

Retirement

13. If you are retired how did you cope with the transition from work to retirement? If retirement is still in the future for you do you look forward to it, or wonder how you will cope?

14. Vincent Alsop (a 17th century minister) preaching about ageing and listening to the doctor said "...improved health in our declining years may make us more lively, active, cheerful and vigorous in God's work."

For the retired - have you seen your retirement in this way? For the rest - are you looking forward to working for God in new ways?

Pray

- Pray for those who struggle with work finding it stressful and oppressive. Pray for wisdom in finding a right balance between work and other responsibilities?
- Pray particularly for help in doing all to the glory of God.
- Pray for those who want to work but are unable to do so and for those struggling because of recent changes to the benefits system.
- Pray for our Walking Day at the end of June for the practical arrangements and the spiritual impact.

David Phillips
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Get Wisdom

Week 5



"To win people for Christ and to build them up in Christ."
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Do all to the glory of God

This study is in part about idleness and in part about work. Some questions relate specifically to paid employment but can be related to retirement and other ways in which we spend our time. The sermon on 30th May was on this theme.

Idleness

Read 2 Thessalonians 3.6-15

The Church in Thessalonica seems to have been troubled by false teaching about the return of Christ. There was a problem with idleness. The two issues may be related but if so that is not spelt out in the letter itself.

1. How did Paul, Silvanus and Timothy (the letter is from all three) conduct themselves in Thessalonica?
2. Why do you think that a brother "walking in idleness" is so serious for the church that they are warned to "keep away from" them?

Work

3. The media recently reported on the Meek family who have given up home and work to tour in a caravan and spend more time together. Tim Meek writes "*we believe that the real measure of modern success is nothing to do with your bank balance or the size of your house*". Do you think this is a fair reflection of how many people see their lives, and particularly see work as a means to obtain these things?

4. The Meeks decided that time spent together is more important than material things and so changed their lifestyle dramatically. Would you have considered (or might you consider) following the Meeks' example?

5. *"I had to ... work twenty-nine hours a day down 'mill, and pay 'mill owner for permission to come to work"* (Monty Python: Four Yorkshiremen sketch) More reliable data suggests that for every 40 hours an average person works today someone in the 1870s worked 66 hours. Given that we also have many labour saving devices at home why do you think so many of us feel over-busy and that work seems to dominate our lives?

6. Tim and Kerry Meek said that they had found work so stressful that they, like many others, were living for the weekends when they would get a temporary respite. Is this something you can echo in your own experience of work?

7. As explained in the sermon the Bible has a positive attitude to work as created by God, whilst also recognising that because of the fall and God's curse our work is often labour and toil. What would you say are the best and worst parts of your work?

Read 1 Corinthians 10.31.

8. This verse is particularly about eating food that may have been offered to idols. However, Christians have applied it more generally and part of St James Vision is ***Seeing work as part of our Christian service, to be done to the praise and glory of God.*** Do you see work in this way?

9. Do you think our teaching, prayer and Bible studies at St James deal sufficiently with this issue?

10. The pressure of secularism is to separate faith from the workplace (and public life and education). Have Christians perhaps been influenced by this to not think of faith as relevant to the workplace?

11. Thinking about the worst parts of your work (question 7), how might this verse in 1 Corinthians help?

Wisdom for work

12. Take a look at some of the following Proverbs and ask how you might apply each to a typical workplace in order to work to the glory of God. They are general so there may be exceptions and they are not just about being successful but about doing what is right.

Prov 10.26

Prov 18.9

Prov 12.24

Prov 14.23

Prov 21.5

Prov 15.22

Prov 29.7

One writer reminds us that when we follow God's wisdom we can expect Him to provide us with the necessities of life and He often gives much more than we need but we must always "seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Mtt 6.33)