

Colossians 1:1-14

Encouraging words

At the start of his letter to the Christians at Colossae, Paul commends them for their faith in Jesus, which is bearing good fruit. He prays that they may continue to build up a community of love and mutual encouragement where everyone's needs are met.

Read this week's passage:



Write

Write an encouraging letter to someone, telling them what you admire and like about them, imagining how your words might make them feel.



Grow

Water the plants in your house, garden or local park, and think about how tending to/nurturing your faith will help it grow just like watering plants helps them to thrive.

DRAW



Draw a spider diagram of what a growing, encouraged and healthy church/community might look like. Talk it through with your leaders and see what actions you might be able to take together.

Find more free Roots resources to reflect on this week's theme:



Living Scripture

'We have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all God's people' Colossians 1:4

In contemporary culture, spirituality is often individualistic – my inner peace; my private walk with God. But Paul writes to a spiritual community, praising and exhorting them to keep going in love and good works, and this challenges us to live out our faith in community among people who encourage, challenge and love us, and where we too give and serve the needs of others. While 49% of the UK population claim to believe in God, according to the census, only 5% attend church. Private spirituality is common, but is it healthy? Can we grow and share our faith on our own? What keeps you connecting with Christian community? Why might it seem simpler to practice faith on your own?

In our world, where culture and social media encourage us to focus on self-care and self-development, Paul's message is counter cultural. We grow not by living for ourselves in splendid isolation but by living for God and serving others in a community of love and mutual encouragement – the polar opposite of the rugged individualism promoted by both ancient-day Rome and our world. Reflect on your relationships: Could you pray and encourage someone in your faith community this week? Who can you learn from and be challenged by? Can you serve someone today, offering the gift of your time, energy and prayers to God?

First impressions

- What's the most encouraging thing anyone has ever said to you?
- Which areas in your life do you need to feel encouraged in right now?
- How can you encourage others with your words?



Pray

Our minds don't always understand everything,
(put hands over head)
help us to feel your encouragement.
(put hands over heart)
Our ears don't always hear everything,
(put hands over ears)
help us to hear your encouragement.
(cup hands round each ear)
Our eyes don't always see everything,
(put hands over eyes)
help us to see where we can encourage others.
(look around you)
Amen.



WALK

Take a walk through your local area, alone or with a friend, speaking or silently praying blessings over homes, schools, businesses, etc.