

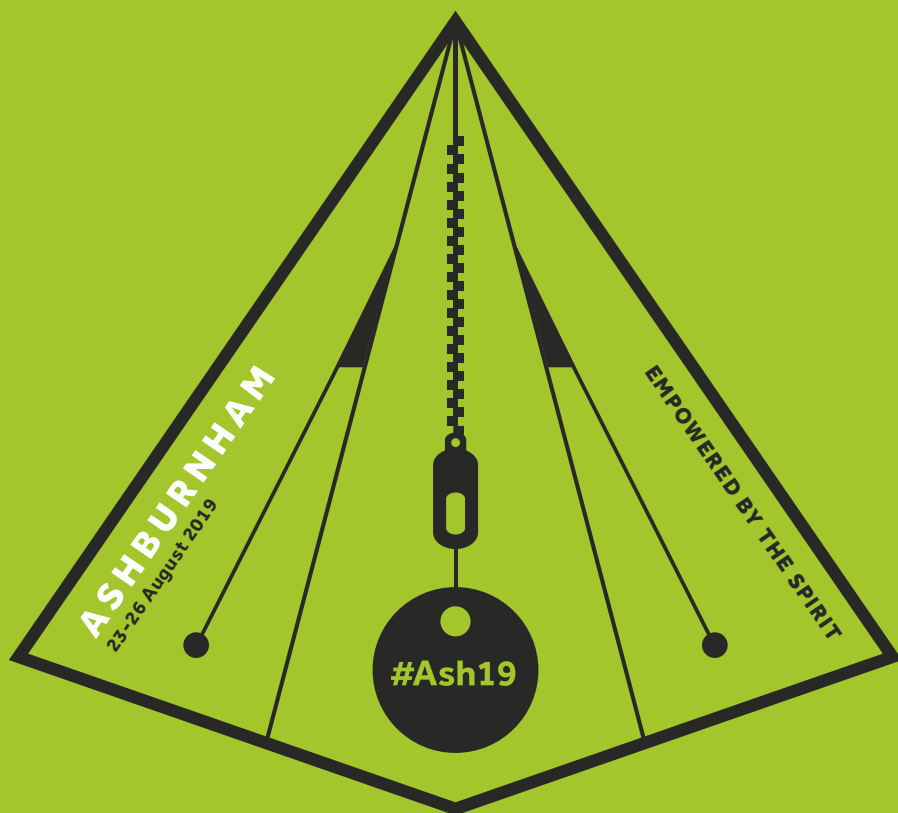


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LATEST

The Next Seven Years
Spirit-filled Church
Spirit-filled Community

Issue 07 May 2019



23–26 August 2019

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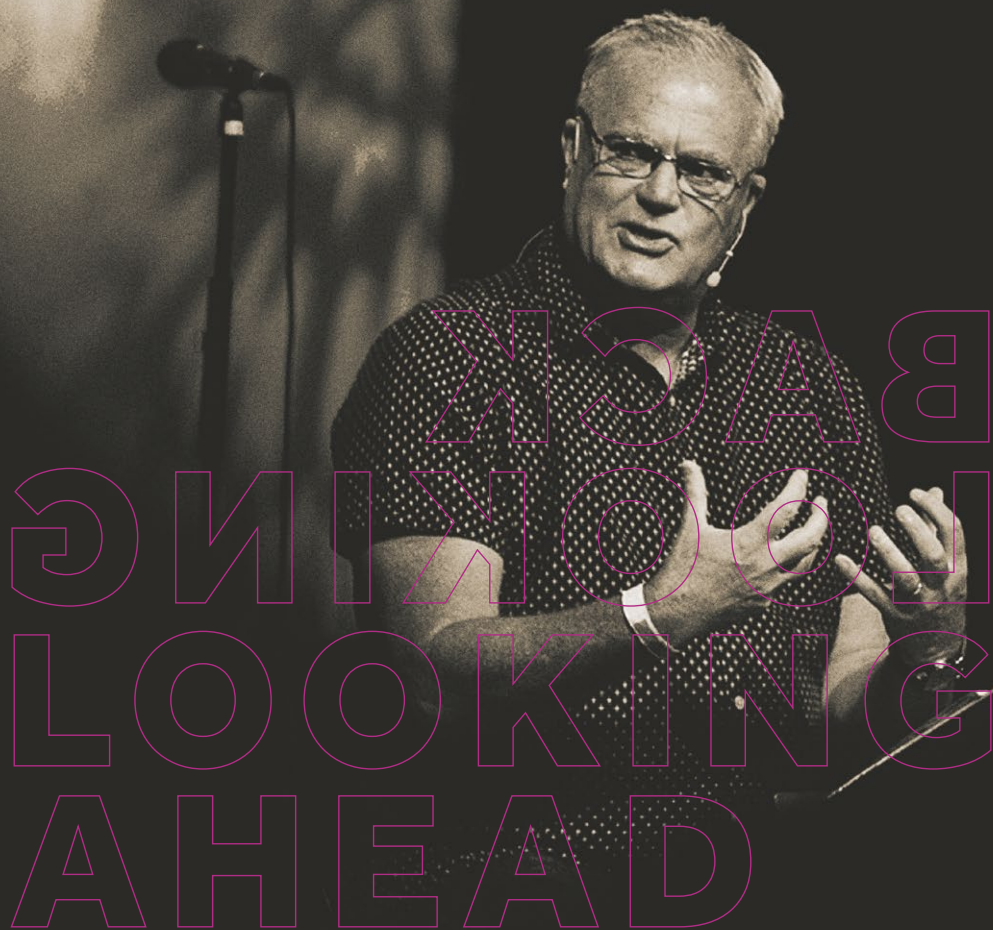
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We've been together as a family
of churches for seven years. Within
this time, we've invested in laying the
foundations of who we are and what
we are called to do together.

THE LAST SEVEN YEARS

Dave Holden

Seven is a significant number in Scripture. Seven days of creation, seven times to march around Jericho, seven years of famine and of abundance in Egypt, the seven stars, seals and churches in Revelation and so on.

I believe that seven is a significant number for New Ground too. We've been together as a family of churches for seven years. Within this time, we've invested in laying the foundations of who we are and what we are called to do together. We've explored family, relationships, authenticity, the Word and Spirit as well as casting vision to raise leaders, impact communities, plant churches and reach nations. We've been shaped prophetically and found that prayer has been the engine room that fuels our increasing sense of call to mission.

It's been a seven-year period of building slowly and steadily. We've enjoyed three Ashburnham weekends, three wonderful Connect Conferences

for those in their twenties and thirties, we know that God has not 'forgotten Europe' and we are in the process of planting several churches into different nations. We have seen hundreds who have completed or are in the process of completing the New Ground Academy where we train future leaders. We have so much to be thankful for - it's been an amazing journey so far and despite the inevitable 'bumps in the road' we are aware that we have spent seven years celebrating God's undeserved mercy and grace.



THE NEXT SEVEN YEARS

Dave Holden

Whilst on sabbatical recently, I felt stirred to pray and think about our future together and felt the next seven years was to be a significant time of building on the past seven years. So far, it's been a time of preparation for all that is to come. We are to expect a major shift in the way that we work together. A new vista; something bigger; not business as usual or ticking over at the same pace as our last seven years but something fast moving, free flowing and more risk taking. This is not so that we have more churches and work in more nations. It's so that God can be more glorified in the earth by thousands of unchurched people being radically changed by the gospel.

I received several prophecies before my sabbatical saying that I am about to 'see things'. So here are some things that I 'see' over the next seven years of New Ground:

1 I see a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit coming to many in our churches which will result in a greater evangelistic effectiveness and an ability to move in miraculous signs and wonders. Acts 1 teaches us that when the Holy Spirit comes on us, we receive power that empowers us to be witnesses.

2 I see numerous fresh initiatives that will impact Europe by reaching into new nations and places where we are not yet working. I see a spread of more church plants across the nations of Europe including across the UK. I see New Ground planting far more across London and to the West, Midlands and North of England. There will be a radical mobilisation of many people into new ventures – maybe God's speaking to you even now about playing your part in this.

3 I see a global impact that stretches far beyond Europe. Our calling is to the ends of the earth and not just to a part of it. Together with



many other apostolic families of churches we will play our part too.

4 I see a new generation emerging among us, anointed by the Spirit and passionate for Jesus and His Kingdom. That includes children, teens and those in their twenties and thirties that will build on the past seven years and go way beyond all that we have seen so far.

For me personally and maybe for many others too, over these next seven years, I want to give myself to raising up and releasing apostolic and prophetic ministries, to passing on a growing legacy to a new generation, to seeing healthy churches growing and impacting their local communities and to taking far more new ground wherever that might be. This will only be possible when we do so in the power of the Holy Spirit, you and I get to play our part in this story and I really can't wait to see where we will be seven years from now.



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SPIRIT-FILLED CHURCH

Paul Mann (King's Church Hastings & Bexhill)

God has always wanted to dwell with his people. It is what he created us for – to know him and to enjoy his presence and closeness. From the Garden of Eden, to the Israelites under the leadership of Moses, to the temple of Solomon – God dwelt with his people and the Spirit came upon ones and twos to empower them in key moments.

This is at a completely different level for us: we live in the age of the Spirit of God, when he has been poured out on all who believe (Acts 2:17) and now dwells not just near us, not just empowering us now



and then when needed, but actually within us, empowering us at all times by shaping our hearts, guiding us into the truth, and assuring us of our salvation! We – the Church – are the dwelling place of God by his Spirit

(Ephesians 2:22).

Being filled and empowered by the Spirit of God is what sets us apart from all other people. When we gather on Sundays or during the week, we expect to encounter God. We expect different people to come with gifts that strengthen us, whether that's a word of knowledge that brings breakthrough or a prayer for the sick that brings healing. These are gifts of grace that are given so that God will be glorified, believers may be strengthened, and non-believers will see, marvel and say, "Surely God is in this place."

In fact, we often see that in our Sunday meetings. Non-Christians come along and are impacted – even when they can't articulate why, they know there is something different about us.

But it's not just about tongues, prophecies and healings. As well as the extraordinary gifts of the





Spirit, there is the fruit of the Spirit on display in the church. Those looking in from the outside are so often impacted by our joy, peace, kindness, and love (Galatians 5:22-23).

Jesus said that people would know we were his followers by how we love one another, and the Spirit

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empowers us to do this. He reveals to us the love of God for us, pouring it into our hearts (Romans 5:5) that we might pour it out to those around us, both inside the church and outside.

It isn't always easy, but when we are empowered by the Spirit we are transformed to live differently. By the Spirit, we pray for the sick and see them healed. But also by the Spirit, we are prompted and empowered in the everyday challenges of life, from kind words towards people who offend us to practical help for those in need.

The Spirit-filled Church is bold, courageous, righteous, loving, generous and joyful. We are equipped and strengthened in our meetings so that we can be salt and light in our homes, our communities and our workplaces. The Holy Spirit living within us is what sets us apart and empowers us to reflect Jesus to those around us.

SPRIT-FILLED LIFE AS NORMAL

Angela Kemm (City Church Cambridge)

I grew up in a church-going, but not Christian, family. I knew all the Bible stories and found them 'fairytale-ishly' wonderful. I always knew there was a God but thought He was a bit of a wimp because of all the dreadful things around and I also didn't feel particularly helped by Him.

I became a disciple of Jesus in my early twenties after being told about the cross and needing my sin forgiven. On that day something changed forever. I had no idea what I'd just done in confessing sin and asking forgiveness so I studied the Gospels to find out what had happened to me.

Wow, on reading the Gospels, it all made sense! Those Bible stories I heard as a child; something clicked and I knew that I was a child of God and that He had things for me to do. I wanted everyone to meet this wonderful Jesus who had changed my life so radically.

I kept studying the Gospels to see how Jesus trained His disciples and then did exactly what He told them to do. It worked. I went into various areas and asked God where the man/woman of peace was, and He led me straight to them. To me, this was normal, what I expected Him to do.

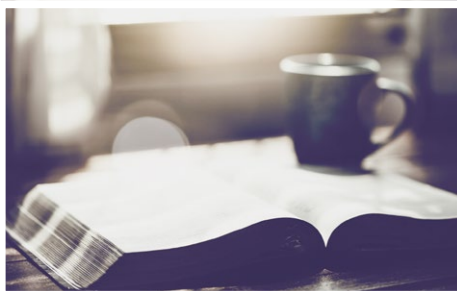
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My dependence on the Holy Spirit grew as I stepped out in more radical ways, and He always came through for me.

"God is not a man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfil it?" (Numbers 23:19).

So, because I read it, and He had said it, I expected it, because He doesn't lie.

My relationship with Him became the most important part of my life, I knew I couldn't do anything without Him. My dependence on the Holy Spirit grew as I stepped out in more radical ways, and He always came





through for me, maybe not in ways I expected, but I knew I was in His hands.

When I became a follower of Jesus, I died. He bought me with His blood. I am no longer my own. He saved me, filled me with Holy Spirit power and commissioned me to go and do what He did. He promised to be with me always. He said it, I believed it, and I got busy doing whatever I thought He was asking me to do.

It wasn't and isn't an easy road and I'd like to have me to myself sometimes, but it is the most rewarding one. Not only do I have a close relationship with Him, but I get to see Him do 'stuff' in front of my eyes. I get to see people saved, changed, healed, delivered, all in a normal day's work, as He wills. He said it, I do it, He brings the results.

This is my expectation of a normal Spirit-filled life open to all believers.

SPIRIT-FILLED FAMILY

Hannah Drew (Crawley Community Church)

There is a battle raging in our home. Sure, the children are poking each other and my husband and I disagree about where to put wet towels but this battle is bigger. 'We do not wrestle against flesh and blood but against....the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.' (Ephesians 6:12). This stuff comes into our home and into my mind all the time and if I'm not empowered by the Holy Spirit, I'm defeated.



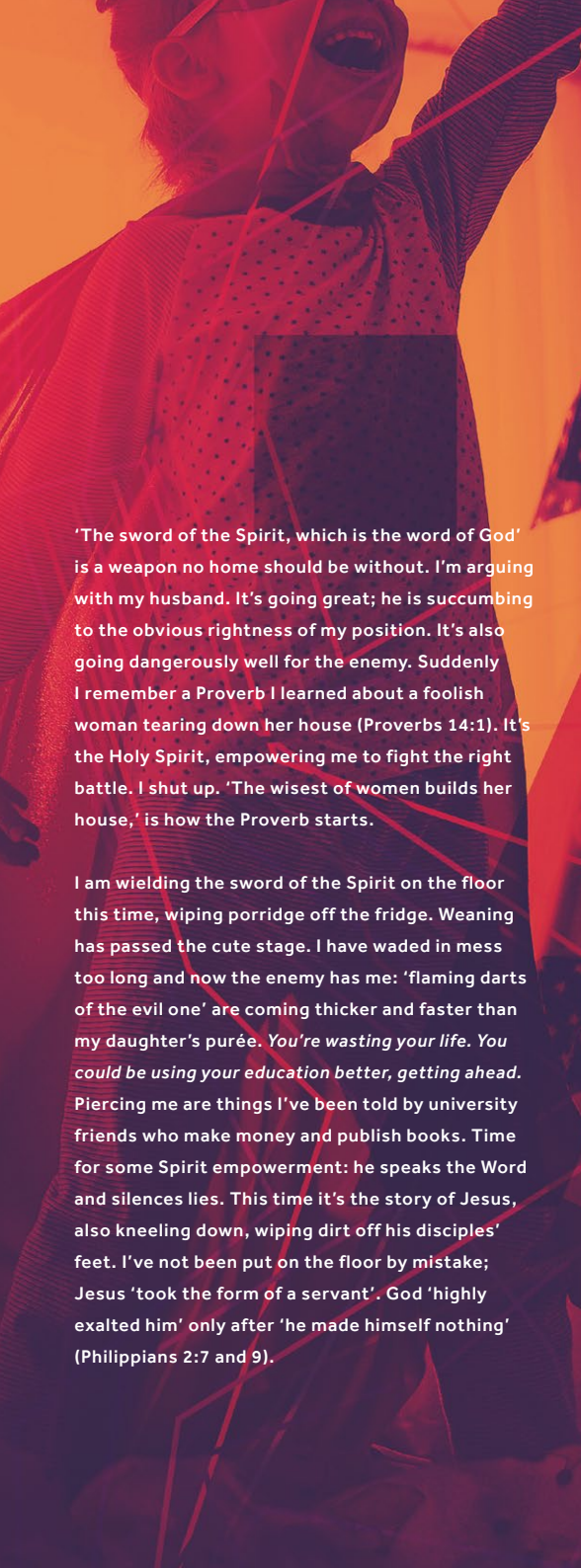
Guests are coming. I'll whip round and tidy up the toys, do a little hoovering, dust, polish, arrange cut flowers. Oh, and I'll bake: yes, bake dozens of fairy cakes. My blood pressure rises when my son opens the dressing-up box. I am seriously frustrated when my daughter forgets she is potty-trained. Next they're on chairs reaching for the playdough. I feel a surge of anger and a shout forming. Don't get me wrong, sometimes I let it out. But sometimes the Holy Spirit's power is a whisper: *It's not about you.* I am convicted. And I hear the Holy Spirit's weapons knocking down some idols: my need to appear in control; efficiency; quiet. He holds up some better goals: fellowship with my children; humility and honesty with my guests; a joyful home.

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'Flaming darts of the evil one'
are coming thicker and faster than
my daughter's purée.

Having fished around for matching socks for the little ones, there isn't much time for mummy's hair and make-up. But something I do try to put on is the 'armour of God' that Paul writes about in Ephesians 6. The helmet of salvation is the happy truth that surrounds my mind, even when I'm losing my head, that God's fatherhood doesn't depend on the quality of my motherhood!





'The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God' is a weapon no home should be without. I'm arguing with my husband. It's going great; he is succumbing to the obvious rightness of my position. It's also going dangerously well for the enemy. Suddenly I remember a Proverb I learned about a foolish woman tearing down her house (Proverbs 14:1). It's the Holy Spirit, empowering me to fight the right battle. I shut up. 'The wisest of women builds her house,' is how the Proverb starts.

I am wielding the sword of the Spirit on the floor this time, wiping porridge off the fridge. Weaning has passed the cute stage. I have waded in mess too long and now the enemy has me: 'flaming darts of the evil one' are coming thicker and faster than my daughter's purée. *You're wasting your life. You could be using your education better, getting ahead.* Piercing me are things I've been told by university friends who make money and publish books. Time for some Spirit empowerment: he speaks the Word and silences lies. This time it's the story of Jesus, also kneeling down, wiping dirt off his disciples' feet. I've not been put on the floor by mistake; Jesus 'took the form of a servant'. God 'highly exalted him' only after 'he made himself nothing' (Philippians 2:7 and 9).



SPIRIT-FILLED WORKPLACE

Nikki Natali (Renaissance, Genève)



When we work in the secular world, it's easy to leave our spirituality for Sundays; the humanitarian sector where I am rarely acknowledges the God of all charitable goodness. Thankfully, God's presence continues throughout the week and I'm eager to see how the Spirit could use everyday moments for His recognition and glory.

A colleague of mine came in to work one day, complaining about his leg and how he had difficulty walking. At the Spirit's prompting, I nervously offered to pray for him, and he declined. Later that day, he complained once more, and I could really feel the Spirit urging me to offer prayer again. "You know, my offer still stands," I told him. He finally accepted, so I went next to him, placed my hand on the affected limb (with consent!) and said the quickest prayer before any other colleague came into the room. He felt much better and was excited to walk again.

"This is incredible! What is this!? Is it sorcery?"

"It's not, it's God. I think He wants to tell you ... that He loves you." - is what I blurted out, surprisingly.

"Hmm, I'm not sure about that."

There was no eloquent Gospel-sharing or incredible conversion story, but I trust that the simple message of God's love may have been what my colleague needed to hear at that time.

On another occasion, I got into a heated discussion with my supervisor. She ended up storming out the room and I was left a bit shaken. I was set on officially reporting this incident to HR, but I was then encouraged to initiate and make amends despite my position, as filing a complaint would only make things worse between us. To be honest I was not thrilled about this; I did not want this to ever happen again. The Spirit strengthened and humbled me though, so I could approach her and agree on some



win-win terms moving forward. I wish I could say that it was smooth sailing between us from then on, but God taught me to show kindness and respect, no matter how difficult things got.

There are many other practical ways to which the Spirit would prompt us towards loving our colleagues: offering a place to stay when one forgets their keys or is temporarily kicked out of their flat; helping them get settled into a new place; cooking for a neighbouring colleague at the birth of their baby; speaking kindly of them; showing



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You don't have to be an expert evangelist to make a spiritual impact at work. Learn to listen to the Spirit's promptings and see where He leads you!

interest in and spending time with them. So many opportunities for prayer, healing and discussion can present themselves when we take time to get to know our colleagues and listen to them.

We lost two colleagues to a plane crash this year, and it shook the small office space that we share. It is hard to know what to do in these times and praying in secret may seem to be the most sensible option. Grieve with those who are grieving and don't be afraid to be present with them.

You don't have to be an expert evangelist to make a spiritual impact at work. Learn to listen to the Spirit's promptings and see where He leads you!

SPIRIT-FILLED STUDENT

Izzi Reilly (King's Church Edinburgh)



As a first-year nursing student who has moved to another country to study, I know that this is a stage that many of us go through; a new city, new people and new start. For me, being empowered by the Spirit has enabled me to not be fearful of all of this 'newness', despite that being my natural tendency. It means learning to live without a step-by-step plan of how this part of my life is going to unfold and instead, accepting God's peace for the unknown. This is by no means something that I am great at, but I know that having the Spirit in me has changed what could have been a pretty lonely first year away from home, into one where I have been incredibly blessed and strengthened.

I have seen God's hand in my studying, too. In the run up to my December exam, I had just a few days to prepare. The fact that I was able to get that amount of work done in the time and not find myself overcome by stress, is such a testament to God's faithfulness to me. I experienced the Spirit's supernatural peace in a situation that would normally cause a lot of anxiety. I was able to trust God with my time, while my non-Christian friends were losing sleep either studying or worrying.

The Spirit empowers us to see God's perspective and not to be consumed by stress, even when that is what everyone around you is doing. It means trusting that despite not having the time and resources you need; God is still good and He's got you covered!

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It means learning to live without a step-by-step plan of how this part of my life is going to unfold and instead, accepting God's peace for the unknown.

Moving to a place where you have to build every relationship from level zero can be a real challenge, particularly when those around you often have confused views on their identity and have come to university to explore self-discovery and wild living. Having grown up in a Christian home, this environment has been quite alien to me. The Bible has taught me to be “in the world but not of the world”. The Holy Spirit empowers and helps



me in my relationships where I can evangelise to non-Christians at uni, which looks very different for different people. I used to think that I needed to be super outgoing and a great public speaker to evangelise – which I'm not. But I'm learning that the Spirit empowers us to faithfully live out our day-to-day life, loving God and loving people. This doesn't go unnoticed and as a result, I've had great conversations with course-mates about my faith.

So for me, being empowered by the Spirit at uni doesn't mean having everything together all the time, but rather that on the days when you don't, there is still faith that God uses the broken to do something miraculous for His glory!



SPIRIT-FILLED COMMUNITY

Derek Gibbs (Redeemer International Church, Den Haag)

"What we think about when we are free to think about what we will – that is what we are or will soon become." Thought provoking words written a while ago now by A.W.Tozer but relevant today. I live in a fast moving, intense community that often leaves little time for reflective or contemplative thought. We can be driven to fit more things in, work smarter, be more productive until it all suddenly stops!

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What we think about when
we are free to think about what
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will soon become.

Redundancy, retirement, unemployment, ill health and stepping down from leadership can leave us in a place where there is suddenly time to think. How much of my life can I still control? Is there anything I can still contribute? Why this anger and irritability? Is God really there for me? We may not put those thoughts into words, but they will be there lurking in the depths of our souls, influencing how we act.

The Bible has a great deal to say about our thoughts; The reason is that our thoughts are so vitally important to us. Our voluntary thoughts not only reveal what we are, they predict what we will become. "Therefore, holy brothers and sisters, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus." (Hebrews 3:1).

Thinking stirs feeling and feeling triggers action. So, as I entered into the retirement age I had to take steps to stay connected to the church community, my local community as well as my personal walk with God. That meant signing up to the New Ground Academy so I would be exercising my brain and connecting with the younger generations. I took regular exercise by joining a badminton club which

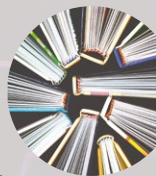




helped me keep in touch with non-church people. I created a reading list to work through even though reading has never been one of my strengths. I used my extra free time to practise hospitality. Tozer helps point out that:

"Over and over the Old Testament writers exhort us to get quiet and think about high and holy things as a preliminary to amendment of life or a good deed or a courageous act."

Paul does the same when he encourages us to "be transformed by the renewing of [our] mind." (Romans 12:1-2). Let us invite the Holy Spirit into the way we think as we partner with Him in every area of life.








PRAYER NIGHT

Wednesday 18 September 2019



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