

Friendship Faith

The Vicar Writes...



June 2018

Dear Friends,

Let me tell you a story based upon personal observations and 'churchy' experiences.

Philip who is out walking his dog on the Burton Dassett Hills comes across a man reading the bible. He says "Hello, having a good read?" and the man responds, "Not really, I don't know we're to start." Philip says he is the local Vicar and offers to help. The man accepts and, as Philip talks, gets really enthusiastic and wants to know more. Philip invites the man to walk with him and his dog as they walk they talk about the bible and faith. Eventually they reach the lake below Farnborough Hall where Philip had left his car. The man had been really moved by what he had heard, and asks Philip, "See, here is water. What stops me from being baptised, here and now?"

Philip answers him, "Well, first you must come to church and attend our course of instruction on baptism and then you must complete our course of instruction on confirmation and then you must go to a church and be baptised and confirmed by the Bishop." Unsurprisingly the man is disappointed and a bit confused and when they part thinks for a little while about what Philip says but then puts it to the back of his mind and forgets it.

This parallels a story written in Acts 8:26-40, but in the bible story the man is baptised and continues his journey of faith. Unfortunately, today being christened, baptised and confirming your belief in the Christian faith has become very ritualistic and full of procedures. There is some preparation, but it need not be long where ritual and formed tradition out way simple faith. Neither should it be limited to a church baptistry. People can be baptised in the sea or at waterfalls, in a stream, in swimming pools and other such locations. I've baptised at the bedside in hospital, in a child's blow up paddling pool in a community hall as well as in fonts in beautiful churches. What matters is faith and a desire to be baptised.

This story teaches me that we must not be afraid to ask questions about the bible and faith. This encounter changed the life of the Ethiopian forever - he heard of Christ, His mission, His sacrifice, the gift of salvation to all nations, not just Israel, in his generation and for all generations. The Ethiopian was baptised and the opportunity for faith had been accepted without delay, and his life will have been changed forever.

Were you baptised as a child and would like to confirm your faith, were you not baptised and therefore think you have missed the boat, or would you simply like to know more about the Christian faith?

Please do contact me, details in *The Directory*.

This summer I will be meeting with 6 adults who answered yes to those questions. Come and join us with no commitment to taking it any further.

Rev'd Nicki

