

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

### ***@ Home @ Rome – how the Romans did church, and who were they anyway?***

Jenny Wilkens

1. The worst happens, the big one hits, and we lose all our church buildings. How do we be and do church?  
What are your non-negotiables as to what needs to happen? What can you learn from the Roman house-churches?  
How much can we just go back to being like the church of the New Testament?
2. It is no wonder Paul's communities had such a liveliness: each individual counted, yet the community's wellbeing was always valued (Paul Sampley). This description of Paul's communities bears little resemblance to what most of us have known as church. The conventions of preaching and church services effectively gag our conversations. There is no meal. Spontaneity is avoided, absent or slotted into 5 or 10 minute 'greeting' or 'sharing' segments, small congregational digressions from the main purpose led from the front...In a sad irony of Paul's meals, we speak of coming to church to be 'fed'. In our case, the 'meal' is usually a course of words prepared by one chef rather than a smorgasbord of rich conversation. (Mark Strom, *Reframing Paul: conversations in grace and community* (IVP, 2000), p. 175-176.

What do you think of Strom's views?

3. What does Romans 16 have to say for the roles and ministries of women and men in your own mission unit in public worship, leadership, representative roles...?

### ***The Pharisee Paul said what? Paul's pharisaic background & his relationship to 'the Jews' of Romans***

Jenny Chalmers

- 1 Since Paul was a Jew, how then do we / should we view our (Christian ) relationships with present day Jews?
- 2 Do you think Paul's letter to the Romans was written as a general introduction to himself? Or (as in Corinthians & Galatians) addressing particular problems?

## ***Walking the Romans Road ...? Sin, salvation & justification***

Deborah Broome

1. Romans 3;21-26 gives three different ways of thinking about how God rescues humanity: the law court (defendants acquitted from the death penalty), redemption or ransom (a payment that frees someone), or Israel's sacrificial system (forgiveness of sins and renewed relationship with God through sacrificial ritual). Which metaphor connects best with your own experience of having your relationship with God restored? Or is there another metaphor that connects with you?
2. 'Faith *in* Christ' or 'faith *of* Christ' – what difference does it make to you which it is?

## ***On tiptoe with expectation – Expanding our hope in the face of suffering.***

Alister Hendery

1. What is your understanding of hope?
2. For Paul, hope is based on God's power and undying love. Its scope is cosmic without ceasing to be personal:  
How does that hope shape your life today?
3. How does the knowledge of our glorious destiny colour the problems / afflictions / sufferings you experience in life?
4. Near the end of 'The Funeral Service' in *A New Zealand Prayer Book*, the minister states: 'We have been parted from *N*, but none of us need ever be separated from the love of God.'  
What does that statement mean to you and how would you explain it to your next door neighbour?