

BBC Essex Reflection

Sunday 30 April 2017



Last Sunday, we had the London marathon and it was great to see so many runners enjoying the day and raising money for charity. At the trackside were the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and Prince Harry, encouraging those who were running for their charity 'headspace', a mental health charity, and it came in the week that Prince Harry admitted mental health problems in dealing as an adult with the death of his mother and his own need to seek counselling. This has been seen as a breakthrough – If Prince Harry can admit to depression and the need to seek help, then perhaps it will encourage others to seek help and not suffer alone.

We can all go through difficult times in our lives, and some are more prone to mental health issues than others, which make it harder to cope. I have ADHD, I have had it since a child, and with that condition comes a tendency to depression, and over the years, I have had to be watch myself for the signs of stress building up. I take medication, and if I miss it, I do not cope as well as I should. I wish it did not have to take this medication, and could cope without it, but as an adult, I have to realise that I need help. From time to time, I have valued the counsel of friends, family and of others in the church, and occasionally sought professional help when things were getting very difficult. Last year, 2016, was a particularly difficult year, with the death of my sister from cancer, suddenly diagnosed and dead within five weeks, our beloved cat was run over causing grief in our family, another family problem, and some health issues, and later in the year some serious issues in the church needed resolving. The Queen once famously said about 1992, 'The year is not one that I will look back on with undiluted pleasure, it has been an 'annus horribilulus', and I can echo that about 2016.

How do we cope when things are tough? We must try to use our own resources of resilience and determination, but what happens when these are not enough? It is then that we need to admit that we need others to come alongside us to be with us, to encourage and give us another perspective. As a Christian, I also find that it is at these times -when I have come to the end of my own resources- that I find Jesus has come alongside me, helping me to see another perspective and encouraging me to keep going, like the poem **Footprints in the sand**.

Our bible reading for this morning talks about the disciples on the Emmaus road, demoralised, walking away from Jerusalem and Jesus meets them talks with them and finally reveals himself to them, and they hurry back to tell the others that they have seen the risen Christ. I love this story, because I can relate so well to easily becoming demoralised and depressed, and my own need for human company to help me see things differently. Jesus met the disciples where they were – in their doom and gloom. He then referred them back to what they already knew – the truths from scriptures which applied to Him, and how His

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death was all God's will and not a tragedy. Then he revealed himself in the breaking of the bread, and they knew that they had been in the presence of Jesus. That is my experience of recovery from times of depression- caused by circumstances or allowing myself to become too self-obsessed. The kindness of loving relationships, and also knowing that Jesus comes to me with love and not condemnation, and reminds me of what has already done in my life, and that He is faithful to complete it in me. I want to end with a quote from Psalm 42, a psalm written by someone in the grips of depression, which has always been very precious to me.

Ps 42:11 Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me? Put your hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my help and my God.