



## Bulletin 11

### Cabin crew prepare for landing?

Last week I spoke of ‘Take Off, Mid-Flight and Landing’ and of some of the difficulties associated with the long-haul mid-flight of Covid19. This week, it would seem some sort of a landing is now on the radar but not yet in visual sight! The nose of the plane is tipped down but there is still likely to be a considerable period of time before the ‘Fasten your seat belts’ sign comes on.

Indeed, we are being informed from further up the ecclesiastical line that there certainly won’t be ‘a moment’ when we suddenly touch down and it’s all over. It will be a phased return during which, while some of us may relatively soon be able to meet in church, possibly home groups, and other meetings, others will still only be able to take part in online gatherings. Thus we will need live coverage on Facebook of actual services and also gatherings specifically created for Facebook ‘Go Live’ as we presently do. One thing *is* certain: Until we are through with this, everyone will continue to be able to present with other members of our congregations either online or in person! So, as usual, watch this space as things develop.

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**So where are we currently in our spiritual journey amidst all that we are currently experiencing?** We’ve now been in the midst of this for long enough to look back on our experience. During this time we’ve walked amongst the Psalms, selected lectionary readings, the epistles of John and James and are currently in the deeper waters of the book of Hebrews. All have pointed us to Jesus. We’ve persisted in prayer and enjoyed a different but very real sense of fellowship. I hope, think and pray we will carry with us out of these times, a greater sense of dependence on each other and upon our Lord. We’ve realised how meeting daily together for prayer has uplifted and fired us in our faith. We must retain that.

If here’s one thing further I hope we will bring out of this, it’s not just finding a *corporate* dependency upon the Lord but a *personal* one – that he would speak and deal with us individually as much as he has while gathered over these past weeks in our times together.

This morning I went to my first webinar (there’s a new word of our age!). It was run by the Church Pastoral Aid Society who are about to become the new patrons of our parish. The topic of the webinar (online Zoom conference to you and I!), was ***Rhythm, Rest and Focus***.

Amongst other things, the speaker offered us ***Five Basic Practices of life***:

- Prayer – not just together but also on our own!
- Exercise – don’t sit at the desk or in the arm chair all day! Have some ‘outside the door’ time. Have an exercise regime, however modest!
- Nutrition – while at home, don’t just snack through the day! Plan for and prepare sensible balanced meals.
- Relaxation – take breaks, pursue hobbies, relax the mind as well as the body.
- Sleep – is important. Take a break from ‘the screen’ before turning in to bed.

All these will help to ensure Rhythm and Focus in our lives and ministry.

*"But when you  
pray, go into  
your room and  
shut the door  
and pray to  
your Father  
who is in secret.  
And your  
Father who sees  
in secret will  
reward you."*

Prayer is not a duty, a chore or an optional extra just for extra keen Christians. Prayer is the very oxygen of faith. I think that's a lesson we're in the process of learning. For many of us, even the mention of the word 'prayer' can invoke instant guilt rather than assurance of the Lord's intended joy, close communion, strengthening and off-loading of burdens. Prayer is rewarding and enables us to refocus upon our world and our Lord. It helps us to keep us planting our feet in Jesus' footsteps – the one who has gone before us. Just as you can't conduct other people's relationships for them, you can't do anyone else's praying for them either. Prayer is essential to personal relationship with Jesus and, praise God, I think we're learning something of that at the moment. May the Lord continue to teach and guide us in it. In Psalm 32 we read,

***I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you. Do not be like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding but must be controlled by bit and bridle or they will not come to you<sup>1</sup>.***

In these times when we're faced with the reality of our own powerlessness, let's learn to let the Lord take the initiative, to trust him more by walking in his company more conscientiously by prayer and learn that obedience to him leads to security, fulfilment, peace and joy. Let's not be stubborn about prayer!

***The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come that they may have life and have it in all its fullness<sup>2</sup>.***

...said Jesus. So, let's learn to go about life his way in these proving, refining and habit-forming times. Let's emerge from this with renewed focus and godliness to face the challenges and opportunities soon to follow.

And one last thing. At Emmanuel we are still trying to resolve the oversight and vision for our young people and families work – particularly on Sundays. John has been doing a magnificent work, but he only took it on to fill the gap while we sought a more permanent solution. Nicky and I are prepared to have a stab at this, but we need the promise of a larger team than we currently have to work with! I will also need additional admin responsibilities lifted from me. Our aim is to create and be part of a rota system so the burden on a small number of people could be relieved and leaders could enjoy preparing for their less frequent duties. Expertise or experience need not be an issue, we are just looking for more volunteers who are willing to have a go at working with our young people now and again. Nicky and I will be offering help, ideas and training to every leader in the team. Please give this some prayerful thought and get in touch if you would like to have a go. It wouldn't have to be forever either! Each of us needs to play our part...

***..., so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ<sup>3</sup>.***

For each of us, taking our place in the body of Christ is about using our God-given gifts. We all have them, it's just a question of stepping up to what our Lord has gifted us for and is calling us to. If we fail to step up, then the body of Christ limps or, worse still, falls! It would be great to think that when Covid19 allows, we could hit the ground running with our young people's ministry. Please check in with Nicky or I if you can! Feel free just to make contact to talk it through to see what it might involve. Lots of help and support will be with the team throughout! [Karldesk@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:Karldesk@blueyonder.co.uk)

So, let's use this time as well as endure and conquer it, safe in the knowledge that '***in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us<sup>4</sup>.***'

May you know every blessing in Christ as he '***meets all our needs according to his glorious riches...<sup>5</sup>.***'

Rev Karl

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<sup>1</sup> Psalm 32:8-9

<sup>2</sup> John 10:10

<sup>3</sup> Ephesians 4:11-13

<sup>4</sup> Romans 8:37

<sup>5</sup> Philippians 4:19