

Worship Material
Confidence to care
Material from Roots Bible Study
Sunday 31st August

Begin with an opening prayer

Lord, we come to worship you,
the one who cares for us more deeply
than we can understand.

Give us the confidence to care deeply
for others, as you care for us.

Amen.

Read Hebrews 13:1-8,15-16

Bible notes

The final chapter of Hebrews is different in focus from the rest of the letter, offering encouragement to keep on in faithful worship and loving concern for others. The writer asks for consistency in a Christian lifestyle – verse 1 could be translated ‘abide in mutual love’, as Jesus encouraged his disciples to ‘abide’ in him (John 15:4). Hospitality is an expression of practical love and can lead to unexpected rewards, as when the angels visited Abraham and Sarah (Genesis 18). Empathetic solidarity with those in prison, faithfulness within marriage, reliable leadership – all this contributes to the well-being of the community and gives them the solid foundation to flourish in faith.

Strong networks of social care are valuable in sustaining community, but the heart of this stability is their relationship with God in Jesus. The writer quotes Psalm 118:6, a strong affirmation of trust in the Lord’s readiness to defend with steadfast love. This goes deeper than the simple instruction not to depend on money. The writer expresses absolute trust and confidence in Jesus, who is unchanged, unchanging, unchangeable. He is eternally present with God, who is able to make us complete (v.21). Therefore, God’s people can watch over one another in love, untroubled by concerns about the hostility of others (Psalm 56:4,11), because, when God is present in Jesus, nothing can bring them to harm. This is expressed (vv.15- 16) as ‘sacrifice’. Hebrews is emphatic that the foundational sacrifice is that of Jesus (10:12), but his self-offering provides a model for Christian life. We offer a double sacrifice of

praise to God alongside care for others – the prophets remind us that praise without service is empty (Isaiah 1:12-17). Sacrifice is no longer restricted to a priestly group – all Christians are urged to live a sacrificial lifestyle because we can depend on our covenant relationship with God in Christ.

Prayer

God of all, your generous heart draws us in
to be cared for, supported and inspired.

We praise you that you call us to care for,
support and inspire others.

Thank you for the confidence to be bold, to take risks
and to trust that you will bless us with the gifts we need.

Thank you for your beautiful, inclusive and strong love,
which is the same yesterday, today and for ever.

Amen.

A prayer to conclude

We have worshipped you here today, Lord.

Ask people to face or look towards the door.

Now we go out, with hope and confidence, to love and to serve.

Help us to worship you out there, just as we do here.

Amen.