

## **Human relatedness and being ‘in Christ’**

**John 15. (selected verses)**

**Read the whole of chapter 15 if you can.**

‘I am the true vine and my Father is the vine grower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you.’

*This passage presents us with a view of discipleship which is inherently relational. In other words, being a disciple of Christ is not simply a matter of one’s own spiritual journey (although it is that too) but of a life which connects us to one another and to the wider world at the deepest level.*

**Is there a difference between bearing fruit and achieving?**

**The story of the vine suggests that we need to belong to God as we ‘abide’ together in Christ. If this is so, what does achievement look like? Is ambition a good thing?**

*The passage also speaks of opposites – a God who is a gentle gardener, or vine grower, tending the growing plants as well as ‘pruning’ and consigning the unproductive branches to be burnt. It is sometimes cited as one of the examples in which Jesus speaks of hell and judgment.*

**What does the consigning of dead wood to the fire tell us about what it means to be either productive or unproductive in the life of Christian discipleship?**

**Jesus also speaks of people being made ‘clean’ by hearing his words. Is this simply a matter of ‘purity’? Or does it refer to the kind of things which destroy relationships, such as attitudes, words and actions which are without mercy?**

**How should we think of ourselves as individuals whose life together depends on being connected ‘in’ Christ?**