

Parish of Ferndown
Study sheet for week commencing 22nd June 2008
True Giving Together – Acts 4:32 – 5:11

In Chapter 4 vs. 32-35 the apostles are selflessly sharing their possessions. Contrast this with our modern lives, in a 'me' culture, where your car is a status symbol, where neighbours fall out over the exact line of a fence on a common border, where a mobile phone company offers you a free phone handset upgrade each year whether you need it or not. How compatible are the aims of the apostles with life in Ferndown? What could you do as a step towards this ideal?

In v34 we hear that 'there are no needy persons among them'. Are you aware of someone in need? If so, what are you doing to help? If you can't do anything personally, what can you arrange, maybe using other members of your small group?

Compare and contrast the behaviour of Joseph / Barnabas at the end of Chap 4 with that of Ananias and Sapphira in the next section.

For a bit of fun and to lift the text off the page, try acting out an improvised version of the Ananias and Sapphira story – you can add your own imagined dialogue. You'll need Ananias, Peter, Sapphira, God, maybe a narrator – and several young men if you can find any!

In Chapter 5, Ananias and Sapphira try to deceive the apostles, but don't get away with it. What exactly was the problem with Ananias and Sapphira's actions? What qualities does God expect of the members of his church?

The punishment is rather immediate, direct, and irreversible! What do you make of this? The loving Father God of the New Testament seems to be still in the business of striking people down. Why was God so annoyed with them?

Please turn over...

Capital punishment is now illegal in most civilised countries, so this may seem an extreme penalty for the crime. Why did he do this? What did he achieve by it? Remember this is taking place against a background where the authorities are trying to discredit the apostles' work.

Would God do the same thing now? Should we still be fearful of Him?

Are you being completely honest with colleagues, friends, family and church members in your dealings? Are you saying one thing and doing another? Take time in silent prayer to ask God to reveal anything to you that you haven't dealt with, and ask Him to show you what to do to resolve it. Ask God to show you opportunities where you can act with others to improve our faith community.

Notes: