



## **Joy hopes in Christ through answered prayer (v.19)**

## **Joy exalts Christ in life or death (v.20-21)**

## **Joy trusts Christ to live a fruitful life (v.22-26)**

## Questions to think & pray through

### Read Philippians 1:19 ('Joy hopes in Christ through answered prayer')

Why was Paul so grateful for the prayers of the church in Philippi?

Why is prayer an important part of Gospel partnership?

What are the things we can pray for each other about? What are crucial things to pray for other Christians, that we quite often neglect?

### Read Philippians 1:20-21 ('Joy exalts Christ in life or death')

Why was it a win-win situation for Paul whether he lived or died?

"If you were on trial for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?" What evidence do you think there should be in your life in being a Christian?

Would you say that for you, "To die is gain?" Why and why not? What might change your perspective? What do you make of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's words (see below)?

### Read Philippians 1:22-26 ('Joy trusts Christ to live a fruitful life')

What images does "A life worth living" conjure up in the world's mind? What would you say a life worth living looks like for a Christian? What does it mean "To live is Christ?"

If you thought you might die, but were then granted another 5 years to live, what you do with it?

Paul said that "fruitful labour" (v.22) for him meant serving Jesus and other Christians. How might you fruitfully invest in other people for Jesus right now, for their "progress and joy in the faith" (v.25)?

"No one has yet believed in God & the kingdom of God, no one has yet heard about the realm of the resurrected, & not been homesick from that hour, waiting & looking forward joyfully to being released from bodily existence. Whether we are young or old makes no difference. What are twenty or thirty or fifty years in the sight of God? And which of us knows how near he or she may already be to the goal? That life only really begins when it ends here on earth, that all that is here is only the prologue before the curtain goes up – that is for young and old alike to think about. Why are we so afraid when we think about death? Death is only dreadful for those who live in dread & fear of it. Death is not wild & terrible, if only we can be still & hold fast to God's Word. Death is not bitter, if we have not become bitter ourselves. Death is grace, the greatest gift of grace that God gives to people who believe in him. Death is mild, death is sweet and gentle, it beckons to us with heavenly power, if only we realise that it is the gateway to our homeland, the tabernacle of joy, the everlasting kingdom of peace. How do we know that dying is so dreadful? Who knows whether, in our human fear and anguish we are only shivering and shuddering at the most glorious, heavenly, blessed event in the world? Death is hell & night and cold, if it is not transformed by our faith. But that is what is so marvellous, that we can transform death." (Bonhoeffer)