

From the Rector's Study, the Rev. Bryce Sangster
Sunday, December 26th, 2021, Christmas I
1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26, Psalm 148, Colossians 3:12-17, Luke 2:41-52

Would anyone be here in church on Boxing Day if this wasn't a Sunday? Yet this is the passage from the Gospel of Luke for today. That a young Jesus says: *Why were you looking for me? Did you not know I must be in my father's house?*

At this time in our history, we will not be found in God's house as often and in the same way. There are so many reasons and impediments for us to be in church. So, it is not about being in church as a physical manifestation of our relationship with God. But there are ways we can be creative in coming into the presence of God, and in relationship with each other.

This time has shown us how much we took being in church and being in community for granted, and it isn't the same. I have said for years (but not the only one) that coffee and fellowship time after the service is not in fact separate from the service but an integral part.

Yet do we only seriously come to God when all else fails?

This may be why it has been said that the poor and the disenfranchised have a stronger faith than the rich and the secure. This may be true, but it may also mean that it appears they have a stronger faith because they still have faith in the face of so much adversity compared to the rich and those without the daily concerns of the poor in certain countries.

Yes, our relationship with God in Christ is a priority, but there is still the need for some sort of balance. And Jesus does learn that lesson because Luke says *Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was obedient to them.*

This reminds us that it is not just our relationship with God but with each other as well. When Jesus asks Peter if he loves him three times after his resurrection, and Peter says that he does; Jesus does not tell him to worship him or pay him homage but tells him to feed and tend to his sheep and lambs. This means the spiritual journey we are on is twofold. Spending time in the presence of God in prayer both privately and in community. (With isolation, more in private). And in relationship with family and friends. Yes, there is learning and growing in these relationships, but I believe we are created to be both spiritual and social beings. To be in relationship with God and each other.

Amen

Covid prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ,
you taught us to love our neighbour,
and to care for those in need
as if we were caring for you.
In this time of anxiety, give us strength
to comfort the fearful, to tend the sick,
and to assure the isolated
of our love, and your love,
for your name's sake.

Amen.