



Thought for the Day. 20th April.

Colossians 1:9

'For this reason, since the day we heard it, we have not ceased praying for you....'

People often ask how to pray, and especially in these troubled times, prayer seems to have come to the fore even in public discourse.

For me, prayer is conversation with God, and I'm reminded that in my first parish, when things occasionally became difficult, I used to go and have a chat with a man called Derrick. He was a member of my congregation, but also a Samaritan. He used to take me into a small room, and we would sit by his coal fire and over a cup of coffee, we would talk about what was bothering me at the time.

I say, **we would talk**, but actually, most of the talking was done by me, and Derrick would just listen. As a Samaritan he had that special gift of active listening, and although he didn't say very much, I went away feeling that I had been genuinely, listened to, and that was enormously helpful.

That for me has been the model of prayer, not a matter of reminding God of things he might have forgotten, or asking him to add things to his To Do List, but just sitting down with him, and talking with him about the things that are on my mind.

The other thing I found with Derrick is that with any good friend, you don't have to keep the conversation going: it's ok just to sit in silence, and learning that has been enormously helpful to me.

And it is something that applies to all of us in these troubled times, listening to people, to their cares and worries, not feeling that we have to offer solutions but active listening. It's something we can offer people, sadly not face to face, but with a phone call, email or text message, just to reassure them that someone is there.

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