

EPHESIANS

Christ Church Westbourne: January to June 2008

Between now and June we are to read Ephesians in our home groups at Christ Church. This is a great letter for us to study. It outlines the astonishing privileges of being a Christian, and in a very practical way the life Christ wants us to lead. As Eph 1:1 and 1:13 indicate, Paul wrote it to some people who'd become Christians in the city of Ephesus, to help them understand what had happened to them and how to live for Christ.

Paul starts his letter by explaining what a marvellous thing it is to be a Christian ; he unpacks the great benefits that are ours in Christ, and what he prays for people (ch 1). He goes on to explain what exactly has happened to us: our situation before we were believers and our situation now - a kind of 'before and after' (ch 2). In chapter 3 he explains his own role as an apostle.

Following on from this, the second half of the letter is all "application" - how we should actually *live* as Christians. He talks about unity between Christians - a big theme of the letter - and how this is to be achieved (ch 4). He goes on to give numerous practical examples of the difference Christ must make, in all areas of life, including the home and at work (chs 4-6). In conclusion, he tells us we're all involved in a mighty conflict with the powers of evil - and shows us how to succeed. So we have a lot to look forward to!

We won't be covering this in church in the same way we did with 1 Corinthians, although in January in Evening Church we will be hearing how the gospel first reached Ephesus; on Jan 13 we will also be looking at Ephesians 2 as we explore the difference between Christianity and religion.

Proposed timetable (dates are weeks beginning)

14 Jan	1:1-14
28 Jan	1:15-23
(5-8 Feb = <i>Eternity</i> mission at BIC)	
11 Feb	2:1-10
25 Feb	2:11-22
10 Mar	3:1-22
EASTER BREAK	
7 April	4:1-16
21 April	4:17-32
5 May	5:1-20
19 May	5:21-6:9
2 June	6:10-23

Recommended reading: if you'd like more comment on the letter, I suggest John Stott's volume on Ephesians in *The Bible Speaks Today* series (IVP).

May God use this to bless us as individuals and as a church.