



# encouragement groups

## Colossians 3-4

2011 term 2

**April 27 briefing night**

1. May 2-8 Col 3.1-11
2. May 9-15 Col 3.12-17
3. May 16-22 Col 3.18-19
4. May 23-29 Col 3.20-21
5. May 30-June 5 Col 3.22-4.1
6. June 6-12 Col 4.2-6
7. June 13-19 Col 4.7-18
8. June 20-26 Col 3-4

# Encouragement groups introduction

## What are encouragement groups?

Groups of 3-4 people meeting weekly for 60-90 mins to read & reflect upon a passage of Scripture, to pray together & to encourage each other in trust & obedience & evangelism.

Every encouragement group across nightchurch will be looking at the same passage in the same week with a shared set of questions.

Each encouragement group will have an “overseer” responsible for the group meeting together and for what happens in that meeting. Its not the overseers job to make the group "work" That's the responsibility of every member.

Overseers will be cared for by the leadership team. Each overseer will be contacted by a leadership team member every 2 weeks to help & encourage them.

Its hoped that encouragement groups through the year may expand and bud into more groups with more overseers.

## What should happen when an encouragement group meets?

Something like this...

*Arrive & catch up (10mins)*

*Prayer with & for each other. (10 mins)*

*Read through passage and use discussion questions to help one another hear & obey the Word of God. (45 mins)*

*Pray together in response to the Word of God (10 mins)*

*Time together*

An encouragement group will work best when people are committed to gathering, preparing beforehand, and discussing lovingly.

Encouragement groups should also be missional. ie. Praying regularly for unbelievers and working together to share Jesus with our friends & community.



5. Why might the apostle use strong language like, "put to death" and "rid yourselves"?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. Prayerfully ponder which of these earthly things you find particularly challenging to be done with.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. What truths do you find particularly encouraging in verses 9 and 10? Why?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. Re-write verse 11 in your own words.

From this passage there is much to give thanks for and much to seek God's help with. Remember that you are praying to the one who is renewing you by his word and Spirit. So pray humbly yet hopefully.



## STUDY 8: COLOSSIANS

*These questions are designed to be worked through prayerfully by each member of the encouragement group BEFORE meeting together. This will be an encouragement to the rest of the group and a help to you as you meet.*

*The questions are just a guide to helping us hear God's Word. Don't be constricted by them!*

**Colossians 2:6 says:- "So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him..."**

**READ COLOSSIANS** in one sitting to remind yourself of all the truths we've been learning these past months.

*Jot down the truths you want to remember about **Christ Jesus and your life in him.***

**Pray through these truths with thanksgiving.**

5. What would it look like for you to be “wrestling in prayer” for other Christians?
  
6. What's significant about verse 16 for us reading these ancient letters?
  
7. Why do you think Paul ends this letter with “remember my chains”?

The companion letter to Colossians is the letter to Philemon. Philemon was a member of the Colossian church. You might like to read that now and compare the two letters.

**Thank God for the people who encourage you in your Christian life. Prayerfully consider those you could encourage and wrestle in prayer for them.**



## STUDY 2: COLOSSIANS 3.12-17

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### READ COLOSSIANS 3.12-14

1. Take some time to savour the description of Christians in verse 1. (you might like to compare it with Deuteronomy 7:6).
  
2. How do you think, is this description linked to the commands that follow?
  
3. Prayerfully ponder what we are to clothe ourselves with. What do you notice about the list?
  
4. Compare verses 12-14 with verses 5-9 in order to compare what we are to put off with what we are put on.
  
5. What do you find most challenging about the commands of these verses?

*In the kindness of God, the Bible never tells us to simply stop doing or thinking things. Instead, we are told to replace unhelpful things with helpful, unholy with holy.*

6. In what way does love bind them all together in perfect unity? (You might like to compare these verses with 1Corinthians 13)

### READ COLOSSIANS 3.15-17

*In these verses the apostle particularly has in mind the community of believers.*

7. What do you think verse 15 means? What would this look like in a nightchurch family? How could you contribute to it?
8. What do you think verse 16 means? (The "you" is plural—"yous!") What would this look like in a nightchurch family? How could you contribute to it?
9. What do you think verse 17 means? What would this look like in a nightchurch family? How could you contribute to it?

**What has the Spirit of Christ convicted you of from these verses? What's the next step for you? How should these verses impact our church family? There is much to be praying about!**

*Reading tip: "You can change—God is transforming power for our sinful behaviour and negative emotions" is a very helpful book by Tim Chester.*



## STUDY 7: COLOSSIANS 4.7-18

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### READ COLOSSIANS 4.7-18

1. Who was Paul in partnership with in the gospel?
2. How does Paul describe his relationship with these people?
3. How does the example of these people reinforce the teaching of Colossians?
4. This last section of the letter is a final encouragement to the Colossians Christians. What do we learn from these verses about encouragement?

6. *If Paul's responsibility is to proclaim the gospel, what is the responsibility of the Colossians Christians?*
  
7. *What would being wise in the way you act toward outsiders look like for you at work or in your neighbourhood?*
  
8. *What would conversation not full of grace and not seasoned with salt be like?*
  
9. *"According to the apostle Paul, what we say is not nearly as important is how we say it." Do you agree with this statement?*

**Spend some time prayerfully considering the unbelievers you are in relationship with. Use Paul's instructions here to guide your prayers.**

**Pray too for missionaries and gifted evangelists that you know using verses 4 to guide you.**

*Reading tip: "Promoting the gospel—the whole of life for the cause of Christ" is a very helpful book by John Dickson on our role in bringing glory to God through speaking the truth in love.*



## STUDY 3: COLOSSIANS 3.18-19

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### READ COLOSSIANS 3.18

1. *What is the command of this verse? What is the reason for the command?*
  
2. *Why do you think the apostle addresses wives, husbands, children, fathers, slaves and masters at this point in his letter?*
  
3. *What are the challenges of verse 18?*

### READ EPHESIANS 5:22–24

4. *How do these verses enhance the command and the reason for the command in Colossians 3:18?*

### READ TITUS 2:3–5

5. *How do these verses enhance the command and the reason for the command in Colossians 3:18?*

### READ COLOSSIANS 3:19

6. Why is it important to read this command to husbands together with the command of 3:18?
7. What are the challenges of verse 19?

### READ EPHESIANS 5.25-30

8. How do these verses enhance the command in Colossians 3:18?
9. Why is it important to read Colossians 3:18–19 in the light of 3:12–17?
10. What is the significance of these verses to those who are unmarried in your church family?

**Pray for the husbands and wives in our church family. Pray that we would be a church family that pleases the Lord in all of our relationships.**



### STUDY 6: COLOSSIANS 4.2-6

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### READ COLOSSIANS 4:2–6

1. From these verses, what you think the apostle means by watchful and thankful praying?
2. Divide verses 3 to 6 into two sections. Come up with a title for each section.
3. Of all the things Paul urges his churches to pray for, prayer for the work of the gospel is the most common. Why do you think that is?
4. What's the lovely irony in verse three? What you learn about God and evangelism?
5. What's striking about verse 4?

5. Ponder prayerfully how these verses ought to impact you.

6. What in your situation makes it difficult to obey these commands?

7. What confidence can you have in being able to obey these commands?

#### **READ COLOSSIANS 4.1**

8. What jumps out at you from this verse?

9. How does the gospel of Christ shape this command?

10. How should this first impact you in your life?

**Pray that in whatever you do that you would work at it with all of your heart as working for the Lord, knowing that it is our Lord Jesus Christ you are serving.**



## **STUDY 4: COLOSSIANS 3.20-21**

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#### **READ COLOSSIANS 3.20**

1. What stands out to you from the apostle's command to children?

2. What's the significance of Paul addressing children directly?

3. The commentator Dick Lucas writes, "It would be hard to find any practical family instruction more rooted in every part of holy Scripture than the importance of children's obedience to their parents." What do you think?

#### **READ COLOSSIANS 3.21**

4. What command is given to the fathers? What is the reason for this command?

5. Why might this be a necessary command?

6. Why might Paul have only mentioned fathers and not mothers?

7. In what ways are verses 20 and 21 similar to verses 18 and 19?

#### READ EPHESIANS 6.1-4

8. How do these verses help our understanding of 3:20–21?

#### READ 1THESSALONIANS 2.10-12

9. How do these verses help our understanding of 3:20–21?

**Pray for our nightchurch families. Pray particularly for our children and fathers. Pray that in all of our relationships we would be putting to death whatever belongs to our earthly nature and putting on the new self which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.**



## STUDY 5: COLOSSIANS 3.22-4.1

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#### READ COLOSSIANS 3.22-25

*"The Roman economy was highly dependent on slavery. Slaves came from conquest in war, voluntary entrance into slavery, or birth into a slave family. There was thus no single racial profile for a slave. The lives of slaves also varied considerably. State-owned slaves who worked in the brutal conditions of the mines had a short life expectancy. Agricultural slaves toiled in the fields. Household slaves served as cooks, hairdressers, servants, and concubines; yet, they could also be trained to positions of significant authority, even administrating businesses for their owners."*

1. What jumps out at you from these commands to slaves?

2. How do these commands extend beyond slavery?

3. What is the basic principle driving these commands?

4. How are these commands shaped by 3:1-17?