

Weekly Newsletter: 3rd October 2022

Reflection: Inviting God into the Hard Places

By Julie Lowe (taken from <https://www.ccef.org/inviting-god-into-the-hard-places/>)

We say “life is hard,” and everyone nods in support. It is a common truism, a well-accepted reality we all can affirm. The political climate, the cultural tone, work pressures, personal and relational stress—all of these contribute. People are anxious, overwhelmed, divided, polarized, and weary. Life is hard, so we all join in a united moan. It can almost feel cliché. You shrug it off as though there is nothing you can do but accept it.

But there are hard things that go deeper. They are more profound and burdensome and feel intolerable. Perhaps it is grief, loss, disease, suffering, or brokenness. It goes beyond the “we are in this together” type of hard. It is an isolating sorrow that threatens to swallow us. It is an “I feel completely alone” kind of hard, an oppressive kind of hard. You long for reprieve; you pray for it. Yet it doesn’t come.

This may tempt you to doubt God’s goodness, perhaps even become angry at him. We are a people who yearn for deliverance. We long for God to take away the hard. We ask, plead, beseech—and, at times, despair. We lament as the psalmist does: “How long, O Lord?” There is something very natural, even right and good, about wanting to be free from the hard things of this world, to have them removed from our lives. We yearn for God’s protection and rescue.

But what if God wants something different? What if—rather than deliverance from the hard—he wants you to invite him into it? What if he wants you to seek his presence *in* the hard, more than his protection *from* the hard? His provision in the midst of life’s hardships, rather than relief from them? Psalm 46:1 says “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help *in* trouble.” Surely God does answer prayers for relief, but this verse shows that God does not intend to take away all, or even most, of the hard in our lives. Rather, he wants to be our source of strength, our refuge, as we go through it. *It is not the absence of troubles in our life that is our comfort; it is God’s presence.* It is his transforming power that enables us to rest in the hard and be at peace in the storm. Why pray for the absence of hard things in our lives when it does not guarantee the presence of peace? Only a deep foundational trust in God’s goodness and sovereignty will create that.

As God allows us to go through hard things, we have an opportunity to trust him more deeply and know him more intimately. “Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you” (James 4:8). He desires to show us more of who he is and what he is capable of doing through our struggle. He wants us to say, “The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for him” (Lam 3:24). He desires to be our refuge and our hope in this life.

We can experience his presence in a very palpable way. Invite him to be with you, draw near to him, and you will experience something more glorious than relief.

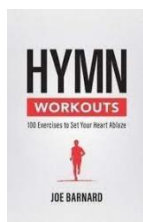
Men's Discipleship – this Thursday

Joe is running a Men's Discipleship Group on Thursday mornings at 10.30am in the church. Tea and coffee will be provided and Joe will be using hymns as the basis of the discussion.

Elders in Holyrood

Murdo Macleod has recently re-joined the Session. For those who are new to Holyrood, our elders are Aaron Allen, Nick Archer, Joe Barnard, Alex MacDonald, Murdo Macleod, Mark Malaczynski, Robert Nelson, Alasdair Roberts, Andy Scott, Ernie Shippin, John Stewart and Roy Tatton. Please speak to any of the elders if you have any questions and they'll be happy to help.

Hymn Workouts: 100 Exercises to Set Your Heart Ablaze



Joe's new book is now out! You can order a copy from amazon [here](#) and feel free to give it an honest review once you've read it.

Let Liz know if you would like a copy and she is happy to order one for you (Liz@holyroode-vangelical.org)

Accommodation Request

Vivi (a Chinese student who worships with us) is looking for more permanent accommodation. Please contact Alasdair (alasdair.roberts@blueyonder.co.uk) or Anncriis (Anncriis@gmail.com) if you can help or know of anyone with a room or flat she could rent. Thank you!

Friends International – Local Link

Friends International Local Link connects international students with local hosts. They are looking for more hosts to sign up, please contact Joanna Manners (joanna.manners@friendsinternational.uk) if you are interested.

Friends International are having a meal for those who host, or an interesting in hosting, on Monday 10th October from 7 – 9.30pm at Carrubbers, 65 High Street, EH1 1SR. Come along and hear more about what's involved and ask any questions. Please register for the meal [here](#).



Litter Pick Up @ Montgomery Street Park

Save the date! Our next litter pick up with the Friends of Montgomery Street Park will be on Sunday 16th October after the morning service. Come along and serve the community in this way!

OMF Scotland Tour: Be Exalted – this Saturday

Be Exalted

Edinburgh | Saturday 8th Oct | 10.30am-2pm

"Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow..." (Phil 2:9-10a)

We live in a time that could easily be characterised by crisis. Conflict, climate, Covid and the cost of living has brought turmoil that both unites and divides humanity. The strong seek self-preservation while the weak struggle to eat. But these are also days of opportunity. Technology, immigration, creation care and the rapid growth of the church in the global south open the door for fresh and exciting approaches to sharing the good news of Jesus across our streets and across the world.

Join us in Edinburgh to hear how God's people are serving the unreached billions of East Asia and how we, in Scotland, can unite with the global church to proclaim the good news of Jesus until every knee should bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Speakers:

- James and Kirsty – recently returned from serving unreached peoples in East Asia since 2006. They have experienced God's faithfulness through earthquakes, police detainments, violent protests and much more!
- Lorna Ferguson – has been in Japan with OMF for nearly 25 years and currently serves with the Field Leadership Team.
- Gerard & Sarah Charles – served for 10 years among Muslims in East Asia, and are currently as the OMF Area Reps for North England
- Sarah Melbourne - OMF worker serving children in Taiwan

Venue: Holyrood Evangelical Church, 121 Montgomery St, Edinburgh

Hot and cold drinks will be provided. Please bring your own packed lunch.

No booking required. No charge for entry.

The first hour of this event will be live-streamed.

Church Calendar

For your prayers and info –

- Monday: Baby and Toddler Group at 10am; Pastoral Care Team Meeting at 7.30pm on Zoom
- Wednesday: Prayer Meeting on Zoom at 7pm. Please let Liz (Liz@holyroodevangelical.org) know if you would like to receive the Zoom codes and don't already.
- Thursday: Men's Discipleship Group at 10.30am in the church
- Sunday:
 - Worship Service at 10.30am (and live streamed). Joe Barnard preaching. Please contact Liz by 12 noon on Thursday if you would like a socially distant seat.
 - Home Groups



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