



Create a peaceful space to pause, and allow yourself to feel God's presence alongside you, as near to you as your own breath. In following the reflection below, as a church we will draw closer to God and to one another as we grow in faith and deepen our sense of belonging to God.

Acts 5:12-16 'The Apostles Heal Many'

¹² Now many signs and wonders were done among the people through the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico. ¹³ None of the rest dared to join them, but the people held them in high esteem. ¹⁴ Yet more than ever believers were added to the Lord, great numbers of both men and women, ¹⁵ so that they even carried out the sick into the streets, and laid them on cots and mats, in order that Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he came by. ¹⁶ A great number of people would also gather from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all cured.



This is a great little piece of Acts! Nowhere else in all the New Testament is there mention of the possibility of healing from a shadow! Yes, healing comes through touch or by word, through faith, hope, even by touching a garment (handkerchiefs and aprons no less in Acts 19) ...but a shadow?! This is one of those biblical moments when we should think a little harder about the text and the context. Luke, the writer of Acts, probably isn't referring simply to the blotting out of sunlight (he might also have been influenced by an old thinking that shadows were important and powerful – based on the fact that they were the same shape as the person).

Luke is convinced that God's Spirit was with the early church, the apostles: ordinary men and women who nevertheless did extraordinary things. They preached and proclaimed Jesus Christ, shared their things and cared for the sick and poor. They lived out their faith...and so their faith bore fruit. The fruits of the Spirit included healing, and so Luke sees God's healing power at work in the church's ministry it was undertaking.

I don't have much confidence that my shadow will do much good in and of itself, but I thank God that in a sense, Emmanuel's shadow in Eastbourne is indeed just as powerful and healing in these times. People's faith is reflected in their shopping for others, collecting medication for others (two hours queue one of our members endured for another), ringing each other, sending cards, caring for neighbours, praying for their community, working in the DGH and in the caring professions, business, public transport, remembering the Foodbank... I could go on.

God's Spirit continues to be at work in us and through us. How might your faith's shadow bring some healing and help to others today?

Prayer: Powerful God, you cannot help but continue to be at work in your world: guiding hands and prompting hearts, encouraging kindness; showing us who to serve.
**BY YOUR SPIRIT'S POWER, GIVE US THE WILL AND THE WISDOM,
TO BE A FULL AND WHOLESOME PRESENCE IN THE COMMUNITY WE SERVE.
FOR JESUS, OUR RISEN SAVIOUR'S SAKE. AMEN.**