

## Bible Chat notes week starting 15 1 23

### John 15: 1 - 17 (NRSV)

*'I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. 2 He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. 3 You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. 4 Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. 5 I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. 6 Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. 7 If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. 9 As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. 10 If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. 11 I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.*

*12 'This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command you. 15 I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. 16 You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. 17 I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.*

1. Have a discussion about what the metaphor of 'fruit' means here.
2. What are the particular qualities of the fruit as described in this passage?
3. What is the secret of bearing fruit in our Christian lives? What does this mean in our daily lives as believers?
4. Maybe gardening is a process of subtraction more than a process of addition! Weeding, pruning and digging up unwanted plants all involve taking away that which is unhelpful. The sermon this week spoke of killing sacred cows and letting go of things which are like shrubs blocking the light of the gospel. How do you feel when you hear this sort of talk?
5. David also said that he had been unaware that several plants really needed extracting from the manse garden! Maybe there are indeed aspects of church life that actually are unhelpful for the fruitfulness of the church. How can we gain the insight we need to recognise what is counter-productive? How can we find the courage to let such things be pruned or even uprooted?
6. To what extent are we willing to change in order to share the gospel with new generations?