

Time 3: The Gift of Time to Encourage

Thought For The Day: BBC Radio Jersey Oct 16th 2013 @ 8.30am

I once witnessed a young lad grow three inches before my eyes. It happened like this. The church was preparing a home grown concert when songs, sketches and poems would be shared.

A lad came up and asked if he could play the violin. Now I knew that he had just started to learn, and I also know that a violin is not an easy instrument to master. So I asked are you sure you are ready. He nodded firmly that he was. "Are you really, really sure?" I asked quizzically. He responded with equal emphasis that he was.

On the night he took to the stage and pushed two plastic straws into the S shaped holes on the violin. Apparently his teacher had told him that if he kept the bow in line with the straws he would get a better note. And so he began. In truth he screeched, scraped, stopped and stuttered.

Everyone held their breath waiting for it to finish. Eventually, he stopped and bowed with great solemnity. There was silence. Then everyone clapped and cheered, "Well done, well done," they called out. The other children stamped their feet in approval. And then the miracle occurred. This young lad sensed the genuine affirmation and stood tall- a good three inches taller than when he came in.

The bible says quite a lot about seeds. Often the seed is a metaphor for what we take time to sow in the lives of others. St Paul put it like this, "Remember the person who plants a lot will have a big harvest. Give freely, love generously and you will have more blessings than you need".

It would have been easy to criticize that lad's violin playing, to suggest that he should not have played or maybe that he should never play again. But the opposite happened. People took time to affirm and encourage.

Maybe if we all took more time to sow seeds of affirmation then it would not just be the crops in the fields that would stand tall.

Lord God, help me to plant some seeds of encouragement. Amen.

And what happened to the lad that night? Such was the encouragement that he responded by playing the piece again! And guess what, everyone cheered even louder!

I love church when it is like that: *a place to belong and a purpose to live for.*