

Rev Tim Perkins
May 20th 2020

Dear Friends,

Over the last few weeks I have been writing about different aspects of what might be called the process of spiritual formation and seeking to reflect upon how our current experiences of life might be either drawing us towards God or pulling us away from God.

One of the tools that I have found to be a personal help is The Methodist Way of Life. This is a set of commitments and practices through which I discover ways of experiencing God's presence, with me, in me, and in the world that I inhabit. It provides a little structure to what can seem like days that blur into each other. What I find to be most helpful about the Methodist Way of Life, is that it helps me to be intentional about my faith each day and that it provides me with a form of accountability for how I live. These were both issues that were of vital importance to John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement, back in the 18th century.

Ideally, the Methodist Way of Life can be used by a group of friends seeking to encourage one another in their faith, and that might be possible for you even at this time, if you can connect with others via a platform such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams. But I have found that it can still be a great source of encouragement in my own personal devotional life. So I offer it to you now as a tool to experiment with over the coming days and weeks. It may be that you just take one of the commitments and one of the questions and focus your attention on how they might enable you to experience a greater sense of God's presence with you.

A Methodist Way of Life

The calling of the Methodist Church is to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission.

As far as we are able, with God's help:

Worship

We will pray daily.

We will worship with others regularly.

We will look and listen for God in Scripture, and the world.

Learning and Caring

We will care for ourselves and those around us.

We will learn more about our faith.

We will practise hospitality and generosity.

Service

We will help people in our communities and beyond.

We will care for creation and all God's gifts.

We will challenge injustice.

Evangelism

We will speak of the love of God.

We will live in a way that draws others to Jesus.

We will share our faith with others.

May we be a blessing within and beyond God's Church, for the transformation of the world.

A Methodist Way of Life encourages us to grow together. Make time to discuss these questions regularly with others.

Worship

What is the pattern of your prayer life?

How easy or hard do you find it to pray?

What has spoken to you recently in worship or in the Bible?

When, lately, have you felt close to God or distant from God?

Learning and Caring

How have you practised generosity since we last met?

How have you shown hospitality to others recently?

How are you caring for yourself?

How and what are you learning now?

Service

How are you seeking to serve others in your communities and beyond?

What has helped or hindered you in your service of others?

How are you caring for God's creation?

How are you using God's gifts (including your financial resources)?

What issues of injustice are you currently concerned about? What are you doing in response?

Evangelism

When was the last time you were able to talk about God?

What opportunities to share your faith have there been since we last met?

How have you responded to opportunities to share your faith?

Is there anyone you might invite to consider Christian faith?

How can we support each other in our Way of Life commitments?

I also want to take this opportunity to share with you two other resources that might be a blessing to you at this time. During the period from Ascension Day to Pentecost (21st to 31st May), Christians all around the world are taking part in a prayer initiative called Thy Kingdom Come. It is an opportunity to commit to praying daily for five friends to come to faith in Jesus. Resources and ideas can be found here: www.thykingdomcome.global

Cliff College have their annual Festival Weekend this weekend. This year it is taking place online and further details and ways to take part can be found here:

<https://cliffcollege.ac.uk/cliff-festival/festival-2020>

With every blessing,

Rev Tim Perkins