



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.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 'The Body is a Temple'

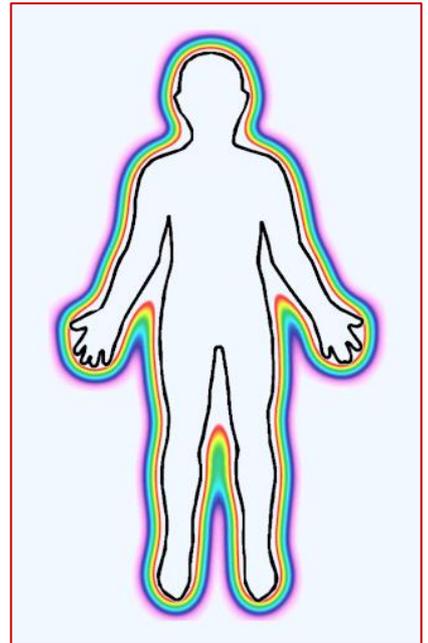
¹⁹ Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? ²⁰ For you were bought with a price; therefore, glorify God in your body.

The above verses have been a driving force in my life for many years and have shaped the way in which I have sought to express my faith. Although St Paul may have been referring to sexual immorality and such conduct being a sin against God who lives in the very bodies we have been given, it applies to all other ways we may be tempted to use or abuse our bodies.

If we are to take seriously the belief that God works in and through us we need to ensure that our bodies are always fit places in which he can dwell. For me it means no smoking or drinking of alcohol, eating healthily and exercising regularly, taking care to deepen my faith by worship, prayer, reading, study and learning from others, and hoping that God is willing to put up with the many ways in which I fall short of his expectations.

If my body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, it follows that God dwells in the lives of others too which means that I must take care to respect all human life. My grandfather was a coal miner who had to retire at the age of 47 because of pneumoconiosis, exploited by the private mine owners and left destitute to raise six children. I can well understand and sympathise with miners and many others who feel their bodies have been used to fill the pockets of others. I don't have to look far to see others caught up in the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis over land rights; young people in our own country being used to promote trade in drugs causing misery to countless others. The news bulletins are full of the many ways in which people are the victims of violence from others.

We hear a great deal about the need to care responsibly for our planet to avoid causing its destruction. Let us then also ensure that we take equal care of our bodies and those of others so that God may have free rein to help influence and shape the future he has in mind for all people.



Prayer:

Lord, forgive our selfishness
in our concern for our own well-being rather than others.
Give us a listening ear
to detect the cries and concerns of others and to respond.
We pray for others in positions of power
that they may use it wisely for the good of all. Amen.