

Labyrinth

A labyrinth is a purposeful journey.

Unlike a maze that has twist, turns and dead ends that are meant to confuse and 'trick' you into getting lost, a labyrinth is a pathway that also has twists and turns, but there are no dead ends, so it is impossible to get lost.

In Medieval times the Christian labyrinth, with its twisting pathway, was used to symbolise the pilgrim's journey to the Holy Land, or the journey of Christ to the cross.

As in the past, most commonly today, we use the labyrinth as an aid to prayer and meditation. Walking slowly and purposefully the labyrinth pathway gives us the opportunity to slow down in the business of life, to reflect on and to consider God's presence and purpose in our lives. The pathway draws us towards a centre point, a meeting with God, a place of encounter to hear what He would say to us before returning again to walk in God's world.

Tony's labyrinth is a unique design. There are choices to make, such as 'which direction might I take to begin?' There are no right or wrong choices. Your purpose is to draw closer to God. You may find yourself walking in the opposite direction to someone else. Simply be mindful and respectful of the others choices. Make room along the

pathway as you pass each other. As you do, remember friends and strangers who have touched your life, give thanks for them and what they have shown to you of yourself.

There are four basic stages in a labyrinth journey:

Stage one – Preparation.

As with any journey good preparation pays dividends. Before entering the labyrinth take some time perhaps to sit and think about the journey you are about to take. Take a few deep breaths being conscious of your breathing and your heartbeat.

Simple prayer

*Breathe in: God of love and life
Breathe out: still my heart and mind.
Breathe in: God of love and life
Breathe out: still my heart and mind.*

Some people like to walk a labyrinth barefoot remembering God's words to Moses when he encountered God, "*take off your sandals for the place where you are standing is holy ground.*" Exodus 3:5

Stage two – Walking to the centre.

On this part of the journey take slow steps as you purposefully 'let go' of things that have hindered your joy in life.

Think about the times, the people and the situations when you have been hurt. Prepare to let go of resentments, bitterness and anger. Prepare to forgive, to seek forgiveness and to forgive yourself.

Simple prayers

"Lord, this burden has become too heavy for me, please take it onto Your shoulders. Help me to forgive those who hurt me."

And when you are ready:

"Forgive me the wrongs I have done, as I have forgiven those who have wronged me."

And when you are ready:

"Lord help me to forgive myself."

or

As you are walking repeat this

Simple prayer:

Lord have mercy,
Christ have mercy,
Lord have mercy upon me.

Allow the steady rhythm of your stride fit the rhythm of your prayers.

From the prophet Isaiah: This is what the Lord says, "I have swept away your offences like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist. Return to me, for I have redeemed you."

Stage three – Holy Space.

"Be still and know that I am God." Psalm 46:10

Spend as long as you like in this centre space. Take time to recall the promises of God's Word.

"Come near to God and he will come near to you." James 4:8

"I love those who love me and those who seek me find me." Proverbs 8:17

"Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart." Psalm 37:4

Take time to listen to what he might say to you.

And when you are ready:

Prepare to leave this space and journey on back into God's world.

"I am with you and I will watch over you wherever you go." Genesis 28:15

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11

"Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." John 20:21

Simple prayer

Christ be with me
Christ before me
Christ behind me
Christ above me
Christ beneath me.
Christ be in me
And wherever I go
may I be in Thee.

Stage Four – Onward journey.

Walk slowly and purposefully recalling the plans that you have, the people you will meet, the places that will you go to this week..

"You are the salt of the earth" Matthew 5:13

"You are the light of the world" Matthew 5:14

Consider the qualities of salt and light.

Pray that God will use you to make a difference in His world.

BLESSING

Whoever you are,
wherever you go,
whatever your strengths,
whatever your weaknesses,
God will be with you,
to hold, to heal, to guide and to bless.
Go, then, in peace, to be a blessing to others
And be assured of His love. Amen.

Dalesdown

Labyrinth

Opening

June 20th 2009

in memory of

Tony Sellwood