

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE TO BE A CHURCH THAT IS LEARNING TO LEARN? SEVEN SPIRITUAL TEMPERAMENTS

Christ Church 10:30 Sept 15th September 2019

We are not only different to look at, but different in *every* way, different personalities, different gifts, different tastes, different aptitudes and also different in the way that we learn about and experience God. Our goal is always clear - as Paul puts it as he writes from prison, to the church in Laodicea:

“Just as you have received Christ Jesus, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith and overflowing with thankfulness” -

The question is HOW?

If we are a church that is *learning to learn*, we need to understand how best **we** do that.

The truth is that we will all do it differently. To some extent at least, it will depend on how we are made. There has been quite a lot of work done over the last few years on **spiritual temperaments** and the impact that these have on how people learn about God, experience him, and grow in relationship **with Him**. Here is an edited version of the work done by M Perrine who identified 9 spiritual temperaments. Here we are looking at 7.

SEVEN SPIRITUAL TEMPERAMENTS

Naturalist, structuralist, ascetic, caregiver, activist, creative, intellectual

1. The Naturalist

Jesus spent almost all his time outside as is clear by the examples he gave in his teaching He looked about him for examples - In Matthew 6 Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow and then behold the birds of the air..... Matthew 13, the parable of the Sower. In Matthew again but also in Luke the story lost sheep. Jesus clearly felt fully alive to his Father, out of doors.

Naturalists are those of us here who love the outdoors and being surrounded by all that God has created. It makes us feel at one with him and we easily overflow with thankfulness. (ref Colossians reading) Through our senses we experience God with us and in his creation we see the hand and the heart of God.

2. The Structuralist

Jesus himself would have been familiar with worship that had a clear pattern. He prayed using the psalms. He also gave us the pattern for prayer which is, of course the Lord's Prayer

Structuralists are people who enjoy order, pattern and symbol. In worship they will feel close to God when using well- loved liturgy and their quiet times will follow a pattern each day.

Pete Greig founded the 24/7 prayer initiative, not you might think, a natural lover of routine and pattern, but he uses Celtic liturgy (hold up book) and the ancient prayer of Examen at the end of the day. In the Anglican Church there is a pattern to our worship our Church calendar year.....

3. The Ascetic

We often hear in the gospels about Jesus going to a quiet place away from the crowds to pray.

Ascetics are people who value simplicity and solitude. They love to go on retreat and at home will need to have a quiet space.

As a church we try to include quiet in our different styles of worship and there are sometimes retreats organised down to Mill House or Llangasty

Evening worship last week - a thin place (Prayer spaces)

4. The Caregiver

We read in Mark 6 just before the feeding of the 5000 that Jesus was filled with **compassion** for the people who were like sheep without a shepherd

Caregivers love God by loving others. For these folk it is not a burden or a sacrifice, it is the most natural thing, they see a need and they act.

Diane, who heads up our youth ministry, recognised a need when she went into in Downend Secondary school. So many young people, especially girls, were struggling with self-esteem. Diane's work with many of these young people as they drop in to chat over their feelings is growing fast. Diane is a natural care giver.

5. The Activist

Jesus was an activist! We see this when he turned over the tables in the temple in his anger and frustration at the way the poor were being exploited by the money changers and the only place that the Gentiles could pray being turned into a corrupt market place. The cross is the supreme example of Jesus taking action: Jesus demonstrated God's love in action.

Activists are people who are passionate about justice and well being for all. They feel truly energised and 'all that God created them to be' when they take up a cause on behalf of others.

6. The Creative

John 1 - 'He (Jesus) was with God in the beginning, Through him all things were made without him nothing was made, that has been made'

Jesus IS the one through whom all things were made.

Creatives are people who, in making something new become taken up in the process of actually creating whether its cooking, writing, painting, woodwork, making a garden, calligraphy, flower arranging, needlework.

Lorraine uses her gifts to the glory of God, her flower arrangement are inspirational and bring joy to our church family.

7. The Intellectual

Luke 2 - As a child, Jesus was in the temple asking questions! Teachers of the law were amazed at his teaching.

Intellectuals feel energised and fully alive when they are close to God, when they are studying, when they are digging deeper into the meaning of things. They ask lots of questions.

Peter Misselbrook draws on his temperament and serves the church when he writes his Bible Study notes which can be found on the website.....

SO WHAT?

1 If your spiritual temperament means that you experience God most when you are being creative, give time for that - make it a priority and focus on *listening* to God at those times. How are you using your gifts to build up the *whole* body? (See the Colossians reading.)

2 What about those temperaments that are not natural to you - eg taking time to come before God in silence - a good discipline...

3 Consider how we as a church nurture and celebrate people of all spiritual temperaments - how does our worship connect with all people?