



RHYTHMS OF GRACE: A JOURNEY INTO REST

www.rhythmsofgraceuk.org

Dear Email-friends,

Once again, thank you for accepting my invitation to Eagles' Wings, which is presumably because you are dealing with 'church issues'. Although everyone has come from a different starting point, and has different needs, I hope there will be something in this letter which is relevant to you, and brings you encouragement.

First of all, I want to reiterate what I said on the home page. I have seen first-hand the traumatic consequences of questioning theology or practices in some Christian bodies, and the resultant private, or (horrifyingly) public condemnation. So it is important to underline that asking honest questions about church is *not* blame-worthy; other Christians may dish out condemnation, but—and this is important—you don't have to *receive* it. And be encouraged, every great reform to the lived-out expression of the Church has always started with people being unwilling to accept the status quo.

The other point is also important; 'You haven't 'left the Church'—whatever anyone else may say. If you are joined to Christ, you are part of His body. What you may have left, or be thinking of leaving, is a local flawed expression of it—and that is ok.

There are many issues and wounds which arise out this position, some of which will be addressed in other emails. My primary concern here is that if you are hurting because of church that you are able to access the comfort you need. And so I would urge you, above all things, to run towards the Lord, not away from Him. His people may be very flawed, but He is perfect love, and longs to gather you up into His embrace.

Maybe you feel like you haven't any reserves of faith left. If that is the case, there is a perfect story in the Old Testament just for you...

Numbers 21: 4-9 tells the story of the people of Israel being bitten by snakes, in consequence of their sin. In desperation, they cried out to God, who told Moses to make a bronze serpent, put it on a pole and raise it up. If the Israelites turned their gaze (lit. looked intently) upon the impaled serpent, they were healed.

Jesus used this picture when talking of Himself lifted up on the cross, when Satan (the primal serpent) was utterly defeated [John 3: 14,15]. Although we live in a fallen world where we bear the

consequences of our own and others' sin, Jesus has taken all of it upon Himself on the cross. (You can read more about this in ['The Power of the Cross'](#)). All we need to do is turn our gaze on Him. No effort. No struggle. Just look.

This is such a remarkable picture. And so easy; just right for those who are weary and broken. The invitation is to get very quiet inside, turn your gaze upon Him and just hold it there. This doesn't require much effort, lots of faith or spiritual strength—which may be feeling a bit worn at the moment—just gazing; that's all.

So the first thing I would recommend to all of you who are struggling is to lay everything down—all the issues, all the turmoil, all the hurt—and just look.

God bless you,

Kate W at Rhythms of Grace: a Journey into Rest

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The next eagles' wings email will be sent on Monday 1st March at 7pm (GMT). Until then, the private web page is accessible through this link: www.rhythmsofgraceuk.org/eagles-wings-4024. And in the meantime, do get in touch...