



23RD FEBRUARY 2020

Carol Hill writes...

In a world where you can be anything ...

There have been a lot of memes in the press over the weekend, following the tragic death of Caroline Flack, saying 'in a world where you can be anything, be kind'. In the west many of us enjoy a lifestyle of opportunity; and also, in the west mental health is very much a hot topic, with depression and anxiety and other issues reaching record highs. According to the Samaritans' report, deaths by suicide rose by 10.9% in the UK in 2018 ... and still they rise.

These statistics hurt my soul, as do TV programmes that show our emergency services having to deal with people in so much spiritual and mental anguish – without either the resources or the skill set to help... I recall one incident showing a man who had suffered a brain injury and a subsequent stroke, housebound and depressed and so angry at times that he was a danger to others. He was in the habit of dialling 999 many times throughout each day and each time the teams responded, and each time he fell through the gaps in provision simply because he was not 'mad', didn't need sectioning, had care support in place, but was still, desperately sad and isolated and without hope.

And I wondered – what would Jesus do?

Isaiah 61 sums it up... (for 'me' read 'God's people')

*He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted,
to proclaim freedom for the captives
and release from darkness for the prisoners,
² to proclaim the year of the LORD's favour
and the day of vengeance of our God,
to comfort all who mourn,*

And Paul followed this up further in **1 Corinthians 13**

⁵ Love does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

In a world where you can be anything, be kind. This is spiritual warfare, declaring God's father heart for the world.

So, my challenge to myself and to us is to walk in this world with open hearts and eyes, looking for the other ... and being open to God's prompting to befriend, offer help, to listen, and to pray. Our café provides excellent opportunity for this, a safe space where people are valued. Other cafes too are getting in on the act by providing 'chatty' tables, where the isolated can meet others.

There is a website too: <https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/kindness-ideas> which lists a whole range of ways to bless others, from simply texting someone 'good morning' or 'good night' to writing a complimentary email to someone's employers, and to just sitting, listening to someone and learning something new about them.

Lent is coming – maybe this would be a good time to actively, every single day, seek God for a specific person to bless – whether known to us or not – and to show something of the love of Christ to this hurting world.

Blessings, Carol

Notices

Healing Prayer Training Evenings

26th February, 4th and 11th March here at Emmanuel Church. To book please complete the booking form ,available from church, and

Send to: lesley@emmanuelbicester.org.uk **Registration has been extended and now closes on Monday 24th February.**

Lent Quiet Day

Saturday 7th March 10am-4pm here at Emmanuel Church. Tea and coffee provided. Please bring your own lunch. See flyer in church for more details.

ROTAS: If you need to check rotas please log on to Church Builder. If you need help with this or any other information about events, groups or who's who then please contact the church office. Details overleaf.

ECB DIARY

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| SUN 23rd February | 10.30 am | Informal Worship, Communion Defeating Discouragement Leader: Clive Collier Preacher: Ian Biscoe |
| | 7.00pm | Evening Service (Refreshments at 6.30pm) Spiritual Gifts, Tongues Leader: Erika Biscoe Preacher: Pastor Emmanuel Obeng |
| TUES 25th February | 9.00am | Prayers |
| | 8.00pm | Wild at Heart |
| WED 26th February | 10.30am | Oasis Small Group |
| | 7.30pm | Prayer for Healing Training Evening |
| FRI 28th February | 9.30am | Cherish Group |
| | 7.00pm | Prayers |
| SUN 1st March | 10.30 am | Informal Worship, Blood in the vineyard Leader: Helen Collier Preacher: Clive Collier |
| | 7.00pm | Evening Service (Refreshments at 6.30pm) Creation, Session 1 Leader: Erika Biscoe Preacher: Ian Biscoe |

Website: www.emmanuelbicester.org.uk

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All notices to Admin Team by 7pm Wednesday