

St Mary's Church Eccleston /

St Mary's Church Pulford

[Eccleston and Pulford Churches](#)

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## Upcoming Services

- **26/06/2022 Sunday 11.15 at Eccleston Church**  
*Choral Communion led by Rev Canon Stephen Attwater [Joint Service]*
- **3/07/2022 Sunday 9.45 at Pulford Church**  
*Parish Communion [Joint Service]*
- **10/07/2022 Sunday 11.15 at Eccleston Church**  
*Choral Communion [Joint Service]*
- **17/07/2022 Sunday 9.45 at Pulford Church**  
*Parish Communion*
- **17/07/2022 Sunday 11.15 at Eccleston Church**  
*Choral Communion*
- **24/07/2022 Sunday 11.15 at Eccleston Church**  
*Choral Communion [Joint Service]*
- **31/07/2022 Sunday 11.15 at Eccleston Church**  
*Choral Communion [Joint Service]*

Dear Reader,

The parish newsletter is available to download from the church website as well as being emailed once a fortnight.

In this edition, Rob Hughes delivers a homily entitled - 'Meditation and Meditative Prayer', Jeanette has provided a couple of lovely prayers, one which she herself has created, and we see some photos of the Cathedral Porch.

**Please note that in June, the service times are changing. Pulford Services will be at 9.45am, Eccleston Services at 11:15am. For up-to-date service information please see the church website [Services – St Mary's Church Eccleston and St Mary's Church Pulford \(ecclestonchurch.org\)](#)**

Kind Regards

Stephen Hutchinson

## Important News and Reminders

### Food Bank:

A reminder from Rachel Williams

#### Urgently Wanted

- Tinned Meats, Tomatoes, Desserts & Potatoes
- UHT Milk & Juice
- Custard
- Small Jars Instant Coffee
- Jams and Spreads
- Instant Mashed
- Cereal Bars
- Instant Pasta & Instant Noodles

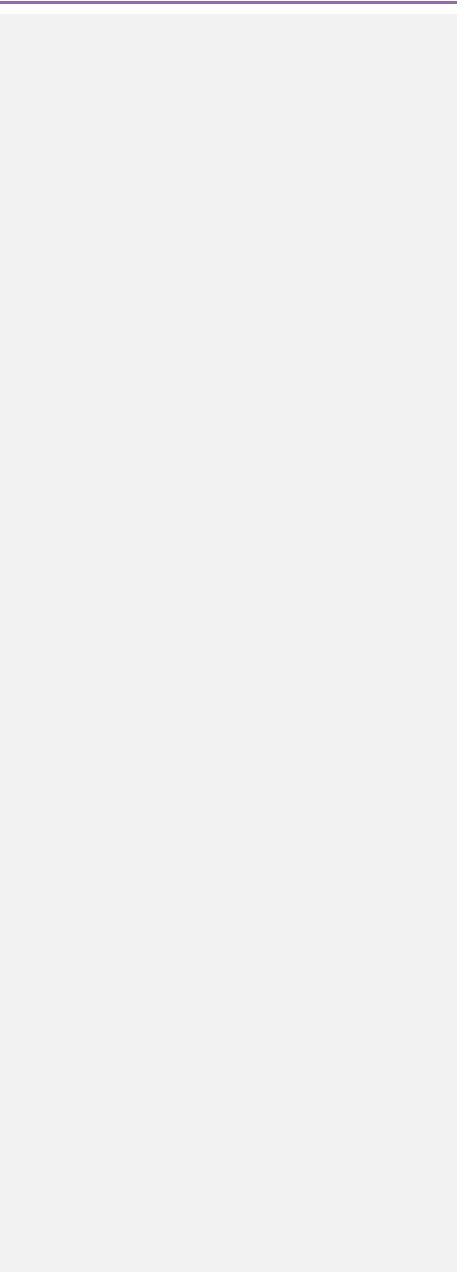
#### Wanted

- Tinned Meat, Fish, Vegetables, Potatoes, Tomatoes, Custard & Fruit
- Cuppa Soup
- Pot Noodles
- Instant Pasta & Pasta Sauce, Mashed Potato, Coffee & Custard
- Biscuits
- UHT Milk and Fruit Juice
- Breakfast Cereal

#### Plenty Of

- Pasta
- Baked Beans

The list changes from time to time. Both donation stations are emptied on the last service in the month and for those parents who receive the magazine we collect from school the last week of each half term.



## Rob Hughes Homily – Meditation and Meditative Prayer

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As you will no doubt have gathered from what I've mentioned in previous sermons, homilies and more recent blogs, I've been experiencing some sort of spiritual re-alignment for quite a while. And there have been more-than-a-few problems for my ageing (but still inquisitive) 'engineering' mind to grapple with. So, I've had to discover, the hard way, that trying to 'rationalize the spiritual' is not only impossible, it's counter-productive and constraining - and I've had to learn to go with the flow a lot more.

The experiences that have helped me do so include private meditation, and silent church. And then, slowly but surely, I came to realise that I, and indeed the human race, have become conditioned - addicted even - to thinking and over-thinking. And let's be honest, there's plenty to think and worry about these days. And as we're considering the reintroduction of Silent Church, my theme here is meditation - but in the context of Meditative Prayer.

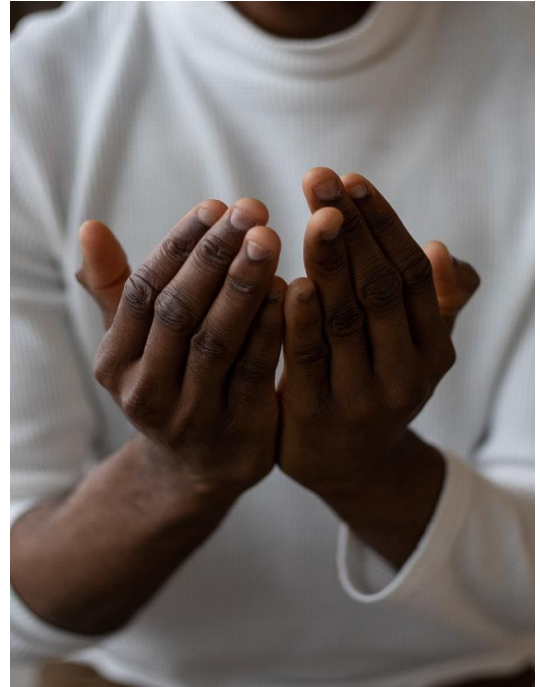
If you feel diving straight in at the deep-end with regard to meditation and meditative prayer, you immediately submerge into a sea of paradox! For example:

**With regard to mindfulness meditation:** the word mindfulness doesn't really sit well with the usual expectation of emptying the mind, and in Buddhist tradition, there is no particular word that distinguishes between heart and mind. So, a more accurate term, in this context, might be heart-full-ness, or heart-full stillness.

**With regard to meditative prayer:** there are many quotes in the Bible about 'meditating on God's Word', and even an instruction to actually "**fill our minds** with all that is true, pure and noble..." At face value, this doesn't 'fit' at all well with the above definition!

I've had to think (there I go again - thinking!!) about how to approach a blog about the 'experiences' of meditation and meditative prayer. This isn't an 'easy' task: there is too particular right- or wrong way to 'do it'. It's a practice - an acquired taste to many ("I'm too busy or not patient enough to bother" are phrases most commonly heard). The experience is different for everyone, too, and profoundly personal. To describe meditation might give the false impression that it's a 'technique to still the mind', and there's generally an expectation that it's some sort of cure for over-thinking. In my experience, that's not so - on fact at times, meditation has been quite the opposite.

The word mindfulness seems to have become synonymous with meditation, and vice-versa, and even this evokes paradoxical expectations. At one extreme, filling our minds with better stuff (meditative prayer); at the other extreme, seemingly, emptying our minds of bad stuff (an erroneous impression of Buddhism).



Let me cut to the chase. As I see it, during personal prayer, **we speak to** God, but in meditative prayer we allow time for God to **speak to us**; there's a big difference. Even though either can follow from, or lead to, the other, it's only through God's word, and through His Spirit within us, that we can find truth and peace (peace of mind, at least). And it wasn't until I experienced meditative prayer during Roger's Silent Church gatherings that I came to realise that there's probably never been a more urgent need to rediscover the quiet art of meditative prayer. Because the many distractions of this world are already drowning out the quiet voice of God within our hearts, and can make us numb to our ongoing and developing spiritual needs.

We need to find a quiet place to be with God. We need not **seek** to empty our minds; we don't even have to **seek** to fill them with His Word; we **simply wait** for God to allow His Word to filter through into our minds as He sees fit.

I have been taken to task now and again about meditation (in any form) being potentially 'unchristian'. Not so; for example: Joshua 1 - "This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night." Psalm 119 - "I will meditate on your precepts and regard your ways; I shall lift up my hands to your commandments, which I love; and I will meditate on your statutes; Philippians 4- "Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever things are of good report... meditate on these things."

Meditative prayer is about making time to **let God have His way - with no other agenda, except to listen** - 'meditating on Him', and meditating on His word (a practice, in itself, of silent prayer. So no apologies when I emphasize that meditation and meditative prayer are practices, not techniques as such. But here are some common-sense 'techniques' to create a suitable environment within which to quiet the mind enough to listen:

In a world full of distractions, we need to identify a quiet place - enough to feel safe, and calm, and relaxed.

We need to give ourselves 20-30 minutes, so that we're not in a rush. It takes time to let the mind take a rest from its own obsessions with busy-ness and overthinking - which prevent us from recognising when God's speaking to us.

Maybe we might choose a short passage of scripture beforehand, or simply allow one to 'come to mind', then let that be our focus when distracted.

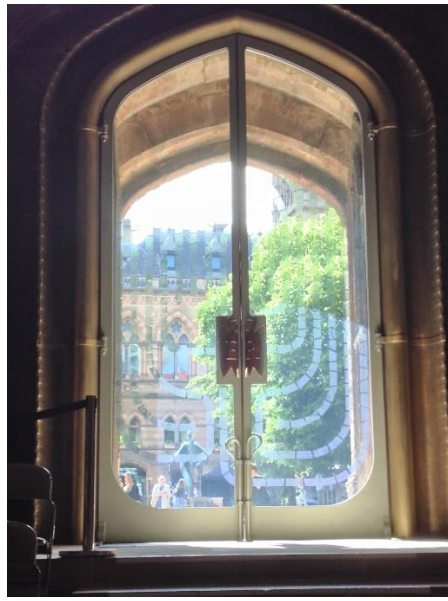
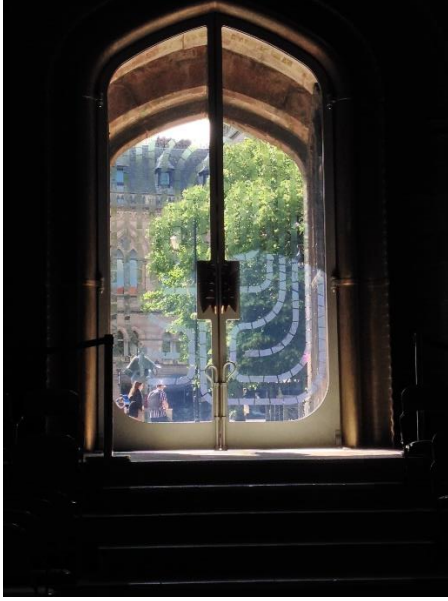
**Allow time for God to speak to us.** This is the hardest part. Many people never hear the Lord speak to them simply because they don't allow Him to. Sitting and 'listening', with neither agenda nor expectation, is an art that can take time to cultivate, and defies logic and objectivity!

So, our prayer to refocus might simply become:

***Lord God, help me, in your presence, to be still; to be aware; to simply "BE".***

**[Rob Hughes]**

## The Pilgrim Porch at Chester Cathedral



Here are some photos I took of the newly commissioned art installation by Stephen Broadbent in Chester Cathedral. The bronze Pilgrim Porch features photographs from every church in the diocese of Chester. The Pulford Church clock image can be seen in the 4<sup>th</sup> photo, and the Eccleston Church font image can be seen in the last photo.

**[Stephen Hutchinson]**

## Two Prayers offered by Jeannette Howe

### Prayer 1 – Jeannette’s Psalm

I was listening to the Lectio365 app the other morning, when we were invited to write our own psalm, like King David of the Old Testament, a psalm that reflected our feelings and our relationship with God. Here is mine:

“Help me to see  
Through your eyes  
Your creation and the challenges that surround me.

Help me to trust  
You in everything  
And to find that place where your yoke is light.

Take my striving  
And let me rest in You  
My Rock, my Redeemer, my Fortress, my God.

#### **Amen**

My child, you have been trying to manage on your own  
Come back to the heart of me, I am with you.

**[Jeanette Howe]**

### Prayer 2 – A reading from Aidan, an abbot and bishop of Lindisfarne, featured in the Celtic Daily Prayer Book (Book one; The Journey Begins).

A brother asked one of the Elders “What good thing shall I do?” The old man replied: ‘God alone knows what is good. However, I heard it said that someone inquired of Abbot Nisteros, a friend of Abbot Anthony, and asked: “What good work shall I do?” And that he replied: “Not all works are alike. For scripture says that Abraham was hospitable and God was with him. Elijah loved solitary prayer and God was with him. And David was humble and God was with him. Therefore, whatever you see your soul desire according to God, do that thing and you shall keep your heart safe.

**[from the Celtic Daily Prayer Book.]**

