

## The Relationship

We have been talking a lot about our relationships these past few months as we have struggled to be distant from the ones we love. We know it has been necessary, but it has been hard, very hard not to be “doing” relationship in the way we would normally do it. We have had to spend much time “being” in relationship as best we can. Loving and caring at a distance, in thought and prayer.

It’s been frustrating tiring. But we have learned just how precious it is to be in relationship with others and just how much work it takes to maintain. For the most part it is worth it though. And we have all found unique and amazing ways to “be” with each other. And we can take some of that forward with us as we ease out of lockdown slowly and considerately.

Over the past few weeks we have been looking at relationship as we have celebrated Pentecost and Trinity Sunday and yesterday Revd Gerry talked about the faithfulness of God, how if we can trust in His goodness, he will lead us through. She spoke about how He promises to hear us.

So as I was considering what to write about this week, today and tomorrow, I came across this booklet that I designed in 2016 for my Clinical Pastoral Education qualification. I was a volunteer chaplain at the John Hunter Hospital in Newcastle Australia and then at St. Mary’s Hospital on the Isle of Wight in the UK. Between them for almost two years as well as working in a chaplaincy role in a number of residential homes in Newcastle NSW in the large city parish I was training in.

Seeing this again made me think about those early days when I was in the hospital in particular – struggling with the noise and hustle and bustle and feeling the need to create something perfect for the person I was spending time with. Wanting to keep a tight control of the nature of the relationship, however brief, to create something that made me feel like I was doing something good and positive. Can you hear the language I was using then? Words like control, me, I...? I didn’t really get that there was no need to control everything – not for the person I was visiting and certainly not for me. I didn’t really get in the beginning that God had it all in hand – for both of us.

It was hard to resist old behaviours in myself. The need to have everything “just right” was making me miserable.

I wasn’t trusting in my relationship with God. Perhaps I was still trying to do it in my own strength. Probably. But one day it just clicked and the result was more than I could ever have imagined. My confidence in God spilled out into the relationship space between myself and the person I was visiting – not just in the hospital but elsewhere too. Somehow God had entered in, I had let go and let God in with a simple “yes” and the nature of relationships changed forever. For the better. God was there. Is there.

The reflections, Bible verses and poems in this little booklet are just some of the tools I used

during my two years as a hospital/ residential home chaplain.

Please have a read through, or listen to the audio and have a think about some of your relationships – where is God in them? Is there a relationship with someone where you need God to be? Do you need God to help you with your perceptions or expectations?

Tomorrow, we can look a little deeper into some of the poetry and prose. Until then, read through, perhaps choose a favourite and pray with it today.

**PASTORAL CARE IS A MINISTRY  
OF BEING,  
NOT MERELY OF DOING**

*Thoughts and prayers for Clinical Pastoral Care in Hospitals*

1 CORINTHIANS 1:4

WHO COMFORTS US IN ALL OUR AFFLICTIONS,  
SO THAT WE MAY BE ABLE TO COMFORT THOSE WHO ARE IN ANY AFFLICTION,  
WITH THE COMFORT WITH WHICH WE OURSELVES ARE COMFORTED BY GOD.

**Make the space so that others may feel their presence is accepted**

**The most basic of all human needs is the need to understand and to be understood**

Be completely humble and gentle;  
be patient, bearing with one another in love.  
Ephesians 4:2

**EXPERIENCE THE FEELINGS OF ANOTHER**

Empathy is the foundation for all healing. It can be found wherever there is a relationship of trust between two people. To have empathy for another is to be fully present for them, to be genuinely listening to what is happening for them at that moment and to accept it. Being a presence of grace, we put aside our preconceived notions about what needs to be done and allow the other to discover what is truly needed. Empathy is way in which one person can lightly reach out to another and without words hold their soul so gently that they feel fully loved and supported.

EXCERPT FROM “LETTERS TO A YOUNG POET” - RILKE

How should we be able to forget those ancient myths that are at the beginning of all peoples,  
the myths about dragons that at the last moment turn into princesses;  
perhaps all the dragons of our lives are princesses  
who are only waiting to see us once beautiful and brave.  
Perhaps everything terrible is in its deepest being something helpless that wants help from us.  
So you must not be frightened if a sadness rises up before you  
larger than any you have ever seen; if a restiveness, like light and cloudshadows,  
passes over your hands and over all you do.  
You must think that something is happening with you, that life has not forgotten you,  
that it holds you in its hand; it will not let you fall.

THIS IS THE CONFIDENCE WE HAVE IN APPROACHING GOD: THAT IF WE ASK ANYTHING ACCORDING TO HIS WILL, HE HEARS US  
1 JOHN 5:14

*And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. 1 John 4:16*

### **Listening**

“We think we listen, but very rarely do we listen with understanding, true empathy. Listening, of this very special kind, is one of the most potent forces for change that I know.”

*Carl Rogers*

THEREFORE, LET US STOP PASSING JUDGMENT ON ONE ANOTHER. INSTEAD, MAKE UP YOUR MIND NOT TO PUT ANY STUMBLING BLOCK OR OBSTACLE IN THE WAY OF A BROTHER OR SISTER.

ROMANS 14:13

*“Empathy is about standing in someone else’s shoes, feeling with his or her heart, seeing with his or her eyes. Not only is empathy hard to outsource and automate, but it makes the world a better place.”*

Daniel H. Pink

### **TO BE PRESENT**

Life is run at such a breakneck pace that there never seems to be enough time to be present for someone else. Truly present.

But, this is what is most needed. For a person to be able to express themselves, feel their feelings, to be safe and know they are not judged.  
To be loving.



To be understanding. To be present.

“Thy Will be Done” – Hillary Scott and The Scott Family  
[https://youtu.be/Dp4WC\\_YZAuw](https://youtu.be/Dp4WC_YZAuw)

*Attend to the other, choose to be silent, and stay with them in their hour of grief.*

#### THE RELATIONSHIP

Being in this place together is often a strange and sometimes uneasy dance. I do not know you and you do not know me. And yet we are here. Not knowing which one of us is vulnerable and which one of us is holding the other. We sit awkwardly in the space at first, listening and waiting. Listening. And waiting.

The quiet can be difficult until one of us, you, begins to speak. Then, in the spaces between the words a small trust begins to develop, slowly and imperceptibly, before suddenly something intimate may be shared one to another. The space begins to feel lighter, more open, and we both know that in some small way the process of healing has begun.