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**OUR PARTNERSHIP IN GOD’S MISSION IN THE WORLD**

**Jesus said:” …. you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth”.**

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In this series of studies we will be looking at what it means for us to be ‘Partners in Mission’ with the individuals and organisations we support at Holy Saviour. There are varying levels of possible engagement with the different organisations but these studies began from discussion about how to strengthen our links with Namalemba, with which we can engage at all sorts of levels and that will be reflected in the way we look briefly at that link each time. Each week there will be the opportunity to reflect on an aspect of how we can engage with others as ‘partners in mission’ and also a focus on the organisations which we support.

We have derived some of the study material from a Partnership bible study guide produced by the missionary society Crosslinks . The very helpful videos they have produced have shaped the 6 week structure of our studies. The links to the videos can be found by doing control/click with this link <https://www.crosslinks.org/partnership-videos/download> Do use the videos if at all possible – you should be able to download them to a lap-top, tablet or phone.

Most of our mission partners send out regular information on-line and in magazines or prayer leaflets. Our local links to our mission partners may have leaflets or magazines you could make use of.

The Bible studies will focus in particular on Paul’s letter to the Philippians. They were definitely his partners in his mission. That’s how he describes them in Philippians 1.5. They took a lively interest in his ministry in other places. They supported him financially. Paul preferred to be able to preach in places without asking local people to support him in any way, so there was no appearance of people paying for the Gospel message. He was able to do so because the Christians in Philippi often sent financial support, as well as sending church members like Epaphroditus who had been sent to take financial support and to encourage Paul when he was in prison in Rome (Philippians 4.10-20). There it is described as a a two way relationship of giving and receiving. *(N.B. We will look at some of the passages more than once, like the description of the links between Paul, Timothy and Epaphroditus in 2.19-30, which illustrates more than one aspect of partnership in mission. Try to focus on how such passages illustrate the particular theme for that study.)*

We hope that groups will have ideas about how we can be involved with and support our mission partners. Please feed back your ideas to Brian Parfitt, our Homegroups’ Coordinator, who will edit and pass them on to our World Mission Group.

Groups may well feel that there are ways they as a group might want to respond, perhaps by developing a prayer link or contact with one of our Mission Partners or with individuals or projects in Namalemba. It would be good if that could happen. We will give what help we can to make that possible.

Many of our links are with societies and not individuals and all have central structures which need funding. Some people will question this but these notes from Crosslinks give a very helpful set of answers to the question ‘Why mission organisations?’

*Mission societies can be hugely valuable and instrumental to the 21st century mission partner – and to their supporting churches. There are many ways that mission societies can contribute to making gospel partnerships a reality, such as:*

*- Selecting, training and debriefing mission partners, as well as providing accountability.*

*- Helping to find additional churches to partner with mission partners.*

*- Providing a legal and financial framework for mission partners – contracts, pensions, tax, insurance, visas, work permits, etc.*

*- Facilitating mission partner placements through their worldwide networks, as well as their accumulated knowledge and experience in deploying mission partners.*

*- Providing pastoral support and expertise in times of stress or crisis.*

*- Offering a range of services and teaching resources for churches.*

**STUDY 1 - PARTNERS IN PRAYER**

How many of the missionary links our church has had can you name? Which of them has particularly interested you? Have any of the group visited Namalemba or any other mission projects? What has been the impact on you of such involvement?

**BIBLE STUDY**

1.  **Read Philippians 1.3-11.** What do these verses show about the nature of Paul’s relationship with the Christians in Philippi? What are Paul’s feelings towards them? How is Paul’s love for the Philippian Christians shown in his praying? What sorts of things is Paul praying for? Are there things here which we can pray for our mission partners?

3. **Read Philippians 4.4-7.** What do these verses show about the nature and value of prayer? What can we pray about and what can be the outcomes of those prayers?

**4. Read Ephesians 6.18-20.** Here is a specific request for prayer Paul makes for himself in prison. What does he want other Christians to pray for? How best can we pray for the specific needs of mission partners and societies?

**LOOK AT THE VIDEO ABOUT PRAYER:**

What encouragement did the video give you in seeing the importance of prayer?

What did you discover about the things we can pray for?

**A FOCUS ON NAMALEMBA & BUMOOZI**

Look at the information about our link. How have you been aware of/interested in/supported our Namalemba link? How could this link be strengthened through our praying?

**A LOOK AT CHURCH MISSION SOCIETY**

Look at the handout about Church Mission Society. If you have time look at their website <https://churchmissionsociety.org/> How does Church Mission Society play its part in God’s mission in the world? How does prayer enable our partnership with them?

**WHAT CAN WE DO?**

How do we pray for our mission partners as a church together and as individuals?

Are there ways we could make our prayer more effective?

**STUDY 2 - PARTNERS IN GIVING**

Look at the information about our mission partners. Which of them offer easy links for personal involvement? Which of them are we likely only to support largely by our giving?

**BIBLE STUDY**

1. **Read Philippians 4.10-20** What do we learn here about the way that the Philippian Christians had supported Paul financially? Why did they support him? How does our giving express our concern for the mission partners we support? How does Paul see the deeper value of their giving? How does the promise in verse 19 relate to attitudes to giving?

2. What does Paul say about the way he faces his changing circumstances? How has he learnt to cope with those circumstances? Paul made sacrifices for the sake of sharing the Gospel, how is that reflected in the lives of those who serve with our mission partners and societies?

3. Paul was not the only one the Philippian Christians supported by giving. They were among the Christians in Macedonia who gave to the appeal for the Church in Jerusalem. **Read 2 Corinthians 8.1-5.** What do these verses say about the Philippians’ attitude to giving? **Read 2 Corinthians 9.6-14.** What do these verses add to ourunderstanding about the impact of our giving? What do they say about God’s work in and through us as we give?

**LOOK AT THE VIDEO ABOUT GIVING:**

What encouragements did the video give you in seeing the importance of giving?

Were their some new helpful insights about giving?

**A FOCUS ON NAMALEMBA & BUMOOZI**

Look at the information about our link. What particular projects have we helped financially? In what ways have we raised money for Namalemba? (If you shop on Amazon, you can sign up to Amazon smile, select Busoga Trust as your chosen charity, and we will receive a small donation each time you shop!) You can donate to the church indicating it is for Namalemba.)

**A LOOK AT BIBLE SOCIETY**

Look at the handout about **Bible Society.** If you have time look at their website. [biblesociety.org.uk](https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/)

How does Bible Society play its part in God’s mission in the world and how does our partnership in giving funds enable them to provide God’s Word to others?

**WHAT CAN WE DO?**

How does the way we give 10% of our income as a Church to our mission partners show our commitment to the church’s mission in the world? Does the fact that this is done automatically on our behalf make that giving impersonal? Do you know of other ways the church is raising funds and giving to our mission links? How can we as individuals support these partners or other people and projects God leads us to have a concern for?

**STUDY 3 - PARTNERS IN CARING**

How do you show love and care for your family and friends? Do you know of ways the church or individuals have shown practical care for any of our mission partners?

**BIBLE STUDY**

1. **Read Philippians 1.3-8** What is Paul’s response to the care shown him by the Christians in Philippi? How have they encouraged him? How can it make a difference to our mission partners to receive support and help from others?

2. **Read Philippians 4.18 & 2.25-30.** Why was Epaphroditus with Paul? How does Paul see the Philippians care for him? Why is Paul now concerned about Epaphroditus and his home church in Philippi? How is Paul hoping to show his care for them?

3. **Read 2 Timothy 4.9-13.** Why is Paul in need of caring support at this point in his imprisonment? What practical help could make a difference? How could the practical support Paul is given also help him to get on with sharing Gospel good news?

**LOOK AT THE VIDEO ABOUT CARING:**

What encouragements did the video give you in seeing the importance of practical caring?

Were their some new helpful insights about caring?

**A FOCUS ON NAMALEMBA & BUMOOZI**

What projects in Namalemba enable the church there to show practical care for others? How have we responded to practical needs by our visits, support and giving?

**A LOOK AT SOUTHAMPTON CITY MISSION**

Look at the handout about **Southampton City Mission**. If you have time look at their website. [southamptoncitymission.co.uk](https://southamptoncitymission.co.uk/)

How does **Southampton City Mission** play its part in God’s mission in the world and how does our partnership enable them to care for others?

**WHAT CAN WE DO?**

How can individual church members show practical interest in and support for our mission links?

A number of the mission partners we support are engaged in practical caring for others. Have a look at the list. What examples of caring can you identify? Why are these projects making a difference to others? Which can you most identify with?

Those who receive caring help from these organisations often express thankfulness for the way that they feel they are not forgotten but feel loved by those who support the projects that give them aid. How does that encourage you to feel that our support is worthwhile?

**STUDY 4 - PARTNERS IN SUFFERING**

When someone you know is suffering or struggling in some way how do you feel about that? How do we respond to that suffering or seek to help in some way?

**BIBLE STUDY**

1. **Read Philippians 1.12-14, 18-20 & 29-30.** How is Paul being encouraged by the support of the Philippian Christians while he is in prison? How might their experience of opposition bring them together in mutual understanding and support for Paul? How can we empathise with those who are suffering, whether it is from persecution or other causes such as famine of sickness? **Read Hebrews 13.3.** How does this verse help us think about those facing suffering?

 2. **Read Philippians 2.19-30.** How do we see mutual support in times of suffering demonstrated in the links between the Philppians and Paul, Timothy and Epaphroditus? How can we support others facing suffering?

3. **Read Philippians 3.10** and **1 Peter 4.12-13.** Christians face opposition and persecution because of their faith in Christ. Where do we see this happening around the world? Which of our mission partners provide encouragement and support in such areas? How do they do so?

**LOOK AT THE VIDEO ABOUT SUFFERING:**

What encouragements did the video give you in addressing the suffering of others?

Were their some new helpful insights about sharing in suffering?

**A FOCUS ON NAMALEMBA & BUMOOZI**

Look at the information about our link. In what ways is the church in Namalemba helping those who are suffering? How does our support help?

**A LOOK AT CHRISTIAN AID AND THE LEPROSY MISSION**

Look at the handout about **Christian Aid and the Leprosy Mission**. If you have time look at their websites [christianaid.org.uk](https://www.christianaid.org.uk/) and [leprosymission.org.uk](https://www.leprosymission.org.uk/%20%20%20%20)

How does **Christian Aid and the Leprosy Mission** play their parts in God’s mission in the world and how do we help them help others with poverty or a disabling illness?

**WHAT CAN WE DO?**

What is the challenge to us of suffering with our mission partners and those they work with? Are there ways we can give encouragement and support to those who are suffering?

In what ways can we better inform ourselves about the challenges our mission partners are facing in their lives or in the work they are undertaking – where can we find that information?

**STUDY 5 - PARTNERS IN GOING**

There are different ways to build relationships. These days we can keep in touch with people around the world via letter, text, email, or on platforms such as Skype or Messenger. How do they all help? What more is gained in meeting face to face and being with people in their situation?

**BIBLE STUDY**

1. **Read Philippians 1.21-26.** Why did Paul hope he would be released ? Why did he want to meet again with the Christians in Philippi? **Read Romans 1.8-12.** Why did Paul want tovisit the Christians in Rome? How can meeting with our mission partners when they visit us or we can visit them strengthen relationships and help to strengthen our faith too?

**2. Read Philippians 2.19-30** Why were Timothy and Epaphroditus sent on visits by Paul or their home church? How did their visits help to build relationships between Paul and the church in Philippi?

3. **Read 1 Thessalonians 2.17-3.11.** What do we learn from this example about Paul’s relationship with another group of Christians, those in Thessalonica? Why did he want to go and see them? How did sending Timothy to visit them address some of the issues and bring encouragement to Paul? How can the reports and news we receive from our mission partners be of help?

**LOOK AT THE VIDEO ABOUT GOING:**

What encouragements did the video give you in addressing going to meet mission partners?

Were their some new helpful insights about going? What about ‘virtual’ going using online links?

**A FOCUS ON NAMALEMBA & BUMOOZI**

Have any of the group visited Namalemba or been part of the visit they made to Holy Saviour? If not what have you heard about these visits? Has anyone been part of other mission projects? How have they been positive experiences?

**A LOOK AT FEBA AND MAF**

Look at the handout about **FEBA and MAF**. If you have time look at their websites [feba.org.uk](https://www.feba.org.uk/%20) and [maf-uk.org](https://www.maf-uk.org/) How do **FEBA and MAF** play their part in God’s mission in the world and how do we help them go to places where it is difficult to reach either through location or local laws?

**WHAT CAN WE DO?**

Are there ways we should be encouraging people to visit Namlemba again? Are there ways we can become more involved in other projects, such as Basics bank locally or the short term visits offered by Embrace and others?

We may not be able to go in person but in his book ‘Quiet Talks on Prayer’ S.D. Gordon wrote that in prayer you can go aside today and shut your door and as really spend a half hour in India as though you were there in person. How can prayer help us enter into the work our partners are doing?

**STUDY 6 - PARTNERS IN LONGING**

**Jesus said:” …. you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth”.** Put our mission links in order - beginning in Southampton and extending to the ends of the earth. How do our mission links strengthen the witness of the church in those places?

**BIBLE STUDY**

1.  **Read Philippians 1.12-20.** What do these verses show about Paul’s longings and hopes for himself and for those around him? How are these ambitions reflected in our support for our mission partners?

2. **Read 1 Thessalonians 2.17-20.** What do these verses tell us about Paul’s longings for the Christians in Thessalonica? In what ways have our sessions this term deepened your understanding of our mission partners and their ministries? How has your interest been stimulated?

3. **Read Colossians 1.3-12.** Here we have Paul expressing his love for and appreciation of a group of Christians he has never met. What is he thankful for? What are his prayers and longings for them? Hoe can those things be mirrored in our concern for our mission partners?

**LOOK AT THE VIDEO ABOUT LONGING:**

What encouragements did the video give you in thinking about our longings for our mission partners? Were their some new helpful insights about such longing?

**A FOCUS ON NAMALEMBA & BUMOOZI**

How might we develop our vision for the links with Namalemba? Are there ways we can be getting more involved and supportive of the ministry of the church there?

**A LOOK AT EMBRACE**

Look at the handout about **Embrace**. If you have time look at their website [embraceme.org](https://embraceme.org) How does it play its part in God’s mission in the world? How do we help them reach people we long to meet as fellow Christians but cannot because of the religious and political situation?

**WHAT CAN WE DO?**

What is the challenge to us of longing to be with our mission partners and those they work with and are there ways we can give encouragement and support to those whom we long to meet but are kept apart?

What things have struck you most from our learning together in this series?

What practical steps can we take to strengthen our links with our mission partners?

Would your group like to link with one of our mission partners or an aspect of the work in Namalemba or people working there who would value your support?