



If the idea of running a short service in Orchid Care Home appeals to you, please have a word with Raymond. We aim to run a service once a week if we possibly can. Three people have moved or dropped out since 2019, so he could use the help. The staff operate the music and are really helpful in every way.

Please pray for our church family		<p>Prayers:</p> <p>*Our children's leaders and those they teach today.</p> <p>*John Howard returned home with antibiotics for a chest infection.</p> <p>♦Grace Burrett lost her husband Peter in the summer. We keep her in our prayers and hearts.</p> <p>♦Haiti— no longer in the news but still dealing with grief, loss of homes & livelihoods and in need of all types of aid</p> <p>*The Well is up and running. Let's pray for Revd. Paul Freeland.</p> <p>*Revd Simon Halls does a great job running Shine Pinehurst.</p>
Mon	Simon Kan & Yu Ling Goh	
Tue	Dilys Kimber	
Wed	Delroy & Natalie King	
Thurs	Joan & George King	
Fri	Gillian Large	
Sat	Lorraine Limer	
Sun	Brent & Abigail Maartens	

Services Next Week : Gender and Unity			
26th Sep	9am	Holy Communion in church	Raymond Adams
	11am	Morning Praise Live streamed to YouTube	Raymond Adams

Live Streaming and Children's Work!

Sunday 19 September 2021

Trinity 16



Gender
&
Truth



Time	Service	Sermon	Readings
9.00 am	Holy Communion in Church	Raymond Adams	Jeremiah 5:1-5
11.00 am	Holy Communion Live streamed to YouTube	Raymond Adams	John 16:12-15

Life for Women In The Old Testament.

Last week, we looked at the issue of the woman with a continuous flow of blood, who touched Jesus cloak. She was “pinged” every day of her life. Her medical condition meant she was required to permanently self-isolate. Why?

In Israel, everything fell into one of three categories.

- **The Clean which encompassed** almost everything.
- **The Holy which included** those vessels and utensils used directly in the worship of God
- **The Unclean which involved** animals like pigs or dogs or camels which could be touched but not eaten. Blood is clean inside the body. Outside it becomes unclean.

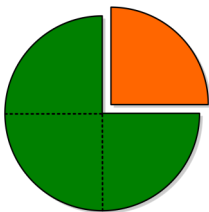


The whole structure was intended as a reminder of the difference between holiness and unholiness. *Israel was to be different* and was not to get its moral values by copying the behaviour or practices of other nations around them.

A person who was ceremonially unclean would usually remain in that state for one day. They could make a purification offering, wash and be clean once more, starting afresh the next morning. However, blood meant a seven day isolation.

Is This Not Excessively Harsh on Women? Would this law not mean that every woman would basically be untouchable for a week a month. *Did they really spend a quarter of their life in this state?*

Professor Gordon Wenham writes: “It is probably a recent phenomenon for women to suffer a monthly period between adolescence and menopause. This is not to do with change in female physiology but changes in society and behaviour. In ancient Israel menstruation would be less frequent for three reasons:



- **Early marriage:** most women would marry at 16
- **Late weaning:** children were breast fed until they were two or three.
- **The desire for large families** (Psalm 127: 4-5) coupled with a lack of contraception.

So those most affected by this law would have been young unmarried women.

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LLF and Our Moral Values

As we saw on the previous page, the whole point of the Old Testament Law was to make sure that Israel did not get its moral values from the behaviour and practices of the nations around them. “You shall not be like them....”.

It had a totally different source. The Word of God.

That being said, there is much more to hearing the Bible today than simply pointing to a verse in the Old Testament. That will not resolve complex questions about sexuality for everyone.

Jesus appears to forbid divorce, for example- but we still allow divorce. That is because we consider the context of his words. Our understanding is that he legislated against Jewish men divorcing their wives for any cause at all, and marrying again. It was sufficient in that society for a husband to say “I divorce you” three times to his wife to allow him to marry another woman. That, says Jesus, is adultery.

But it does not mean that every person who remarries after divorce in the UK in 2021 is guilty of adultery. That would be to take Jesus’ words out of context.

So what does God say about matters of identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage? Two of our home groups plan to tackle the five part course called “Living in Love and Faith” in order to explore that question. We will interview them at the end and we very much hope that others in the church will want to join groups later in the autumn. We can run groups any time until Easter 2022.



New Seating Arrangements



In order to keep everyone as safe as possible during the pandemic, we may need to direct you to specific seats, especially as 11am approaches. This is for everyone’s safety.

It might mean that those who would like to go to the balcony will be invited to sit downstairs. Please help us by coming early.