

PSALMS  
OF HOPE  
@UnitedChurchFerndown

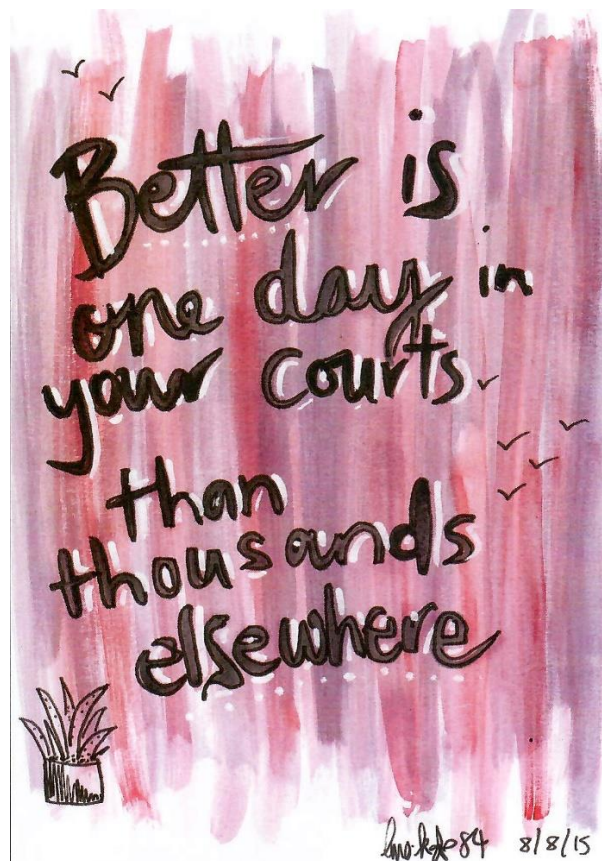


United Church Ferndown's 2023 Lent Programme

Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> February

Reflection #4

**ABSENCE MAKES THE HEART GROW FONDER!**



**Pray:**

Lord, let everything I do in this season of Lent come from You, be inspired by You. I long to be closer to You. I long to receive the hope that You offer. Help me to remember that nothing is more important than You in my life. Help me to rely on You for help. I want to walk in your footsteps, Jesus. I confess that I have often felt I knew better and ignored Your presence. Heal me, Lord, and help me to find You in the darkness of my life. Let me reach out and feel your hand and love there to guide me. Speak to me in this moment, Lord God. **Amen.**

## Introduction:

It was a while back, when Melanie and I were both working and our second child had been born. We found ourselves not going to church, It wasn't an active choice; it was just that other things came up to do... There were work shifts to do, there was family to visit, family trips to go on and, if I'm honest, lie-ins to be had! We didn't choose to stop going to church – It just happened. After a while we realised that we were fed up, irritable and struggling with our busy life. So, we went to visit friends and once the children were asleep we confessed that life was getting hard for us. So, we prayed for this cloud to be lifted and God's first response was 'Get to Church!' He actually told us which church He wanted us at! This was a challenge as it was a very traditional Baptist Church. We walked towards the door with the joy similar to the joy you normally have when visiting the dentist. But once there, we met with God. We were thirsty but didn't realise how thirsty until we drunk the living waters once again. We realised that missing church made things worse not better... A day in God's presence is better than a thousand somewhere else...



## Read:

### Psalm 84:10 (NASB)

<sup>10</sup> For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand *outside*.  
I would rather stand at the threshold of the house of my God  
Than dwell in the tents of wickedness..

### Psalm 86:11-12 (NIV)

<sup>11</sup> Teach me your way, LORD,  
that I may rely on your faithfulness;  
give me an undivided heart,  
that I may fear your name.  
<sup>12</sup> I will praise you, Lord my God, with all my  
heart;  
I will glorify your name for ever.

### Psalm 142:5 (NCV)

<sup>5</sup> LORD, I cry out to you.  
I say, "You are my protection.  
You are all I want in this life."

### Psalm 143:6 (NCV)

<sup>6</sup> I lift my hands to you in prayer.  
As a dry land needs rain, I thirst for you.

## Consider:

Sometimes (even as Christians) we can find ourselves feeling low! Fed Up! Cheesed off! Grumpy! Not Happy!. We can suffer such feelings even with full knowledge of Biblical truth and the greatness of God. There might be many reasons for such feelings of despair but behind each one is an enemy of our souls who is actively seeking to bring defeat and darkness in our lives.

Here we have some encouraging Psalms about such times. Even when we are unable to identify the real event that causes our sadness we read that it is our God who is faithful all the time. When we mess up with God, it's not just a mistake - It robs the Christian heart of joy and vitality. David knew about messing up. He knew about feeling separated from God. Once He was reunited with God it filled him with loads of joy. His separation left him alone from God and he wanted back in.

Apple once had the advertising slogan 'Once you go Mac, you'll never go back. Once you've been in the presence of God, you won't want to leave,,,' Better is one day in Your courts than thousands elsewhere!

## Pray:

Ask God to refresh you... Ask that you might be aware of His presence throughout the day.

## Try it out:

Take a refreshing drink (Maybe a glass of water, I fancy a mug of Tea!) and slowly take the first sip. Feel it moisten any dry areas! In a similar way recognise that you need to be refreshed by God.