



Notes for Adult discussion groups at
On-Line@9 Worship Service
on 21 September 2008

More than fair!

Matthew 20 : 1-16

1 “The Kingdom of heaven is like this. Once there was a man who went out early in the morning to hire some men to work in his vineyard. **2** He agreed to pay them the regular wage, a silver coin a day, and sent them to work in his vineyard. **3** He went out again to the market place at nine o'clock and saw some men standing there doing nothing, **4** so he told them, ‘You also go and work in the vineyard, and I will pay you a fair wage.’ **5** So they went. Then at twelve o'clock and again at three o'clock he did the same thing. **6** It was nearly five o'clock when he went to the market place and saw some other men still standing there. ‘Why are you wasting the whole day here doing nothing?’ he asked them. **7** ‘No one hired us,’ they answered. ‘Well, then, you also go and work in the vineyard,’ he told them.

8 “When evening came, the owner told his foreman, ‘Call the workers and pay them their wages, starting with those who were hired last and ending with those who were hired first.’ **9** The men who had begun to work at five o'clock were paid a silver coin each. **10** So when the men who were the first to be hired came to be paid, they thought they would get more; but they too were given a silver coin each. **11** They took their money and started grumbling against the employer. **12** ‘These men who were hired last worked only one hour,’ they said, ‘while we put up with a whole day's work in the hot sun – yet you paid them the same as you paid us!’

13 “ ‘Listen, friend,’ the owner answered one of them, ‘I have not cheated you. After all, you agreed to do a day's work for one silver coin. **14** Now take your pay and go home. I want to give this man who was hired last as much as I have given you. **15** Don't I have the right to do as I wish with my own money? Or are you jealous because I am generous?’ ”

16 And Jesus concluded, “So those who are last will be first, and those who are first will be last.”

1. a) Why did the landowner pay all the people the same amount?
b) What was Jesus seeking to illustrate and teach by telling this story?
2. What makes people declare, “It's not fair” and how might we show God's generosity?
3. Where are the instances of casual labour today? Which groups are disadvantaged in employment terms? In what ways should Christians respond to these situations?
4. Discuss with the group what, for you, this story says about the God we worship.

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