

Coach House Church BEACONS

COUCH 2 ENCOURAGE

17TH NOVEMBER 2020

Ever felt you need some encouragement? My name is Jamie and I'm part of the Leadership team here at The Coach House.

I've recently finished the Couch to 5K fitness plan. This is a plan devised to get you up and moving from your couch and running or at least moving for 5km or 3.1 miles. This was originally started by a chap called Josh Clark who made it to get his 50 year old mother up and moving to get healthy. He was an encourager.

Now having just finished the 9 week plan of Couch to 5k, I know what its like to run and feel like I want to give up. To get to the point where your brain is telling you your being silly and you should give up, that you just cant do, or carry on.

The feeling of your breath being sucked out of your lungs as the drowning from not being able to get oxygen into them, as your knees and legs feel the pain of not being used properly for a while, that everything in your body and mental strength drains with each foot step. So on the app that helps guide you I had the lovely comedian Sarah Millican encouraging me every now and again with helpful "keep going" and "you've got this" messages. It really helped me carry on, even in those moments of sheer desperation.

If you listened to Bekah's Beacon yesterday, she spoke about her journey into the couch 2 5k plan and how her fear of failure had pushed her to keep going. She started around 5 weeks after me, so is now just getting to the fun / not so fun part of longer runs. This morning, for the first time we decided to go out and run together, and as I am further into the plan, I decided that i'd stick to running and being along side Bekah as she ran.

We started the first section, and Bekah started to struggle as the minutes and kilometres ticked up. And as I could see her starting to struggle, and breath harder my initial reaction was to tell her to slow down and take a rest because I didn't want her to be in pain, but as I started to say the words, out came something I wasn't expecting...and it was "keep going babe" "you've got this", "I believe in you", and I did . I did believe in her, I really knew she had the strength

and will power to keep going. So I encouraged her, even through the moments of her telling me she couldn't do it.

We all need encouragement. This life that we live can be challenging at times and we all need encouragement. We all need someone to lift us up don't we? 64 years ago, on June 18, 1956, a freak accident happened on a lake in New York. A speeding motorboat bounced on a wave and shot into the water two of its passengers, a 50-year old man and a little girl. To keep her from drowning, the man held her head above water while the boat circled back. They rescued the girl. But the man sank and drowned.

That's how Dawson Trotman died, the founder of the Navigators, an international discipleship ministry. According to a quote in Time Magazine in the US, "He lived to save others. His death was just the way he would have planned it. In his obituary someone wrote that he died just the way he lived, always lifting someone up.

What a legacy. To be known as someone who always lifted others up. Someone who was always encouraging others. It has taken me many years, and I still am learning that one good word, one word of encouragement can inspire and physically help people.

There was a study done using children and the affects that encouragement has on them. These psychologists hooked up all these wires and sensors to children and then they would either use encouraging words and gestures or discouraging words or gestures. What the study showed was that when children were encouraged, their physical energy would increase. When they used discouraging words and gestures, the energy level of the kids would drop immediately and dramatically. While this particular study was done using children, I'm sure that they would get the same result in adults.

We all need some encouragement. We all like to receive encouragement don't we? When we receive encouragement we feel that others care about us.

In Acts 4, the church was young. It had really just gotten its start there in Jerusalem and all of the church was in one accord the scriptures tell us. The apostles were preaching and teaching every day and more and more believed that Jesus was their long awaited Messiah and they were placing their faith in Him and what He had done on the cross for them. They were excited and on fire for God. The scripture says that they were selling their property so that everyone in the church would be provided for. There is one man though who was singled out for his generosity and encouragement of others,

His name was Joseph, the apostles nicknamed Barnabas (which means "Son of Encouragement").

Joseph sold a field, and then took the money to the apostles. His name was Joseph but we don't know him by this name. This is the last time that his proper name is used in scripture for him. His nickname was Barnabas. The apostles gave him a nickname. How many of you have a nickname? I get called JB, Jay, Jaybo and also Ja - mes by my closest of friends, but those nicknames don't really mean anything but Joseph, nicknamed Barnabas did.

In the bible, names had a meaning and Joseph's meant "Son of Encouragement" or encourager. Barnabas' character as an encourager was so well known that they actually changed his name. His nickname became who he was .

The church was expanding and starting to reach the gentiles. When the church in Jerusalem heard about this guess what they did, they sent an encourager. They sent Barnabas. Everywhere Barnabas is present; you will find encouragement going on. Even when the great apostle Paul was angry with John Mark and didn't want him to be part of his ministry team anymore Barnabas chose to stay and encourage John Mark.

Barnabas also took Paul to the Apostles and stood up for him. He told them of Paul's conversion and how he personally had heard Paul preach the Gospel of Jesus. Think what might have happened had Barnabas not took Paul by the hand and encouraged him to go see the apostles. It would have been easy for Paul to say "these people don't accept me. Maybe I don't belong here"

Barnabas, through his actions, encouraged and strengthened Paul in his faith and his reputation. Barnabas' actions matched his words didn't they?

Friends our actions need to match our words if we are to truly encourage people. People need a warm touch sometimes. Someone just to wrap their arms around them and hold them. No words necessary, just the action of comforting and encouraging. Occasionally I get a card from some of you in the church.

I may be having a bad week or need a little encouragement. No special occasion, just an encouragement. While the words are comforting, I realise that it took an effort to do this action of encouragement. Most of all, people need our prayers. What an act of encouragement just to pray for someone. Let them know that you are praying for them and then do it. But let's remember, we encourage by our actions and our words. Lift each other up. Encourage your friends and neighbours. You never know how God uses our encouragements to bring people into a relationship with Him.

So let me tell you this, Bekah did complete the run, and will continue to run. And I, God willing will run along side her and try my best to encourage her.

And I will also endeavour to encourage you. You're all doing great, even when you feel you aren't, remember the best encourager ever, God is waiting to encourage you into a greater relationship with Him.



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