

No. 3 'Common mindset and mutual love'

Read Philippians 1: 27 – 2: 4

God made us in his image to be social beings, needing relationship for our wellbeing. He demonstrates and models it in Holy Trinity and with his believing family. *How does being a member of God's family manifest itself when you pray, or in other daily activities?* As we read this letter, we become very aware Paul is team building for Jesus, because he knows God values each individual, but every individual will need the love and support provided by a team (family) to flourish, and together "I can do things you cannot, you can do things I cannot; together we can do great things." (Mother Teresa)

Paul was a member of many teams (as we are), his travelling missionary team, his home church in Antioch, every church he founded, to name a few, and, as he writes in this letter, his expectation was support from them all. Personal support for him centred upon a common purpose 'contending for the faith of the Gospel.' This was the glue of mutual interdependence. *In what ways do we demonstrate our support for our teams?*



We all hope that when we are in need of support, the 'team bank' will not run dry. Even before joining any team, poignant to remember that Jesus gave the ultimate in support, in the hope we might join his team. Paul points out that membership has both benefits and costs. *Divide the group in two, ask one half to list the benefits and the other list the costs, of belonging to*

God's team. Then compare notes. How do these compare with those of your home group team? Then read again chapter 2: 1-2. "Love is the cause of unity in all things." (Aristotle) As a member of St James, you are a member of several teams. I name three (but there are more for many of us), the Diocese of Bath and Wells, the Church of St James, and your home group. All these groups would declare committed Christian objectives. *Reflect on these groups. How does their support for us, and ours for them, differ for each separate group? If your reflections contained any criticisms, consider how, either as a team or individually, unity could be improved.*

Read John 15: 9 – 17 We return to joy, and now its link with love. Love to Christ brings him joy, love from Christ makes our joy complete. God is love; it will be his ongoing everlasting response, and it should be ours too. Jesus says he has made known to us what he requires us to do. In light of our discussions, *what do we need to enhance our individual response – to "go and bear more fruit?"* Paraphrasing Vince Lombardi (renown sports team coach) – 'Individual commitment to a group effort - that is what makes a team work, a company work, a church work.'

Thought for the week: 'Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: if one falls down, their friend can help them up' Ecclesiastes 4: 9

Prayer We commit to you Lord our plans, for our group, for the onward journey of our faith; reshape and refine them Lord to make them yours.