

Weekly Bible Study for Highcliffe and Bransgore Methodist Churches

Discipleship #6 "Choices" Luke 10: 38-42 w/c 14th February by Norman Bonnett

1. "Lord of all pots and pans and things,
Since I have no time to be
A saint by doing lovely things,
Or watching late with Thee,
2. Or dreaming in the dawn-light,
Or storming heavens gates,
Make me a saint by getting meals
And washing up the plates."

Does this poem scratch where it sometimes itches? I'm sure that all of us have at one or other times in our lives, questioned the role or roles we have undertaken/played. We have been faithfully seeking to serve the church, the Lord Jesus or one another and will have asked ourselves whether we are using our gifts correctly. I ask you to read carefully and slowly our passage – Luke 10:38-42 and to ask yourself where your sympathies lie.

Q1 Who can you most relate to in this story -Mary or Martha?

Q2 What about Jesus, does he deal too harshly with Martha, whose "side" was he on -if any?

One of the greatest joys of belonging to any community is in discovering how different people can find a variety of needs for them to fulfil. Churches are an obvious example of such a community and there will be roles enough for everyone – see 1 Corinthians 12: 1-11 (varieties of gifts and services). A perfect church would need the giftings and services of everyone to function correctly. **Q3 Can you imagine a church such as the one described where everyone serves according to their gift for the benefit of all? What gets in the way of this happening?**

I was once deeply involved in a series of Alpha Courses. It needed all sorts to be effective. It needed people who would invite non-Christians to be present, it needed folk who would prepare the meals for those who would come, it needed someone to take care of the video through which the teaching would be communicated, it needed people who would welcome visitors, people to answer questions, the event to be covered in prayer and also to be ready to pray with anyone who wanted to make a commitment, it needed people who would follow-up those who had responded in any way and it needed gentle but effective leadership. Alpha is clearly a very focussed and specialised tool of Christian outreach and it encompasses a great variety of skills and enthusiasms that should be present in a lively church. **Q4 Can you add to the list of skills and enthusiasms and should these be present always and not just for very specific events like Alpha -every Sunday perhaps?**

Most of us who have spent time as part of a Christian congregation will have been faced with the same choices as Mary and Martha. The Bible speaks of gifts and we will have spent time in prayer about these choices. Sometimes we need to ask others for guidance and always we need to remember that everyone's skills, however grand or ordinary are needed in the Lord's work. Jill and I are currently following a Bible study in Exodus in which the prevailing message is that Moses feels inadequate for the task he has been set, God promises again and again that He will be with Moses and will guide him through the challenge of facing Pharaoh. Moses learns how to trust God just as you and I must trust God if we are to follow whatever calling is laid before us. May God bless you as you respond to His challenges. In love, Norman.