EATING TOGETHER WEEK

One of my favourite accounts in the Gospels is when Jesus appears to the disciples after the resurrection. It appears the disciples didn’t really know what to do with themselves so those who were fishermen went to what they knew best, no doubt to occupy themselves. They were out all night but caught nothing. As dawn broke they saw someone on the beach who asked about their catch (they didn’t know who it was). He told them to throw their nets again and suddenly their net was so full they struggled to pull it in. (You can read the full account in John 21).

As they got near to the shore they recognised Jesus and they saw a charcoal fire with fish on it, and some bread. Just imagine, how good would that be, to smell food cooking after being out fishing all night. They must have been hungry.

Jesus recognised the need of the disciples for food, but he also recognised their need for encouragement. How despondent they must have been feeling before their catch of fish, and how that mood must have changed as they dragged the net in.

Further on in the story he speaks especially to Peter who had denied knowing Jesus when he was challenged after Jesus had been arrested. Three times Peter had denied Jesus and three times Jesus asks Peter “do you love me?” Jesus knows how much that denial will hamper Peter’s future unless it is dealt with.

So, firstly Jesus deals with the physical need of the disciples – he had the fire burning and food cooking before they had seen him. He then deals with the emotional needs, reversing the disappointment of catching no fish, and finally he allows Peter to find forgiveness which set him up for future ministry.

When we eat with someone (even if it is just a cuppa) we offer opportunity for relaxed fellowship when needs can be discerned or expressed. We may feel inadequate if someone reveals something that is troubling them, but a listening ear (no advice needed) is worth so much. It may be possible to follow this up with prayer either with the individual or afterwards.

*Produced by John Wilkins on behalf of the Bents Green Holy Habits Planning Group (Debs Barnett, Glenn Evans, Martyn Read, Graham Wassell, Daphne and John Wilkins).  You can find more information on the Circuit Holy Habits Programme on the Sheffield Methodist Circuit website and also the Sheffield Methodist Circuit Facebook page.*