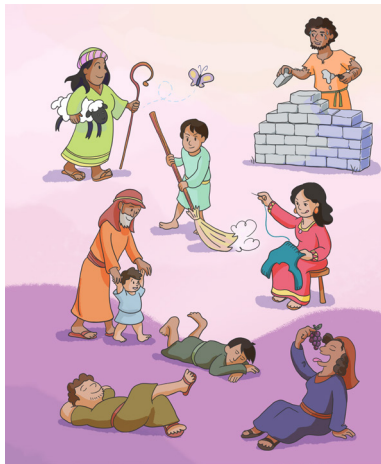


2 Thessalonians 3:6-13

How to live now

In this part of his letter, Paul is heavily critical of those who believed that Jesus had already returned and therefore saw no point in working. Instead, they relied on the support of the church to keep them fed! Paul reminds them sternly that they still live in the 'not yet' time before Christ's return. Today we explore how we, too, should live in the now as followers of Jesus as we await his return.

Read this week's passage:



REFLECT

Christmas can be a tough time of year for many reasons and can include feelings of grief and loss. As you prepare to welcome Jesus, think about the good and the difficult things of this year. Make cardboard prayer stars to go on your Christmas tree with smiles or sad faces on, to acknowledge your feelings of joy and sorrow.

ACT



Check out the website of Faith Justice – a network for young adults who want to work for justice because of their interest in the Christian faith. Sign up to their mailing list to find out how to get involved.



Sort through your old Christmas cards into those which depict the Christmas story and those which don't. Use some of the cards to create a Christmas collage picture which depicts the Christmas story. Depending on how big you

make it, you could use it as a piece of art to decorate your home at Christmastime, or as a Christmas card. You could photograph it and reproduce it on lots of cards to give to people. Recycle the remaining cards by using the front designs as gift tags for this year's presents.

Find more free Roots resources to reflect on this week's theme:



Living Scripture

'Brothers and sisters, do not be weary in doing what is right.'
2 Thessalonians 3:13

What we believe about God affects how we live. The Thessalonians believed Jesus had already returned, so they expected life on earth would end very soon. Some gave up their jobs and were getting ready for heaven, which turned out to be a problem when they needed money for food that week!

A modern equivalent might be how we view the future of our planet: Can global warming be addressed? Do our climate actions make a difference? Or is it too late? How do we live, taking responsibility for our world while still trusting the God is at work too, saving and making the world a better place?

It is easy to grow weary, to lose hope, especially when the task is hard and takes a long time. In verse 6, Paul says that sort of hopelessness is contagious. But when we see the example of others full of faith and making a difference, we are inspired and challenged. This is why we need encouraging faith communities.

Who challenges and inspires you to keep going in faith and service? In what work are you feeling weary? How could working together help keep you motivated? Who can you encourage this week?

First impressions

- How does this image speak to you about 'how to live now'?
- What 'good' can you do for others this week?
- How can you prioritise living for God in the week ahead?



Pray

Infinite God, we praise you when we glimpse you in the beauty of the church and the world outside it.

We praise you that we can see your purpose and know your desires for us.

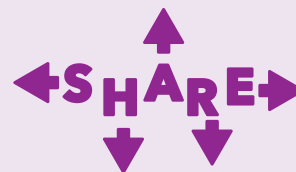
We thank you that we can glimpse you even when there seems little light at all.

We thank you that your Spirit lights the way for us, warms us and calms our fears.

We praise you that we can know you in work and play, in solitude and community.

We thank you for helping us to perceive the way we should live our lives to the glory of your great name.

Amen.



Plan a list of tasks/chores for each member of the family, according to ability and time. Include going to work/school/nursery as a task, as these need to be recognised as important too. Involve the whole family in deciding who should be doing what and why.