

Cardiff Methodist Circuit Prayer Month – 12th May, 2020

Today's thoughts are provided by Rev. Paul Martin.

The early months of 2004 were among the most stressful days of my life. I was still working as a lay pastor on the Isle of Man, but I was now going through the early months of candidating for the Methodist ministry. In fact, I had already given in my notice so that the Ramsey Methodist Circuit would be able to appoint a successor to me in good time for that person to be ready to move over in August. I cannot exaggerate my concern at what I was putting my family through. If I was to be turned down, I would be without a home to go to or a job to take on. Indeed, I would have to leave the Island that I had come to love because my work permit would cease.

I found myself working incredibly hard anticipating questions that would come my way at the Connexional selection process at London Olney. In fact, I overprepared and during the two days there was rather eager to make my points. During one of the interviews there was no shutting me up and one of the interviewers looked at me and asked,

"Do you ever get time to listen?"

Listening is a very important part of prayer. Sure, it is good that we are able to express the things on our heart to our Father God. But that is only a part of it. Prayer is also about being able to listen for the voice of God and God's guidance amidst the noisiness of life. It is not so much me getting my way with God as God getting God's way with me. It is about enabling God to transform my being and my thinking that in turn may change my doings. As with any relationship, as my wife sometimes reminds me, there needs to be two-way communication.

John Bode puts it well in the hymn "O Jesus I have promised."

"O let me hear thee speaking
In accents clear and still,
above the storms of passion,
the murmurs of self-will;
O speak to reassure me,
to hasten and control,
Lord speak and make me listen,
O guardian of my soul."

I hope that is our experience and that prayer might be a two-way process in which our relationship with God is enabled to grow!

POINTS FOR PRAYER

- 1/. Hospitals and care homes with prayers for staff and patients/residents in this difficult time.
- 2/. Our churches. That we might find ways of remaining as communities of faith in very different times using new means