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| <b>Welcome</b>                        | Have you ever felt inexplicably joyful, despite your circumstances? Share when!  |
| <b>Worship ideas</b>                  | Choose songs/ hymns/ music that emphasise 'joy'. <i>(If you like classical music, perhaps listen to the end of Beethoven's 9<sup>th</sup> (the 'Ode to Joy') – hymn words below.</i>   |
| <b>Word (refs.↓)</b>                  | <i>some suggestions for discussion here</i>  |
| Phil. 1:1-3                           | Remember - this letter was written <u>for</u> (though not <u>to</u> ) us as believers, as well as for and to the church in Philippi. Is it important to you to know questions such as who, when, where, the church's origin and situation, etc – or can we just apply the lessons we need from the text itself?  |
| <i>Optional study</i><br>Acts 16:6-15 | <i>Questions to help if you <u>do</u> find it helpful to know the background – otherwise miss this out!</i><br>Try and trace the journey Paul and his companions took on a map (there may be one in the back of your Bible).<br>Vv. 6-7: How do you think God directed them not to go to Asia (i.e. west to Ephesus) & Bithynia (i.e. heading north-east) – and, more importantly why? How would they have felt then? – and when they got to Macedonia?<br>Vv. 9-10: How important to Paul was this clear call from God? How important is it to <u>you</u> to have clear guidance from God for decisions you have to make (can anyone share any examples?)<br>Vv.13-15: do you think Paul would have thought this was a promising start? |
| Phil. 1:1a                            | What significance do you find in Paul's description of himself and Timothy here ( <i>New Living Translation</i> has 'slaves'). Timothy doesn't actually contribute any of the letter's contents – why do you think Paul includes him here?   |
| Phil. 1:1b                            | Is it more important to you to be a 'slave of Christ Jesus' or a 'saint in Christ Jesus'? Paul particularly mentions those with designated roles in the church as overseers ( <i>NLT: elders</i> ) and deacons. What are these roles? Do they matter these days? Why do you think he mentions these people separately?   |
| Phil. 1:2-3                           | How often, if ever, do you wish blessing ('grace and peace') on your fellow-Christians? Do you pray it for them? How? What difference does it make to them? What difference does it make to you?<br>Do you thank God every time you remember other believers? Do you ever let them know how thankful you are for them? When? How? Does it help <u>you</u> ?  |
| <b>Witness</b>                        | <b>Pray</b> – for one or more other Christians that you know who have chosen not to attend church regularly at present. Thank God for them. Can you think of a way to let them know (sensitively!) that you miss them, that you have prayed for them, that you are thankful for them?<br><b>Discuss</b> whether you could encourage them, or maybe others who <u>do</u> come to church, to join your group or cluster (or another one) this year.  |
| <b>Reminder</b>                       | Hellen (Sewe) from Nairobi arrives this Thursday 13 <sup>th</sup> and there will be 'tea' at church at 4.15pm and also a shared lunch at 12.15 on Sunday. Please try and get to one or other 'welcome' for her (or both) if you can!   |

**Hymn to Joy:** Joyful, joyful we adore Thee/ God of glory, Lord of love/ Hearts unfold like flowers before Thee/ Hail Thee to the sun above./ Melt the clouds of sin and sadness/ Drive the dark of doubt away./ Giver of immortal gladness/ Fill us with the light of day./ Mortals join the mighty chorus/ Which the morning stars began./ Father love is reigning o'er us/ Brother love binds man to man. / Ever singing march we onward/ Victors in the midst of strife/ Joyful music lifts us Sonward/ In the triumph song of life!