

## A Loving People

### Readings

#### Ephesians 3:14-19

For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, **being rooted and established in love**, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge - that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

#### Ephesians 2:11-18

Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (that done in the body by the hands of men) - remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, **excluded from citizenship** in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. **But** now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.

For he himself is our peace, who has **made the two one** and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to **reconcile** both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him **we both have access to the Father** by one Spirit.

### Reflection

1. We love because .... we are loved.
2. God's heart for all people is not new..... Ex.19:6
  - Grace & love is God's nature and that is the heart of the Gospel... 'Good News' !
  - 1 Peter 2:9 ... priesthood is our call
  - 1 Peter 2:12 ... Living out the 'Good News' in all that we do
3. Three **Characteristics of a loving people**
  - Relational: Reflective of trinity. John 17:23
  - Communal:Eph 3:18 '...together with all the saints...'
  - Practical:James 2:18... what we do shows what we really believe.
4. **Our love is...**
  - Unconditional (non – transactional)
  - Costly
  - For everyone....

### Questions for personal reflection and group discussion

- What gets in the way of us believing we are loved? ... in fact, what do we really believe?
- What is 'Good News'? A commodity we have? Something we do? Something we are?
- How should we be 'a loving people..... relationally, communally, practically?
- Why has the 'church' often made love / good news transactional?
- Are we ready to pay the price of love in Bognor Regis?
- Do we really believe that God's love is for everyone?

### Feedback and Questions

- If you have anything to share out of all of this – any stories, testimonies, creative works or whatever – please let us know. You may be a huge encouragement to many other people.
- You can submit comments and questions to the church office, via your home group leader, or make a note and put it in the offering boxes. There is a special section on the Church website ([www.opengate.org.uk](http://www.opengate.org.uk)) on the 'Forum' page to discuss any issues relating to the church:rebooted series.

