difficult; but Paul is saying – think of all those other positive things, and the God of Peace will be with you. It shouldn’t be hard as a parent to think of everything that’s lovely about our children, should it?



Hilary and Chris: No.

Peter: Then again, I haven't gone through teenage parenting yet!

General Laughter

Hilary: Sometimes when they are teenagers you long for the days when they were Florence's age!

Peter: Every stage of parenthood has its challenges and its joys. Thank you for giving the time to talk about motherhood, and for thinking about the message of Philippians. The bible can be applied to all sorts of topics.



Prayers – Written by Louise Walton

We pray for our homes and families, and especially today because it is Mothering Sunday we pray for our own mothers, whether they are with us every day, whether they live far away, or whether we see them no more.

Loving God, thank you for the love of our mothers. Thank you for their care and concern and for the joys they have shared with us. Thank you, God, for all that they give us.

Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

Thank you, God, for all our mothers who are frontline workers. The nurses, doctors, care home workers, teachers, shop workers, delivery drivers, postal workers and others. Please keep them in your warm embrace so that they always know you are there to help them when they need it most.

We thank God for a mother's love as we remember the love between Christ and his own mother.

Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

We pray for all the teachers and educators as the children go back to school this week. We pray that you give them the energy and enthusiasm to teach the extra children in their care with new routines and ways of doing things.

Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

We pray for all those that are not feeling so well at this time. Those in care homes, hospital and at home. Wrap your loving arms around them as they take the time to make themselves well again.

We pray for all those whose anniversaries fall at this time. Keep their families and all those that knew them in your thoughts and give them comfort when they need it most.

Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

God of love, mother to all, hear these prayers and answer them, for the sake of your children.

Merciful Father ... **accept these prayers, for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**