**WOODLANDS CHURCH**

**September 10th 2017. Good Call**

**Discussion notes: Vocation, Relation, Location. 1 Corinthians 7**

‘Calling is the big picture, guidance is the detail’. Most of us at some point in our lives are looking for guidance about one or more of the ‘big three’ life issues above. We are asking ‘What is my vocation, who should I marry, where should I live or work?’ Last week I suggested that there are exceptional circumstances and seasons and exceptional people who get exceptional, supernatural, calling and guidance. Some of the heroes of the bible clearly fall into this category and we can sometimes expect to get their sort of guidance.

In 1 Corinthians 7 Paul gives a very different sort of pragmatic wisdom which is also part of God’s revelation to us and is perhaps more common!

1. I Cor 7:1 ‘Concerning the matters you wrote about’. Clearly the Corinthian Church asked Paul for guidance on marriage and sexuality. What areas do you think the Church should guide on today? Who would you turn to, to advise you on relationships and marriage?
2. What sort of criteria does Paul reference as reasons for marriage and singleness? What surprises you about his advice?
3. How far have secular ideas influenced our ideas about marriage? Paul seems to encourage people not to put off marriage if the age of their betrothed is an issue (v 36) or if sexual passions are too strong. What factors influence timing and commitment in marriage in our culture?
4. Paul doesn’t seem too bothered about what work we do, but more about how we do it and where we get our heart identity (17-24). What is the relationship between what we are doing and who we are becoming? What do you believe about the human right to intrinsically fulfilling work?
5. What guided Paul in decisions about where he should be living? (e.g. Acts 18). How important is it to be guided to particular places to live? What factors should shape our decisions?

Understandably we are very interested often in discerning immediate things and things which though urgent are often temporary, rather than eternal. How does an eternal perspective shape our thinking and actions about things that (even if they last a lifetime) are temporary, though powerful in shaping us?