



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

The Parish of St Peter & St Mary New Fishbourne and the Parish of St Mary the Virgin Apuldram

www.fishbournechurch.org.uk www.apuldramchurch.co.uk

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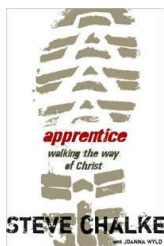
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Dear Parishioners

Although some may not believe it, a Parish Priest is always 'on-duty' in fact no Christian is ever 'off-duty'. On our most recent journey to England's beautiful north-west we stopped at a motorway service station; I need regular intakes of caffeine when driving long distances to keep me awake. It was a cold day and as we walked in to buy some coffee we noticed a young woman with a little boy of about five years old sitting outside in the cold surrounded by cases and bags. We were both concerned and wondered if there was something wrong; they looked abandoned. Having bought our Latte "to go" we walked out and they were still there, it was now raining and they had moved under the eaves of the service station. We felt compelled to ask the young mother if she was okay or if she needed help. She declined at first but asked if would look after her bags whilst she took her little boy to the toilet. We waited awkwardly, not knowing what to do when she returned. Should we enquire about her circumstances; give her money; buy her some food; give her a lift or simply not interfere any further? As it happened she was a proud Mum and was reluctant to accept any help apart from a hot coffee. Having learnt that her parents were coming from Yorkshire to collect them in a few hours we left her with a great sense of unease in our hearts.

So what else could we have done? What was our Christian duty? When do you stop helping? How much do you give? How far is the extra mile Jesus speaks of? We drove away thinking we should have done more.

How often do we meet a situation that challenges our comfortable view of life? How tempting it is to run away, to walk by on the other side of the street. Perhaps we are not required to deal with the whole problem, but simply to do the bit we can. I don't know, is that just another "cop out"? In offering help, we risk rejection, abuse, ridicule or even violence. Are they good enough reasons not to help? In offering help, we also risk having our offer accepted! What would Jesus do? To help us understand he gave us stories such as the Parable of the Good Samaritan. We all need guidance on our Christian journey and our handbook is the Bible. Some of us can find it very difficult to understand the Bible, thankfully people like Steve Chalke have written books like 'Apprentice' which can help us unpick the mysteries of some of the old familiar Bible stories which we may often have read but failed to understand. Why not have a go at reading it, we're never too old to learn.



Love and Best wishes to you all

Clive

Our aim is to be a Christian faith community, which will provide a spiritual and theological family base from which Christ will be proclaimed by word and example in the wider community, now and in the future