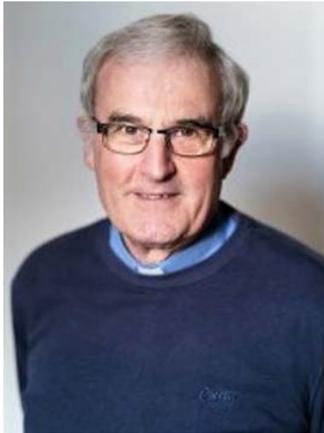


GRASMOOR MISSION COMMUNITY LEADERS' WEEKEND

2 – 4th November 2018 at Rydal Hall



Godfrey Butland

Our Friday evening set us at ease: relaxing and restful but encouraging inclusivity and sharing. The ice breaker was novel and fun! Our theme was 'Strength in Weakness' (2 Cor 12:7-10). Strength comes from God by the Spirit. "...when I am weak, then I am strong": a difficult concept, but one that gave consolation and encouragement to many participants. Weakness gives us integrity and authenticity, enabling us reach out with empathy rather than moral superiority.

Saturday morning arrived, in pouring rain! Our second session was entitled 'Strengthening the Core' (Luke 4:1-14) - Jesus in the wilderness. The Holy Spirit will always lead us to God, but he also leads us to difficult places. The session emphasised the need for silence and stillness; for prayer; and for scripture study. We were invited to light a candle to signify our intention in one or other of these areas. A very challenging session!

Session Three, after coffee, took the theme of 'Strengthening the Call' (John 21:15-22), and we reflected on the post-resurrection conversation between Jesus and Peter. The call comes from Jesus; the commitment must be total and it won't be easy. Are we prepared to do that? Another challenging session.

During the afternoon, we had some free time, which was both welcome and important due to the intensity of the morning sessions. Some of us used the opportunity for a 1:1 with Kevin or Anne. Later, there were some voluntary workshops on 'Discerning God's Call', 'Praying for Healing' and 'Contentment'.

On Saturday night we enjoyed a relaxing special dinner, followed by words from Bishop John Holbrook, who was with us for part of the weekend, in his new role as Chair of the ReSource Trustees.

On Sunday morning, we had a further teaching session, before sharing Holy Communion together. 'Strengthening the Cord' (Acts 2:42-47) was about the early Christian church, and what we might learn from them. The Spirit was leading the disciples, who lived communally and inter-dependently. Faith grew by outreach. Our church buildings could be seen as either barracks or field hospitals. If the early church had looked inward it would die, so too today.

In summary, this was an excellent weekend, with two charismatic leaders who based their teaching strongly on Scripture. They included some of their own personal story, which made them both vulnerable and more real. The worship at each session was deeply moving, and we were gently led by the Holy Spirit.

Here are some personal testimonies from the weekend:

Andy: The weekend for me clearly showed the Spirit at work. During my 'split' from God, the Spirit was still working with me throughout that time apart. The weekend gave me a degree of understanding of the role he played, and is still playing, in my life, and with that an acceptance of the work of the Spirit within me. Where will it take me ...? God knows.

Christina: How gracious is God, that he gave us time to spend with him, in fellowship with our fellow workers. I am reminded that I was made with his precious plan in mind. I am here, I am willing and I am rested after a wonderful weekend spent at Rydal.'

Kris: It was a time of refreshment and an opportunity to both give and receive. I can sum the weekend up from my point of view thus - I came home full to the brim with good food and overflowing with the Holy Spirit.

Godfrey Butland