

## Week 45 – Saturday May 5th, 2018



### Convocation

On Tuesday, Swanwick will resound to the sound of a couple of hundred deacons gathering for their annual Convocation. The noise can be quite horrendous! But over the few days we are together, we will meet old friends, make new ones, say goodbye to those who have died, welcome those who will join us. We will learn and laugh, worship and pray, and be renewed and refreshed for another year.

Many of us work in isolation; some may be the only deacon in their Circuit, and this gathering together reminds us that we belong together and have been called to serve God in this ministry.

I work in four churches, three of which are in villages and quite rural. Numbers are low and we can at times feel quite despondent and isolated. So opportunities to get together with others is a real treat. "O for a thousand tongues" can be sung in deep despair or in joyful anticipation! When numbers are low, then there are fewer folk to do the tasks needed to keep the church going, yet it seems to me that Jesus really wasn't into big gatherings all the time. Yes, we have the feeding of the 5,000, and crowds coming to hear him, but so often Jesus is in a house with one or two, with his twelve disciples, or with just three – Peter, James and John.

The Bible tells us that not a sparrow falls that God does not see, and that the hairs on our head are counted. Even today we are individuals to Jesus, known by name, and all called to serve where he has placed us. One of the more neglected gifts of the Spirit is that of encouragement, building each other up, being supportive and positive. As a preacher I see the faces of those in the congregation week by week, and sometimes it looks as if we have all just come from a session at the dentist rather than worshipping the King of kings and Lord of lords!

Who are the people who love and support you? Who encourage you and make you feel positive? AND who do you love, support and encourage?

So please pray for the deacons at Convocation, for their ministries, and for the people they seek to serve, that this time together will be a blessing for all.

**Encouraging, gathering God,  
you call us all to be your people,  
held together by the love of Christ in the power of the Spirit.  
May we truly be one in your name,  
so that those who meet us see your love shining through us  
and your power transforming the world  
through what we say and do for you.  
Amen.**

*Prayers for May written by Denise Creed  
Picture: the logo of the Methodist Diaconal Order*