

This month's letter is from Pastor Garry Kelly, Cross Hills Baptist Church

Find Your Happy Place

One of the many definitions of a happy place is considered to be a place or situation that somebody only has to think about in order to feel happy and relaxed. With due consideration, a happy place is as individualistic as it should be. In reality, it could be anywhere. It may be the smallest place in the world or alternatively, it could be the largest. It could be from a mountain top, to perhaps a chair in the garden shed. Anywhere, in fact, where a sense of calm and inner peace prevails despite the turmoil in life and the world that surrounds us all.

Many people experience fraught and busy lives that allow little time for chilling out or relaxing, going to that happy place, no matter where or what that may include. A happy place can provide a solution or opportunity to grasp an element of freedom in the hope of serenity and peace in life. Some people are consistently searching for happiness, yet never find it. If we feel happier within, we can create a barrier against the problems of life. A happy place allows for periods of peace and reflection, it's where we try and rid ourselves of the cares and concerns that may be troubling us. A happy place may simply be listening to the sounds of nature such as the birds of the air, or a flowing river. A happy place may well provide a comfort zone where one can feel calm and safe. But perhaps most importantly of all, it can provide a feeling of solitude where we are not invaded by others and the many global problems that affect us all.

But perhaps the greatest happiness of all is much closer at hand than we realise. Despite certain opinions, God abides everywhere, some may misguidedly believe He lives purely up there somewhere in the clouds, or He is seated on the throne of judgement watching all that occurs below. God doesn't just sit there, He is an active caring, loving, forgiving, God. He is ever-present so it is not difficult to find Him. He is in the sounds of nature, a walk in the park, the rush of the wind or even the calmness of the sea. He is in the peace of your garden, the beauty of the flowers.

Your peaceful place may also create a time for personal prayer with God.

Prayer is usually a quiet time in life, no matter how busy our surroundings are. It is a time for meaningful conversation with God. Prayer can be considered as one of the most powerful instruments of communication, relaxation and happiness, available to us all. If we seek relaxation, if we seek peace and happiness in life but we are still troubled by the issues of life, prayer provides the opportunity to ask God, for guidance, comfort, reassurance, easing our stress, leading us to a happier place.

In God's word; Philippians 4:6-7 reminds us: 'Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.'

Pastor Gary Kelly