

## **Coming Home?**

- Couldn't believe how appropriate the suggestion for how to introduce the theme this morning was!!
- Show picture of Gerard and Sarah
  - who are these people?
  - where are they?
- They have gone from here with our blessing and support:
  - their original commissioning service was before I came to Fintry...
  - but when they were last here we sent them off again after a special service
  - **how do we try and support them, and show that we care for them?**
  - **how do you think each of these things we've suggested would make Gerard and Sarah feel?**
- **Make sure a visit has been suggested!**
  - **just so happens a couple of folk are currently in China visiting Gerard and Sarah!**
  - **(read out e-mail from Freya...)**
- **When Freya and Amy come home, what questions will we want to ask them?**
  - what questions would we want them to ask of Gerard and Sarah?
  - see if we can't make that happen!
- Today we are looking at how a church wanted to show their care for the apostle Paul:
  - they sent someone to visit him and to help him
  - this person came home in the Bible passage we are exploring today
  - the kinds of suggestions we have made in respect of Gerard and Sarah will help us understand what was going on as we think about it later

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## **The Beginning of the Church in Philippi**

- *Recap founding of church in Philippi*
- Founding of Church in Philippi - Acts 16
  - Lydia, dealer in purple cloth
  - delivering slave girl who could tell fortunes
  - riot - and Paul Silas put in prison
  - singing in prison!
  - earthquake, freed, prison guard comes to faith
- Paul and Silas only there really pretty briefly
  - visit again in Acts 20:6
  - maintaining and growing relationship
- We can see that Paul had a wonderful, deep seated concern for the believers in Philippi:
  - only have to look at 1:3, 4, 7, 8, etc!

## **The Current Situation of the Church in Philippi**

- *What is happening now with Epaphroditus*
- By the time we get to the time Paul wrote, he is in prison, or at least house arrest
  - and this partner church (1:5) have been praying for him (1:19)
  - now we find that these Christians, grateful to Paul for sharing the gospel with them, have wanted to go further in showing their love and concern for him
  - so they have sent Epaphroditus, one of their own, to visit him
  - Epaphroditus bring gifts (4:18) and greetings from the Philippians to Paul
  - **very much as with Amy and Freya we sent gifts and greetings to Gerard and Sarah!**

## Philippians 2:25-30, 4:14-20    **No place like home**    **Fintry, 10/6/2007, am**

- and as has happened in the past, for example when Crawford and Sheila visited Amanda in Nepal, and so on
- this visit was clearly a joy and an encouragement to Paul
- but the visit was marred somewhat by Epaphroditus being ill, indeed nearly dying
  - but note he was willing to risk that (note about travelling conditions at the time!)
- he recovered, and now he is eager and ready to return to Philippi
- (he will probably have been the bearer of this letter!)
- note how Paul affirms Epaphroditus - he hasn't failed, though he is now returning home - rather he has succeeded in his mission to help and support Paul

### **The "So What" of the Church in Philippi**

- *What should we learn from this little incident?*

#### **Attitude to be adopted**

- Attitude that both Paul had for the Philippians, and that they had towards him:
  - affection
  - affirmation
  - love
  - care
  - trust in each other's ministries and callings
  - and a trust in God to provide for it all

#### **Actions to be emulated**

- Careful not to say: "Oh, I really am interested in what Gerard and Sarah are up to"
  - but never write to them, or actually support them financially, or go, or whatever
- And bring that closer to home:
  - do we have this same attitude of affection, affirmation, love, care, trust to...
  - ... LifeGate folk who meet in this building on a Sunday afternoon?
  - ... other churches in the town, Steeple, Logies, Hillbank, St James', Central Baptist?
  - ... Downfield churches, who we share Christmas and Easter services with?
  - **and each other?**
- And in what actions can we prove our attitude?