

CHURCH, BIBLE AND PRAYER: BORING AND UNNECESSARY?

Before I became a Christian I was very put off by what I saw as the agonising boredom of key elements in the Christian life. If I was to become a Christian, what would I be letting myself in for. Why would I want to go to church, read the Bible and pray. Were they really necessary?

The clue came in my question. Anything that we can't see a good reason for is likely to appear uninviting. I play badminton and used to think that the warm-up exercises I saw people do were mildly amusing and very pretentious. Then one day I tried them for myself and discovered that I found it much easier to move the following morning. Warm up exercises seemed much more sensible and appealing to me when I saw how they helped me and the benefits they brought. It's not very different with going to church, reading the Bible and praying. They're not mindless routines we go through in order to gain credit with God. They are there to help us to live our life to the full.

The essence of the Christian life is a life lived in relationship with God. Praying is simply communicating with God. We pray because we want to talk to God, to share our life with him, to allow him to speak to us and to ask for things. A relationship without two way communication is really not a relationship at all.

The Bible is God's autobiography. By reading it we get to know what God's like. It's also God's blueprint for life, through it we learn about how we were designed to live and we start to understand the purpose and meaning of life. We discover something worth living for. The Bible takes effort to understand but we don't have to study it alone and there are loads of resources to help us.

Finally, the Christian life is hard work. To live it wholeheartedly is to live in a very counter-cultural way. God didn't design us to struggle alone, to become a follower of Jesus is to become a part of a worldwide family where we enjoy the company and support of God's family, we learn together how to live and love each other as God intended us to.

Praying, reading the Bible and going to church seem mindless and boring apart from a real, interactive relationship with God. However, as we grasp their purpose and benefits they look much more appealing. As they become more and more meaningful, they become increasingly enjoyable and satisfying and they start to help us to become the people we want to become.