

“Love is not self-seeking” 1 Corinthians chapter 13 verse 5

Mostly, our lives revolve around ourselves. That's hardly surprising. We live with ourselves all the time and we are always aware of our physical, mental, spiritual and emotional needs. It's only natural that our first instinct is to get these met.

The problem is that our fallen human nature causes us to be prone to prioritise our own needs over and above the needs of others, and that many of our needs, especially our inner needs, have also been corrupted by human rebellion against God. That's why we so easily become self-seeking. We spend our lives literally seeking the interests of ourselves.

This makes for a world of competition and conflict, in which each individual is competing to get their own needs met. It is also intensely wearying, because the real need that we are trying to meet is a need for God, and that is an eternal need which can never be fulfilled by anything else. No wonder people sometimes say, with a sigh, “I wish it wasn't about me all the time.”

But the very definitions of love and grace offer a way to live lives that are focussed on more than just ourselves. To love is to desire the best good for another person. Grace is the desire to show kindness to others regardless of their deserving. When we are in a loving, obedient relationship with God then we find our inner needs begin to be met. This means that we can progressively turn our attention from ourselves towards others.

When someone asked Jesus what is the most important commandment in God's law, Jesus replied, “Love the Lord your God with your whole heart, soul, mind and strength, and love your neighbour as yourself.” That's the whole hierarchy of love, right there. If we get right with God then, because of his love for us, we will come to want for others the things that we want for ourselves. Paul says the same thing when he tells us that we are to look “not only to our own interests, but also to the interests of others.

The Christian community is one where people are engaged in turning from self-absorption to a more outward-looking kind of life in which others are least as important as self. It's part of the Christian journey of faith, and it is one of the things that hints at the world of better values that God has promised will one day come into being.

Prayer.

Father, the world we live in now is often called a “dog eat dog” world in which everyone had better look out for themselves because no one else will look out for them. But you promise a “love each other” world in which people look out for the interests of others. A world in which the values of meekness and humility will be dominant. We look forward to that world, and ask that many living now will come in faith to Jesus Christ, so that they can be part of it too. In Jesus' name, amen.

*All these devotionals can be found on our website [inghamitechurch.org](http://inghamitechurch.org) on the 'Resources' page. Click on the link to go there.*