

# Home Group Study Notes - 2/8/20

## Challenging saying of Jesus - on Family

### Introduction

Family life can be full of ups and downs. How do you feel about your family at the moment?

### Discovery

Mike says "My church leader, years ago, when I'd just become a Christian, said that the right order of priority for our attention and energy is: 1. God, 2. family, 3. paid work, 4. church work. I've never forgotten it." Tim mentioned the same priority order on Sunday.

What do people think of that? (Don't spend too long on this, we'll come back to it.)

Read Luke 9:57-62.

Jesus seemed to say that to follow him, people had to leave family life behind.

He even said we should hate family! Read Luke 14:25-27.

### Discussion

Let's look at these in order... (you don't have to of course. If you like, just go for it.)

What does it mean to follow Jesus?

In Jesus days on earth, following him sometimes meant leaving family life behind. Is that the case for us today? Discuss.

Note - the daughter of Rees Howells, who, like many children of her time, in the early 1900s, was left for years in the UK while her parents were missionaries abroad. She really hated it!

Some children of church leaders today feel the same as their parents devote their time to leading their churches. Discuss.

Is there ever any excuse to say no to our families in favour of 'following Jesus'?

Look again at the Luke 14 reading. Is 'hate family' an exaggeration? Maybe hyperbole, aimed to make the point? The NIVSB says so. If anyone has it, read it out maybe.

On the other hand, Phil Moore, the author of 'Gagging Jesus', says that it is 'gagging Jesus' to say it's hyperbole! Read what he has to say about it in his book, below (maybe ask someone to read it out).

*'We tend not to be as offended by verses like this one as we ought to be. We simply shrug off Jesus' call to hate our children and parents and siblings as a piece of preacher's hyperbole.'*

*Even if somebody points out that miseō is a very strong Greek word which doesn't just mean to hate but to detest or to pursue with hatred, we don't get overly concerned. We gag Jesus and simply misinterpret his message as 'don't love your family as much as you love me.'*

*The problem is that this verse is part of a larger passage (Luke 14:27-33) which shows us that Jesus isn't talking about loving our families less but about dying to*

*their love and approval. He finishes this passage with: '... those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples.'*

*If you or I were to talk about carrying a cross, we might be guilty of using preacher's hyperbole. Not Jesus. He gave this teaching on the back of several predictions that his enemies were about to crucify him in order to silence his words. He explains in verse 26 what he means by hating the members of our own family by telling us in verse 27 that following him means dying to all that we hold dearest in our lives, including our loved ones – especially our loved ones.*

*So it shouldn't surprise us that we need to surrender our own family relationships to Jesus too. It isn't a question of whether following Jesus will cost us everything. It is simply a question of what and when.*

*The Gospel is the message that a Father gave up his only Son to save us from our sin (John 3:16). It is the message that a Son was willing to be abandoned by his Father so that we could become part of his heavenly family (Mark 15:34). It is a call to follow the one who distanced himself from his mother and his brothers so that we could be brought near to God (Matthew 12:46–50). Families may be very respectable idols, but Jesus tells us they are often idols all the same. Let's not allow our families to stop us from taking up our crosses daily and living for the one who took up his cross so that we might live at all.'*

Think about this for a while.

Then pray for each other, for families, and for the families of church leaders and missionaries etc.

God bless you as you meet today.

Mike

Quote from 'Moore, Phil. Gagging Jesus (p. 65). Lion Hudson LTD. Kindle Edition.'