

Another Day

Biblical reflections for busy teachers



Excited by an outcome

"Now, our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name."

1 Chronicles 29.13

It must happen! The moment when you have reached a goal, exceeded a target or just seen the 'light go on' as a child 'gets it' for the first time. You can't wait to tell someone, to share your success. Until you remember how a colleague who is struggling will feel and you don't want to add to their current lack of self-belief.

Being excited by something that has happened to you can sometimes be quite trying. To you, because you are bursting to share it. To others, because they don't share the place you are in or have reached. This was a state of play anticipated by the Apostle Paul. Writing to the Romans about spiritual gifts and the 'body' nature of the Church, he provides a number of scenarios and the Christian's distinctive approach, including, *"Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn."* Romans 12:15

Empathy is different from sympathy because it includes a practical and deep understanding of the person whose concerns have been shared with you. You know what it is to walk in their shoes. This concept of identifying is part of the character of Jesus Christ, whom the writer to the Hebrews described in this way, *"For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted."* Hebrews 2:17-18

This, then, is part of our calling. And how incredible it is that God so often brings across our path and into our lives someone with whom we really can identify. Similar circumstances, issues and troubles. Not so surprising in the staffroom, although the way opportunities arise to, *"comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God"* (2 Corinthians 1:4) can be quite amazing.

But what about our good news? The excitement we long to share. Perhaps it needs to be more about honouring the One who made it possible and giving thanks to God for the skill, the opportunity, the inspiration and the Holy Spirit at work in you. After all, you do believe, *"I can do everything through him who gives me strength"* (Philippians 4:13) don't you?

Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.
Lamentations 3:21-23