



+ We came to the end of our series in 1 Thessalonians this week. As we've looked at the theme of living with real hope. This last section of the letter reminds us that as Christians we are spiritual brothers and sisters together called to love one another through the difficulties, tensions and weaknesses of life. Paul encourages us to live life in relationship working together to grow the church holiness.

### **Living life in the family of believers - Relationships**

With leaders (12-13): the church in Thessalonica wasn't giving those who care for and teach them respect for their hard work. Whatever the disputes Paul asks them to hold those over them in highest regard.

With one another (14-15): Paul highlights several concerns related to the Thessalonians' struggles. He urges the brothers and sisters to work through the tensions and help those who are in need. All the verbs/commands are for the building up/growth of the family.

### **Living life in the family of believers – (Worship)**

Prayer: Even in the midst of hardship Paul encourages the Thessalonians to rejoice, pray and give thanks to God in all circumstances all the time. This is a tough ask. But Paul and the Thessalonians know that their heavenly father who loves them and is in control and gives them hope in Jesus.

Prophecy: Some in the church were dismissing words of prophecy, suspicious perhaps of anything of that nature. Paul tells them not to ignore them but test them; then keep what is good and reject what is evil.

### **Living life in the family of believers – (Partnership)**

God with us: In all that we do in Christian life, including these 19 commands in this passage, Paul's prayer shows us that it is God who is at work in us. He makes us more like Christ and will faithfully present us perfect on the last day.

The church with one another: Paul ends by asking the Thessalonians to partner with him in prayer, to greet all those in the family of God by sharing life together and finally by reminds them that everyone, all in Christ are brothers and sisters in God's family called to love one another.

***As always here are a few questions to start off your group discussion.***

Remind one another of the main themes in 1 Thessalonians and keep these in mind as you go through this passage

Spend some time rejoicing and giving thanks together for the diversity you observe in Magdalen Road. But what kinds of (potential) issues can arise from such diversity to harm our unity?

What was the situation spoken of about the Thessalonica in verses 12-13?  
 What makes a good leader/teacher? How can this be abused?  
 How does Paul ask the Thessalonians and us to respond to those over us?

What are the pastoral concerns in verses 14-15 and how are they to respond?  
 Can we see any of these or other concerns (tensions or people needs) in MRC?  
 How do we or should we respond?

How were the Thessalonians being asked to respond to God in worship? Do you ever find these hard?  
 How can we encourage one another to do (16-18) in the midst of difficulty?

What was the issue facing the Thessalonian church regarding prophecy? Why do you think they were treating them with contempt? How does Paul encourage them to respond?  
 How might these play out today? Why might we be suspicious of prophecy? In what ways can we test it?

What is Paul's prayer in 23-24? What is God's role in our spiritual growth? What does this look like in practice? In view of Jesus' return how do these encourage us as Christians?

What are the last three commands Paul gives to the Thessalonians? How do they highlight to us the reality of spiritual family life?