

Meditation 21st September 2021

Although it may seem to be quite a long time ago I watched with great interest on television the Olympic games. An event that before it took place seemed to be unlikely, improbable and perhaps even the wrong thing to do in these difficult times. However, our anxieties seemed to have been allayed.

Gt. Britain was very successful and it took us away from the grim news each day of the number of cases, hospitalisations and deaths that we are still hearing on every news bulletin.

Then it was the Para Olympics. Another very successful event, Gt Britain won many medals, many that were unexpected and others that did not live up to what the media and also the athletes themselves were hoping for.

Getting to a level of fitness for a top event is life changing. The Olympic athletes had worked hard, experienced many ups and downs even whilst in Tokyo, their particular sport would have taken over most of their wakeful hours and probably many of their times of sleep as well and some did achieve greatness in their particular discipline. However it was while watching the para Olympics that we could realise the mountains that these athletes had to climb. Just to begin a sport was a huge leap of faith for many of them. At the beginning of their careers just stepping out onto the track with a prosthetic limb must have been a huge moment for them. Johnnie Pearson a British runner is involved with young athletes, and one girl of about ten who had prosthetic legs told of how she would cover them with her trousers at the beginning of the week she spent at this facility. By the end she would wear shorts without any hint of embarrassment. Sport can be a confidence booster.

In all sports people compete to win, whatever people say whether it is dressage, the high jump, 100 metres, most people would hope that they could win a place perhaps an Olympic gold, silver or bronze and they beat themselves up if they haven't performed as well as they thought they might.

Since the Olympics which do seem quite far away now we have had a huge triumph in tennis through Emma Raducanu. It seems hard to imagine an eighteen year old, unheard of before Wimbledon to the majority of people, winning one of the top prizes in the world playing tennis. Of course when there is a winner there is always a loser and the girl beaten by Emma felt she was badly done to during this match. Despite this, the two girls talked glowingly of each other and did appear, and I felt it was genuine, to care about each other and they both spoke eloquently at the end of the game. Let us hope that success doesn't change Emma

1Corinthians 9:24 'Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize. Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last but we do it to get a crown that will last for ever'.

So stepping out onto the track is only part of the story, the part that people forget is that to get this far has taken hours of dedication and self-sacrifice, but it is this confidence that has helped the athletes, at whatever level, to socialise, meet with other people, take a step forward; they may go on to have a great career ahead of them and when their competing days are over they may still be in the limelight, but it was athletics that has given them the opportunity, the confidence to realise that whatever they do, with determination and hardwork they can achieve so much, "the race that is marked out for us" (Hebrews 12:1).