

Text of the video on Spiritual Health MOT

We're all familiar with the idea of going for a medical checkup. They test our blood pressure, our temperature, they might weigh us and measure us, and they go gather facts and figures about our bodies, because we can't really see what's going on inside, can we?

But we also hope that they will ask us, how are you doing? How are you feeling within yourself? Because that is also important, even if it's not to be measured in the same way.

We're also familiar for the MOT that our car goes for every year to check that everything is running well. But what about a spiritual health check? Well, we're going to suggest that this season of Lent going towards Easter, that we give ourselves a spiritual health check.

Now, there won't be many facts and figures to gather, because we're not really like that when it comes to spiritual things. So it's hard to measure things. But we can gather evidence by reflecting, by spending time with God.

Now, this is not about, am I doing well enough as a Christian? Do I need to try harder? Absolutely not.

This is something quite different. This idea of going deeper is about sitting down with God and saying, how are we doing, God? For God to ask us that question, how are we doing, you and I?

And for us to be able to look honestly, look a little bit more deeply than we normally do in the busyness of life, taking a little bit of time out to reflect. Where am I growing? Where am I seeing fruit?

Where am I seeing God working within me and changing me to be more like Jesus? What would I like Him to do next? Where am I not very open to him?

Where would I like to be open more? It's about a growing relationship of love. Maybe this illustration would help you a bit.

Let's say you were going to give me some sweets. You wanted to give me sweets and I wanted to get them and receive them. I could hold out my hand and receive a few sweets from you.

Lovely, thank you. Or I could put out both hands and receive a lot more. Or, if you really wanted to bless me and I really wanted to receive, I could stretch out my arms wide and you could come and bring me great boxes of the stuff, and I would receive them with gladness.

And so it is with God. Maybe at the moment, we just have one hand out, but we'd like to add another hand and receive more from him. Or maybe we're ready to stretch out our arms for a whole shed load of blessings from him.

Gifts of love, the fruits of the spirit, ways of growing in Christ, the ability to share our faith more effectively with other people. Who knows what it might be? This is an opportunity, this lent to have a spiritual health check in order to understand more about ourselves and to see what we can do to help God to grow more things in us and to receive more from Him.

So how are we going to do this? Well, there'll be a sermon series about it and we're going to have a sermon series with different things such as looking at the state of our hearts, about our identity, our relationships, about our habits, and how all these things are helping us or perhaps hindering us from growing deeper in Christ. There'll be questions for home groups, for life groups to look at, and if you're not part of a life group, you can find them on the website so that you can join in as well. Also, we'll have a spiritual checkup that you can do in a personal journal. So one of the ways in which you can engage is by filling out this personal journal to reflect with God in your own time, in the quiet, you can do it at your own speed and your own pace. It just asks you questions, which helps you to think about that question, how are we doing, God, you and I?

And you can fill out those questions. I think it would be really helpful to do that. Taking stock, having time out, time to evaluate things that we don't normally know notice, perhaps bringing things to the surface that have been hidden.

And there's a further opportunity that if you would like to, you can take your journal and you can meet with one of the leaders on a one to one session, where you're just asking the question out loud, how am I doing, me and God, in the presence and the company of someone who wants the best for you, who is going to be someone who can listen, who might ask questions that will help you to process things. Many of us need to get things out loud and out of our heads in order to understand better what's going on inside. So this will be an opportunity to do that if you would like.

You can sign up for the one to one conversation, and we will match you with somebody appropriate, and it will be arranged in a time and place that suits you both. So this is quite an unusual opportunity, but Christians throughout the centuries have been doing this all over the world, having a one to one conversation with somebody. So this is an opportunity we'd like, as many people as possible to take us up on.

So, starting on Ash Wednesday, this will be a series that will run through till Easter, a chance to go deeper. And it's not an exam, it's not an assessment. It's not about, can I do better?

Should I be trying harder as a Christian? It's about going deeper with this lovely banner that Sally and her team made, going deeper in the love of Christ, receiving more from the Father, allowing the Holy Spirit to work more in us. And as we go deeper, we discover more and more about the depths of love God's has for us and what he wants to do in us and through us.

Remember, it's about finding the treasure as we go deeper. So join us this Lent and discover more of what God has for you and for me.