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Briefing 80: Wednesday 8th September, 2021.

Dear Friends,

Unsurprisingly, my talk on Sunday got people talking and reflecting a great deal more than usual. (How I wish that were the case every week!) As I mentioned on Sunday, it's not a straightforward passage nor an easy subject. It is an emotive issue, and one on which people have strong views. But as it's there in the Scriptures, and part of our series from the Pastoral Epistles of 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus, we can't just miss it out.

My aim on Sunday was to try and set this issue within a Biblical context— both from the creation accounts and from the history of God's Old and New Testament people- so that as we wrestle with this issue and arrive at our conclusions we are doing so not on the basis of our culture, our own experience or our own feelings or opinions, but on God's revealed Word. As Christians, we must be led by the Word of God, as it is rightly understood and applied. This will sometimes require us to challenge our own thinking as we study God's Word and wisdom, and it may result in needing to change our views.

That doesn't always come easy to me, as I'm sure it doesn't always come easy to you. Whether we realise it or not, we are all schooled and shaped by our culture, and so accepting a different view, even if it's in the Bible, isn't always as straightforward as it may seem. It often takes time, much study, humble prayer and God's Spirit to convict us and change us. So please let me encourage you to keep thinking and mentally wrestling with this issue and talking to me and to one another about what the Bible really does teach, and to be kind, gracious and generous as we do.

I'm aware, though, that even a longer-than-usual sermon was nowhere near enough to outline what I believe is the Biblical case, nor to discuss different perspectives. As I said on Sunday- there are plenty of them, some of them held by those who also hold the Bible to be the reliable, truthful, inspired Word of God! So below are some of the resources I used when thinking through this issue, as well as a link to access the video, audio and text from the talk on Sunday. I hope they will be helpful to you too...

Grace and peace,

Dave

Video, audio and a PDF of the text of the talk from Sunday can be found here: [The Pastoral Epistles: 1 Timothy 2 Men and Women in Ministry – St Nicholas Church \(saintnicholaschurch.org.uk\)](https://www.saintnicholaschurch.org.uk)

3 great talks on this issue from Hugh Palmer at All Souls Langham Place, giving it the time it really needs, can be found here: [All Souls, Langham Place : H009 Men, Women and Ministry](https://www.allsouls.org.uk)

A great **podcast** with a discussion between 2 women who take opposing views on this issue can be found here: [Unbelievable?: Egalitarian and Complementarian views on Biblical Womanhood - Beth Allison Barr and Rachel Green Miller on Apple Podcasts](https://www.apple.com/podcasts)

2 BOOKS:

Women and Authority- The Key Biblical Texts by Ian Paul. Ian looks at the key Biblical texts and although he arrives at a different conclusion to me, his thinking is clear and thorough. It's a very short book and I have 2 copies to lend...

God's Good Design- What the Bible Really Says About Men and Women- Claire Smith. Thorough and very readable, Claire makes the case for a complementarian understanding of women in the church.

I also used a wide variety of commentaries, some more technical than others... Although I'm using them as I prepare for future sermons in the series, I am happy to lend them out for short periods if you'd like a more academic read.

IMPORTANT STUFF – DON'T JUST GLANCE- TAKE IT ALL IN!

Come +
Pray!

WEDNESDAY NIGHT PRAYER GATHERING: 7:45pm-9pm— ask Dave for a Zoom link.

FRIDAY NIGHT at St Nicks Church from 8pm-10pm.

Come + join us and pray with us for our churches, parishes and God's world.

Private Prayer in St Nicholas church THIS WEEK and NEXT WEEK.

Tuesday 7th from 2pm-4pm, Wednesday 8th from 12noon-2pm, + Thursday 9th from 10am – 12 noon.
Tuesday 14th from 2pm-4pm, Wednesday 15th September 12noon-2pm, + Thursday 16th 10am – 12 noon.

ST NICHOLAS SUNDAY KID'S WORK Whilst we are aiming to run our groups on alternate weeks, due to the availability of leaders, S Club for children in years 2-5 will be running again this coming Sunday (12th) and on 26th. Our S Club Minis (nursery-Y1) + S Club Max (Y6-Y9) groups will be held again on 19th September + 3rd October. There will be colouring sheets available for younger children this Sunday.

CHRISTIANITY EXPLORED- Starting Thursday 14th October, at 7:45pm. Ideal for those wanting to refresh themselves on the basic truths of the Christian faith, and for those wanting to explore the identity and mission of Jesus for the first time, CExp is a 7-week course which takes participants through Mark's Gospel answering questions about who Jesus is, why did he come, and what does it mean to follow him. **It's free, there's no singing or prayers**, and there's no need to say anything if you just want to listen. But it's a great opportunity to ask questions too! Karen and Philip Walker will be running the course- why not chat with them and go along yourself, or take a friend with you.

GIVING A LIFT TO CHURCH: I'm still searching for someone to offer a single, double-vaxed lady, who lives in Great Ashby, an occasional lift to church. Do speak to Dave if you are able to help.

VIDEO UPDATE FROM JIMMY AND KATIA ROCKS- St Nicholas Mission Partners in Brazil – can be watched here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dzGopsmUDI>

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD: Last year our churches sent almost 100 boxes and St Nicholas was the collection point for hundreds more. This year we're doing it again! Details of how to fill a box yourself or fill one on line can be found here: [Operation Christmas Child \(samaritans-purse.org.uk\)](http://samaritans-purse.org.uk) But we need volunteers to help with receiving boxes at St Nicks from 15th-21st November from 10-4pm each day. Can you help? If so, please contact Stuart Marshall on enquiries@saintnicholaschurch.org.uk Stuart is also looking for volunteers to help take boxes to the regional collection centre in Duxford the week after. Can you help there?

EVENTS IN THE COMING DAYS... 5 of them this coming Saturday!

5 EVENTS THIS SATURDAY 11TH SEPTEMBER

Men's and Women's Breakfast: from 8:30am-9:45am. To book contact Mike or Karen at churchwardens@saintnicholaschurch.org.uk

Vicarage Gardening Party: from 10am-1pm. Bring some tools (or just your muscles) and help Dave and Judy with an autumn clear-up and cut-back.

Church Working Party: Gardens not your thing? Then from 10am there a number of jobs to be done in and around St Nicholas Church. Speak to Mike or Paul Drakes.

Church Sitting for the Herts and Beds Historic Churches fundraising event. BOTH churches need volunteers to church sit on Saturday- perhaps in hour slots- to welcome riders and walkers. Please talk to Mike or Karen from St Nicks if you can help there or contact Hilary at St Mary's Graveley.

Preparing for A Passion for Life: Come and be inspired, informed and prepared for next Easter's national mission at this gathering at Letchworth Free Church, Gernon Road, Letchworth SG6 3HS starting at 7:30pm. Contact Karen for more details or help with lifts.

ST NICHOLAS DOOR-TO-DOOR TEAM: The team will be going out this week on Thursday from 2pm. Please do pray for them. If you'd like to join the team on their visits- please contact Karen Walker or Steve Bamford.

TALKING WITH MUSLIMS ABOUT JESUS: Tuesday 14th September from 7pm in St Nicks Church, lower Parish Room. Come and gain a better understanding of what Muslims believe and learn how to start having conversations with them about Jesus. No need to book, just come along.

ST NICHOLAS WALKING GROUP: The next walk will be on Thursday 16th September, meeting at church at 9:45am then driving to near Church Farm Ardeley. There is a pub and a café on site for refreshments afterwards. No need to book, just come along!

READINGS FOR THE NEXT FEW WEEKS: The readings for the next 3 weeks are as follows:

12th Sept: 1 Timothy 3v14 - 4v15 19th Sept: 1 Timothy 5v1 - 6v2a 26th Sept: 2 Timothy 6:2b-10