

The Parishes of St James Shireshead and St John's Ellel.

Lent 2018

What does it mean to be the church in the community?

The five weeks of meetings journey through Vincent Donovan's book Christianity Rediscovered - An Epistle from the Masai

Week 3 March 7th

Who do you think Christ is?

Ideally you need to read Chapters 5 & 6 bearing in mind the following comments and questions which will form the basis for our discussion when we meet.

It was 20/25 years after Jesus' death before people began to write down their reflections on his life. Perhaps it took them that long to reflect on the question he posed, "who do say I am?" We need to witness to the same Jesus the apostles witnessed to by preaching the Gospel and evangelising people who have never heard the same message the apostles or we have heard.

If you were given a single opportunity of presenting the Christian message to a local group who had no knowledge, as far as you knew, of Christianity or the stories of Jesus what would you want to pass on to them?

Christianity can often be seen to be very hung up on individual vocations or organisations like the church. Is baptism a call to individual salvation or a joining of an organisation? Or is it an acceptance of being part of a community. "Does Christianity make any sense outside community?"

Once the Masai have been baptised Donavon tells them, "I will not return to teach you ... from this day it is your responsibility to teach others." We spend a lot of time in the CofE agitating about who will be "our vicar" and what we have raise to meet the costs from the diocese. The logical collusion to Donavon's stance is that teaching the gospel is a local prerogative within the local community. How do you react to that?

The Masai gave people different roles according to gender or aptitude but the whole contributed to community life. In Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4 we read that we all have different gifts and roles; some will be apostles, others evangelists, others teachers and others administrators. How do we identify those roles and encourage people to use their gifts as part of a united mission to our community? What are you?