

## Beg, encourage, urge

### Notes on 1 Thess 2.9-13

- This passage begins with Paul talking about his own labour and toil and how he has been working day and night. This suggests perhaps that as well as supporting the Thessalonians, Paul and his companions worked to earn a living so that they could be independent and not a burden to the church. Here the gospel is being demonstrated to the Thessalonians through actions, not just words.

- We find a childhood reference in this chapter which is rare in Paul's letters: 'we did everything for you that parents would do for their own children'. There is a sense here that the letter is talking to each member of the community in Thessalonica as an individual, and that the authors of the letter are thankful for how their 'children' have turned out.

- As the consistency of the apostles' words and deeds demonstrated the divine origin of their message, so the willingness of the Thessalonians to acknowledge their preaching as God's Word is transforming their lives into an embodiment of that same Word of God. And so, Paul speaks of 'the good news of your faith and love'.

### Encouragement

Using a piece of blank card, folded in half, and coloured pens/crayons, make a card for someone who might need a little encouragement in their life. When complete, hold the card, in silence, and pray for the recipient you have in mind, that they will receive encouragement. If possible and appropriate, send or deliver the card to the intended recipient.

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### Questions for reflection

- ▶ What would you do in this situation?
- ▶ What or who encourages, urges or persuades you to be more Christ-like?
- ▶ How might you encourage others in their faith journey?



### A prayer of approach

*We know that in coming towards you,  
you came towards us first.  
You called us by name,  
bringing us deeper into you, into community, into love.  
We thank you for the gift of this,  
and hold our hands humbly,  
offering you what we have,  
knowing that you receive what we give –  
even when it is very little. Amen.*

### A prayer for others

*We pray for all who feel isolated.  
In their uniqueness, they may also feel alone.  
This is most of us, some of the time,  
but it is some of us most of the time.  
God of encounter, may we all turn with love and interest  
towards those who have been isolated.  
God of encounter, hear our prayer.  
Amen.*

### A personal prayer

*Jesus of strong words, you were not afraid: calling people you  
knew to deeper integrity, challenging our ways of seeing ourselves  
and others. Give me courage to live well in all the small choices  
of my day, to hear your voice calling me to the deepest integrity  
of myself, and the deepest practice of goodness with those I love.  
Amen.*

### Live your faith

Each day this week, look for an opportunity to urge, encourage or plead in a positive way. It could be to yourself, to another person, or to a cause.