

Elder's Report

This past year has seen the end of my first term of serving in eldership at OCC. A privilege difficult to describe but which has been a delight and not a hardship. Working alongside the other men and women on the Session I have witnessed the wealth of talent, dedication and love for God and His people that exists in this church. Can I encourage you to follow an example set by Paul and Timothy in Philippians – to thank God every time you remember them? Although not an accurate quote, we should do this because we want their work to be a joy to them and not a burden.

At the start of a second term I am challenged but not daunted by what lies ahead of us and am confident that He who has begun so much in us will (enable us to) carry it on to completion. My hope for the year ahead is that personally we are continually reminded that God has a plan and a purpose for each one of us. I am reminded that we are those who God has redeemed / ransomed and called by name, He says "you are mine", what a wonderful thing to be told. Ephesians (NLT) tells us that "Even before he set about making the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes." We are masterpieces of God's handy work, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance. And again as Paul says to the Philippians, God is working in us, let there be no doubt about that. In this coming year let us each shine, in the place where God has placed us, like stars in the universe as we hold to and hold out the Word of life in this lost and dying world.

The Men's Ministry has over the past year met several times, often over breakfast as we like to eat and fellowship (see we can multitask). But "bread" has not been our only means of sustenance, in these times we also have opportunity to pray, share God's Word and encourage one another. Included in our times together were Enable 2013 which was a great day of hearing from God and worshipping Him with hundreds of other men from all over the UK. And during our annual away day 20 of us went to **The House of The Open Door** where we heard from Gordon Neale, Elim Regional Leader. We were also introduced to The Code, described as a man's manual for practical Christian living, which we hope to spend more time studying over the next year. Our next event will be Enable 2014, were Carl Beech one of the co-authors of The Code will be speaking.

I read in a nation newspaper recently of Johnathan Edwards' reiterating that he had lost his faith. It comes as a disappointment that he makes this assertion bearing in mind the sacrifices he once made for his faith. Yet Jesus speaks somewhere about the love of some growing cold. If I were to have just one prayer answered this year it would be that those we know (family, friends, loved ones) who's love has grown cold will know again the warmth of God's love, the joy of His salvation and return to the Father; just like the prodigal son.

Jerry