

Hands - application

- Pray for the fathers in the group, that their fatherhood would 'derive' from the Father, as in 3:15.
- Continue to pray for those who were baptised last week.



Further notes

- Keep an eye out for the Parenting Course and Men Behaving Dadly at St Mark's, designed to resource fathers.

Spring 2014

17th June

Ephesians 6:1-4 and 3:14-19

Fatherhood:

the good, the bad & the perfect

Background for leaders

This week we're continuing our series on Ephesians. Paul's letter was to the Christian church at Ephesus, in modern day Turkey.

The opening chapter and a half (from 1:1 - 2:10) is one long expression of praise and prayer at the good news of the Gospel. Paul explains what Christ has done for His people, and what the implications are before going on in the rest of the letter to encourage Christians in their response.

*This Father's Day, Mark Thomas preached on the subject of Fatherhood. He spoke about **good** fathers from Ephesians 6:1-4, taking examples from the Scriptures and interviewing dads in the congregation; **bad** fathers (also from the Scriptures!) and the **perfect** father in Heaven, from Eph 3:14-15.*

Conversation starters

- What fathers can you think of in the Bible? Were they good, bad or perfect?
- How does Fatherhood differ from Motherhood?
- On Sunday, Mark shared the statistic (from 1995) that 40% of American children sleep in a house where their father doesn't live. Is the same true in our society? What impact does this have?

Head - context and culture

Read Ephesians 6:1-4 — discuss the passage

- How are children encouraged to live in this passage?
The crucial qualifier "in the Lord" mean this isn't permission for abuse
- What two things do we learn about good Fatherhood from v4?
Not to provoke children to wrath, and to nourish them in the faith.

Read Ephesians 3:14-19 — discuss the passage

- In v15, the word "family" is *patria*, which can equally be translated "fatherhood". How does this influence our understanding?
Ultimately, earthly fatherhood ought to be a reflection of the love the Heavenly Father has shown us.
- What are the implications of knowing God as our Father?
- What different aspects are there to Paul's great prayer in v16-19?

Heart - what does this mean for us?

- Richard Dawkins says "*the biggest damage religion does is indoctrinating and brainwashing children*". Does he have a point? How does this relate to ch 6 v4?
- What do these passages have to say to those of us who aren't fathers?