

Dear Friends, can you believe that we are almost half the way through this year already! And what a year it has been. It's hard to tell where we are at with regards to coronavirus, there are so many competing voices; some want to lift lockdown to get everything going again, others are very fearful that any lifting is going to open the door to another spike in cases and lead to many more deaths. There is no easy answer to all of this, and we must pray for all those in Government, and for people who influence decision making, such as scientists. This leaves the ordinary 'man in the street' in an uncomfortable position, of either feeling in limbo and constantly waiting for something to happen, or feeling in a constant state of flux where we feel things are constantly changing and we can't keep up.....what a terribly conflicting position we are in; and this is taking its toll on everybody.

As I write this letter, we are just entering into a week that has two big themes; 'Mental Health Awareness Week', and 'Thy Kingdom Come' Season in the Church. And I see the two as very much connected.

As its theme this year Mental Health Awareness week is focusing on 'Kindness'. The interesting thing is that Kindness is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit. The fruits of the Holy Spirit are a kind of litmus test to show Christians where we are in regards to our walk with the Lord. If Christians are not displaying the fruits of the Spirit, it will damage the credibility of the Church, and raises questions. But the fruits of the Spirit come to life in a person who is connected to the tree as it were; fruit cannot appear from nowhere, it has to grow on a tree, and get its life from the tree. So it is with the fruit of the Holy Spirit; we need to stay connected to Jesus, who said of himself, I am the true Vine. The main way we stay connected to God is through prayer. And Jesus is our example, as he was always taking himself off to quiet places to connect with his Father in prayer, and to be refreshed and empowered for life.

Most people are kind to others, and we have even seen a wonderful increase in kindness in our communities, but many folk are not kind to themselves, and that is a shame. I spoke about this recently in one of my regular messages by email, because God has been speaking to me about this. We are coming through this terrible time, and one thing that is evident is that everybody is doing the very best they can to help, and to offer kindness in any way they are able to, given the restrictions. The other thing that is evident is that more people are praying. I am going to leave you with two prayers to help you continue to get through this time; the 1st is for yourself; and it is better known as 'The Serenity Prayer'. Please be kind to yourself, you are doing the best you can, and please know that God is with you and loves you. The second prayer is for everyone. It is the basis for 'Thy Kingdom Come' season and is better known as 'The Lord's prayer'. It is a powerful prayer that Jesus himself taught us to pray, it's a prayer that has the power to change us, and our world, for the betterment of us all. God bless you,

With love Revd Sue. x

The Serenity Prayer

*God grant me the Serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the
Courage to change the things I can, and the Wisdom to know the difference.*

THE LORD'S PRAYER

*Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name. Thy Kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily
bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against
us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is The
Kingdom, The Power, and The Glory, for ever and ever. Amen.*

*"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness,
faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no
law". Galatians 5: 22-23*