

A Day of Prayer



Three weeks on from our day of prayer the thought emerges, why did we have it? For me the sense of the presence of God in the church that day was tangible and I guess that was so for others too. Yet we have to ask whether that alone is a sufficient expectation. Should not the things that we do have an effect beyond our own personal feelings of well-being? Can a day of prayer have any impact on the life of the wider community?

Many of us struggle with the sense that something is not right with the world and indeed with the Church and our own personal lives. That struggle has I believe increased in recent times to the point where we are beginning to recognise that our own efforts and Church programmes are not enough to bring about the transformation that we sense is desperately needed. This takes us to the place where we turn to God to transform individual lives, churches and nations.

The layout of the Church building on our day of prayer aimed to draw this thinking into focus. On the right hand side it was about bringing ourselves as we really are before God and on the left, about bringing the world as it really is before God. The depiction in the chancel area of the river with abundant life was about God's promise of healing and peace. This is what we long for but following our day of prayer nothing much, in a wider sense, seems to have changed. So was it all worthwhile?

On two occasions recently I have been given the words perseverance and patience. Our culture demands an instant result but faith is about perseverance even when nothing much seems to be happening.

And a day of prayer is about faith:

- Putting aside our own interests in the belief that God can make a difference.
- The belief that somehow our prayers can enable Him to unlock the kingdom of heaven.

I feel that in these days God is calling us to pursue Him relentlessly; persevering in prayer for as long as it takes even if it means regular fasting or spending half the night with Him? This is what I feel our day of prayer was about and I suspect it is what the Latimer event is about too; creating the conditions by faith through which God can break through.

We might not see immediate answers to our prayers but I believe that in the context of a longer term pursuit of God our 24 hours of prayer somehow brought us closer to the day when maybe we can be transformed and revived.

Steve