

HOMEGROUP REPORT

One of the many challenges of 2020 was how to keep the journey of discipleship going for everyone when we were not allowed to meet physically for most of the year. We were better placed than most churches were because of our strong homegroup culture.

One of our 12 groups came to a natural end just as lockdown started (because of people moving away) but the other 11 mostly kept going, with leaders putting time, effort and imagination into keeping their groups functioning and keeping the members in touch with each other. Zoom played a crucial role, but so did more familiar means of communication such as phone calls and distributing printed material. A big 'thank you' to all our leaders. Not only did we keep going with Bible study and learning, but our groups are key providers of pastoral care and fellowship as well.

In 2020 we began with several 'whole church' series which we studied together, starting with a study of the book of James which challenged us to think through the relationship between faith and 'good works', followed by a Lent study titled 'No Wonder They Crucified Him', which made the point that Jesus' words and actions were so radical and challenging that his contemporaries had little option but either to support him or seek to destroy him.

After Easter we had a unique (or so we thought) opportunity to engage with the Spring Harvest resources as they were hurriedly put online as the event itself had to be cancelled. There were interesting talks on subjects like God and Coronavirus, Science and Christianity, how we can declare God to be good when the world is a mess, tackling anxiety and tackling depression. Then we did one of the best Bible study series I've come across for some time – Church: What We Can Learn From The Book of Acts.

For the rest of the year we offered a variety of courses using different media, recognising that different groups were meeting and studying in different ways.

In 2021 we plan to take advantage of the opportunity to meet face-to-face again with some exciting and challenging study series, and to start some new groups. If anyone would like to join a group (old or new) do let me know.

Paul Ratcliff, April 2021