

Short Report of the Lent Groups 2013

At the CTAL Ministers/Exec meeting on Wednesday (5th June) I was asked to circulate a short report on this year's Lent Groups. The aim being two-fold: to let people know how the groups went and to publicise next year's groups, with a view to encouraging even greater attendance and avoiding conflicts with other programmes.

Over 70 people from all of Ludlow's churches attended 10 groups which met weekly in different people's houses. The groups each met on 5 occasions during Lent. Groups meetings were programmed to suit their members' availability and preferences. We are very grateful to the group leaders and hosts for the work they put into making their groups so thought provoking and enjoyable for all the participants.

The groups used the York Course 'Jesus Rediscovered' as the basis for their discussions. It was well liked by group members. Copies of the course are available on request for people who were unable to attend the groups. Please contact me if you would like a copy of the leaflet or the CD.

A meeting of participants was held on 10 April to discuss how the course had gone and to plan the next one. People felt that it had been particularly valuable in providing an opportunity to meet members of other churches and to discuss the direction of spiritual life as well as current general and personal problems. Practical applications of our Christian belief were also debated, especially with reference to the CTAL 'Ludlow Under Pressure' report.

It was agreed that we should continue with another York Course next year. The CTAL Executive is keen to link the theme of the Lent Groups with the taking forward of the 'Ludlow Under Pressure' initiative. An existing York Course that seems appropriate is 'Attending, Exploring, Engaging', which looks at how we should listen to God and other people, explore the implications of what God is saying and then engage with the world in service in the light of the things God says. However the as yet unpublished course for Lent 2014 may well also be suitable.

It was also agreed that a meeting of those interested should be held next year before the start of Lent 2014 to pray and plan for the programme and the groups. The date will be decided and publicised at the CTAL AGM on Thursday 7 November. We hope to run a number of groups next year of housegroup size, but also a larger group that would allow greater variety and debate. The groups will be organised (as this year) by Jen Pollard, assisted by Mike Beazley. Many thanks to Jen for all her hard work in making this year's programme such a success.

Finally, please could you all encourage as many as possible of your members to take part in next year's groups. Please also avoid planning events or programmes that might conflict with the Lent Groups. Requests for leaders and hosts will go out at the CTAL AGM on 7 November along with details of the pre-Lent meeting. Application forms for the groups will go out early in the New Year and details of the groups will be published at least 2 weeks before the start of Lent (Wednesday 5 March). Meetings will take place weekly in each of the 5 weeks until the end of Lent (Thursday 17 April).

Mike Beazley