

# Scattered Church Musings

Number 29

## Matthew 10. 40 - 42

He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives them who sent me. Anyone who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward and anyone who receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man will receive a righteous man's reward. And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of the little ones because he is my disciple. I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward.

So how do we approach hospitality in the current climate when we cannot invite people into our home? Time is such a precious commodity and so often underrated. So many are struggling, so the simple acts like giving water abound: the conversation with a neighbour, the telephone call, the little gift on a doorstep, the picture drawn for someone. The other day I was walking and getting frustrated with the person in front going slowly and being unable to pass them on a narrow path. We stopped to let someone come the other way and a conversation ensued almost by accident with the obvious need for this person just to talk. Half an hour later I was still there, not frustrated anymore, but glad that I was in the place that God wanted me to be. I was able to allow this stranger to just voice their anguish and concern. It

## Reflection

At first glance the analogy of giving someone a cup of cold water may seem to our modern mind rather shallow. On reflection though the need for water is paramount. To the early disciples they relied totally on basic hospitality as they travelled to proclaim the mission of Jesus.

What is the best hospitality you have ever received? Some years back I had the pleasure of completing the Coast to Coast walk across the country which involved staying in a range of bed and breakfast establishments, often in remote places. At the time my working life took me to decent hotels in London, but where was the best hospitality? Without doubt the inexpensive B & Bs on route. Why? The welcome, the little touches, the lovely conversations, the sharing of experiences and the ability to relax and refresh. No competition with the luxury, the empty room, the isolation and the plush furniture.

reminded me that I have two ears and one mouth indicating the importance of how I should use them - listening being more important than speaking.

Are we open to these moments from God? Are we attuned with Him enough to recognise these so called chance occasions? In my case He even managed to get through my irritation at walking too slowly and with a sense of humour He has me stop for another half an hour.

We are Jesus' eyes, ears and feet. How do we recognise the way he can and does use us, especially in the current climate of need?

# SOUL SHAPER

*A few weeks ago we considered a poem which reflected on what God is doing in his church at the moment. This poem is similar but it reflects upon what God might be doing within you, personally, at this time.*

*There was once a sculptor who worked hard with hammer and chisel on a large block of marble. A little child who was watching him saw nothing more than large and small pieces of stone falling away left and right. He had no idea what was happening. But when the boy returned to the studio a few weeks later, he saw, to his surprise, a large, powerful lion sitting in the place where the marble had stood. With great excitement, the boy ran to the sculptor and said, "Sir, tell me, how did you know there was a lion in the marble?"*

I marvel as I watch the master sculptor chip away,  
forming something other: His design.  
As wood, marble and stone require hammer, chisel, patience and skill,  
so the human spirit is shaped by the master craftsman

Is a spiritual life defined by tranquillity  
or obedience? Following  
God's Spirit as he draws us to the unfamiliar, the unknown.  
The alternative? Distraction, busyness, emptiness.

The challenge to move from noise and mindless occupation,  
to listening. Awareness of God's Spirit,  
his active presence. Creation of empty spaces.  
Resistance to voices that compete. Being not doing.

I choose to stop, to look at the dark days: pain, hurt, despair,  
loneliness, confusion and loss,  
choosing to see chipping and crafting, chiselling. Your active presence  
revealing something new, something other, your new design.

As I submit my life to you as marble to be crafted,  
tough and unyielding, provide me with  
companions who will encourage, challenge, caution and counsel.  
Lord, create a new heart and renew a right spirit in me.



## Pray & Ponder

What does it mean to be  
Jesus' hands and feet to  
those you meet this  
week?

What do you need  
to do for you this  
week, to care for  
yourself?

Put it in your diary,  
set an alarm,  
write yourself a  
note—and make  
sure you do it.

You can't help  
others if you're  
running on empty.



Self-care is never a  
selfish act - it is simply  
good stewardship of  
the only gift I have,  
the gift I was put on  
earth to offer others.

*Parker J Palmer*