



## 2: EPAPHRODITUS *Sunday 21st January 2018*

[These are some summary notes – don't try to cover all the questions!]

'Risk Taker' is a phrase taken from Paul's description of Epaphroditus, a little known character in the New Testament.

**Philippians 2.24-30; 4.17-18.**

'Risk Takers' is about living out authentic Christianity in today's world.

We observe a real servant spirit in Epaphroditus. Read **Philippians 2.5-8**. In what ways do you see Epaphroditus seeking to be like Jesus, exemplifying the 'mind of Christ' and 'emptying himself' as expressed in this celebrated hymn of Christ

### **The church at Philippi had a concern for Paul.**

- An offering is taken up in the church for Paul. The concern was very practical.
- Epaphroditus travels to Rome with the gift. How was the gift (Phil 4.17-18) received?
- Epaphroditus helps Paul. In what ways can you imagine he was able to help and support Paul? List some of the things that you could see Paul needing and Epaphroditus supplying.

There are many people who are not necessarily under house arrest but they are limited and restricted by personal circumstances. In what ways can we be open to help and support them?

How does Epaphroditus help you to think about ministering to others?

Think for a few moments about your own life and those who were there for you when you had particular needs. If you feel it's appropriate, why not share something of your experience.

Give thanks for them

### **The church and Paul had a concern for Epaphroditus**

- Epaphroditus became ill and nearly died.
- It is said that he had 'risked his life'. Remember how Alan spoke of how there was the link with gambling as people risked everything on the throw of a dice. In the Early Church (250 AD) there were a group known as 'gamblers' who risked their lives visiting the prisoners and dealing with the dead in the time of the Plague.

What would the church look like if there were more who had the same spirit as Epaphroditus?

There was a great bond of love that Epaphroditus had for his own church in Philippi – it challenges us to consider our own love for WBC.

There are at least four summary descriptions about Epaphroditus. Take a couple of the descriptions and express together something of the challenge the title presents to you.

- The risk taker – **BROTHER** '*my brother*' Phil 2.1-2
- The risk taker – **WORKER** '*my fellow worker*' 1 Cor 3.9
- The risk taker – **SOLDIER** '*my fellow soldier*' 2 Tim 4.7
- The risk taker – **MESSANGER** '*your messenger*' Apostle = sent one Matt 28:18-20; 2 Cor 5:20

The statement about Epaphroditus is like a character reference that is written about him.

Personally take time to ponder what a brief character reference would look like for yourself!

Phil 2.29 NLT *and give him the honour that people like him deserve*. Paul says, remember to honour such people – but, how do we go about that ourselves?

**FOR YOUR OWN NOTES:**