

Covenant

St Mary's Homegroup studies
Autumn 2016, Number 1.



An Introduction to Covenant

As members of St Mary's Church we belong to two covenants. The first is over 20 years old and is with the other churches in Haddenham village – Baptist, Methodist, Roman Catholic. This is Churches Together in Haddenham (CTIH). The second is very new and it was agreed at the start of this year. This is for our membership of Wychert Vale Benefice and is with the churches of Cuddington, Kingsey, Aston Sandford, Stone and Dinton with Hartwell.

1. What has been the experience of members of your group of CTIH. What does it mean for us as church members to be in covenant with each other? What does it mean for the wider village?
2. What expectations might you have of the Wychert Vale Covenant?

Covenant and Contract

The word 'Covenant' can be confused with the term 'Contract', but these two words have different meanings. Contracts are an agreement that is negotiated to provide some benefit to both parties. A covenant is usually offered as a gift from a stronger person/party to a weaker one. The desire is not for material benefit but to have a relationship.

You may like to listen to this "Thought for the Day" by Sam Wells, which explores this difference:

'The workplace flourishes when contracts slowly but surely turn into covenants.' Rev Dr Sam Wells - 23/06/16

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p03z6vxt>

Read Psalm 111

3. What aspects of Covenant do we see in this Psalm?
4. How do God's people respond to God's covenant.
5. How should we respond?

Read Hebrews 6:13-20

6. Who initiated this covenant and what was offered?
7. Why can we trust God's promise?
8. What is the basis for the hope that God offers us
9. Why does it keep us firm and secure?

Verse 19 can be paraphrased: "God's hope is an anchor that keeps us safe and steady".

You may like to share some experiences when God's hope has been an anchor in your life.

Extension study

Benefice sermons on Covenant can be found on the Wychert Vale website:
<http://www.wychertvale.org/sermons/>

The first sermon is an introduction and is based on Hebrews 6:13-20.

Resources

These resources may be of interest and will help you go deeper into the theme of Covenant:

Wikipedia. Covenant (Biblical)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Covenant_\(biblical\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Covenant_(biblical))

What are the covenants in the Bible? GotQuestions.org blog

<http://www.gotquestions.org/bible-covenants.html>

Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum (2015) God's Kingdom through God's Covenants: A Concise Biblical Theology. <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Gods-Kingdom-through-Covenants-Biblical-ebook/dp/B00XWDR064/>

(£6.99 on Kindle).

This is a really good introduction to covenant as a topic and also looks at each covenant in turn.