**WOODLANDS CHURCH**

**May 13th 2018. Living as Witnesses**

**Discussion notes: Works. Acts 4:32-37**

In the Church Calendar we are in the season leading up to Whitsun, Pentecost Sunday. The book of Acts documents the first Pentecost and the gift of the Spirit to enable the disciples to be witnesses (Acts 1:8). Our series this May will look at what it means to be a Witness in the power of the Holy Spirit (alliterating around the letter W quite strongly!).

The ’Noise’ in Bristol has picked up a (probably apocryphal) saying of St Francis of Assisi ‘Preach the gospel to all creation; use words if necessary’. Now last week we reflected that words are indeed necessary, but they belong with and are authenticated by ‘Works’. Works are the visible good deeds that a Christian community does in response to their faith in Christ; not dead works of religion, but live works of faith.

1. What place is there for exceptional and highly visible philanthropy (like Barnabas) in our Christian communities? What stories past or present do you know of such people? Are you familiar with the Muller story in Bristol for example?
2. Matthew 5 tells us to let our light shine before men so that they will see our good deeds and glorify our Father in heaven. Should we organise our social action so that it is clearly linked with Woodlands Church to help our witness? Or should we somehow represent generic Christianity, or the whole Church in the City (like Hope 18 achieved)?
3. What is the tension between public good works (as in Matthew 5) and secret giving as in Matthew 6? Clearly Barnabas’s gift was very public. Why?
4. What kind of conditions in a local Church produce an outpouring of ‘good works’?
5. If you were strategically planning to witness to the nature of God’s goodness and mercy to our city, what ‘Good works’ would you strategically suggest we invest in?

Pray for one another as you leave this week that you would look for appropriate opportunities and ways to serve others in our city.