

Coach House Church

BEACONS

BEING A PASSENGER

19 APRIL 2021

We once borrowed a tandem bike to try out. It looked good and the idea of travelling together seemed such a good idea. However, when you are used to being the one in control of the bike it is very difficult to be in the back seat. When we turned a corner, my initial response was to counteract the lean into the bend which meant we stayed in a straight line and, consequently, caused some tension. Suffice to say that was the one and only venture on a tandem. We went on to buy a bike each and peace and calm descended once again.

Being the passenger when you are used to being the driver can also be a challenge. It's not that you don't trust the driver but that you instinctively react to the road ahead of you, reaching for the brake, then realising that you are not in charge and your foot pressing down is having no effect on the car. Such is our muscle memory.

The bible tells us in Proverbs 3:5

Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding.

This is often easier said than done but is something that should be practised at every opportunity. It means that you can be the passenger who fully relies on someone else. If I'm on a plane, I am happy to be a passenger and to let the pilot do his job. I may feel uncomfortable on the journey as I'm not keen on take-off or landing however, I would never consider telling the pilot how to fly the plane. I let the person who is qualified take charge.

The problem is we like to take charge ourselves. We convince ourselves that it is only a small decision that isn't worth bothering God about. He doesn't need to trouble himself with our trivialities, the mundane events of everyday life.

But 1 Peter 5:7 tells us to

Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.

How many times do we turn to others for advice and leave God to last. There's a warning in Proverbs 25:19 about who we turn to:

Putting confidence in an unreliable person in times of trouble is like chewing with a broken tooth or walking on a lame foot.

Another thing we do is to trust in God while the going is good, but then start to question when life gets tough. Corrie Ten Boom said: "When a train goes through a tunnel and it gets dark, you don't throw away the ticket and jump off. You sit still and trust the engineer."

When life gets tough, when life changes and is no longer what you thought it would be, the bible tells us to still trust in Jesus. When we can't see the immediate solution to a problem it is tempting to look for a solution elsewhere. But this is short sighted on our behalf. 1 Corinthians 13: 12 reminds us that we can't see the whole picture, our life's path is obscure to us but not to our Creator.

Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely.

So, what better reason to let Jesus be our guide in life, to follow God's rules for a life that is not driven by anxiety about the unknown? While being a passenger requires trust to let someone else take control, there are benefits for our own well-being. In Matthew 11:28-30 Jesus tells us:

“Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.”

Jesus acknowledges that life is sometimes difficult. Turning to Jesus does not remove trouble, making difficult decisions, facing trying circumstances. However, the worry is shared by talking and praying to God, in the name of Jesus. God's Holy Spirit is sent to be our comforter, to give us peace, so that we can cope with whatever comes across our path. We share the problem or concern and then leave it with God who knows all things and knows what we need for our future.

It can be difficult to let go, to stop being responsible if that is what you have been used to. Stopping and stepping back from what has always been your role, in the workplace, family or church life can be a challenge. Some people feel that they are no longer useful. They can feel demoralised or ineffective, left out on the scrap heap. I know those who feel this pressure because they were once so busy in their younger lives when they were physically able with plenty of stamina, but now have to reduce their workload and responsibilities because their bodies or minds are shouting out to slow down. Proverbs 20:9 reminds us that age brings experience.

9 The glory of the young is their strength;
the grey hair of experience is the splendour of the old.

In Psalm 71, the writer calls out to God to continue to be close to him as he ages and also reminds us that experience should be passed on.

O God, you have taught me from my earliest childhood,
and I constantly tell others about the wonderful things you do.
18 Now that I am old and grey,
do not abandon me, O God.
Let me proclaim your power to this new generation,
your mighty miracles to all who come after me.

Sometimes our roles shift and change and we are asked to be a passenger and not the one in charge. But change is not necessarily a demotion, a step down the ladder. Change is just change and a response to circumstances. As part of the family of God, we all have a role to play- whether this is in supporting others and sharing experiences of how God has helped in personal situations in the past, or by phoning someone for a chat, sharing a meal, praying for shared needs, being the listening ear when required. In another part of Psalm 71 it says:

My life is an example to many,
because you have been my strength and protection.
8 That is why I can never stop praising you;
I declare your glory all day long.

One of the reasons we live and work together in communities is so we can support each other, share our life experiences and encourage each other. This last year has taught us this more than ever, how much we need each other and how important human contact is for us.

As Christians, we are also so aware that we need to rely on God. We are the passengers and God is in control. The words of an old hymn, written by Annie S Hawks in 1872 say:

I need Thee every hour, most gracious Lord; No tender voice like Thine
can peace afford. I need Thee, oh, I need Thee; Every hour I need Thee;
Oh, bless me now, my Savior, I come to Thee. Amen



MELANIE JACKSON



Coach House Church

leadership@coachhousechurch.org //

0161 432 5604

the coach house church, 222 wellington road north, stockport sk4 2qn