

Meditation 30th November 2021 - Transplants

Recently we, my family that is, have been celebrating the kidney transplant of our youngest grandchild Ben which took place in November 2016. Members of St. James' Church at that time will remember how they continually prayed for him. Ben had been taken ill with renal failure the previous year when we were in Canada visiting our eldest daughter. We cut our holiday short and returned not really knowing what the outcome was for Ben. A nurse from the RVI had spoken with Ray and myself while we were away and told us Ben would be given dialysis three times a week while he was awaiting a new kidney. Transplants for us at that time were major medical procedures that happened to other people not to a little boy of seven and we were absolutely shocked.

Once home we were surrounded by the love and support of our friends and fellow worshippers at Riding Mill church especially when we heard the news that Karen was to donate one of her kidneys. Eventually everything was ready for the surgery to take place, Ben in the RVI and Karen in the Freeman. This was the most difficult situation, Sophie and I stayed with Karen until just before she was anaesthetised and then dashed to the RVI to be with Ray and Ben's dad.

It was a hard day; one of the brighter moments was when Sophie and I were sitting in the café at the Freeman feeling really down, and Iona, a member of St. James and a nurse at the hospital, saw us and came and talked to us, lifting our spirits. And then when we were all sitting in Ben's room at the RVI and he was in the operating theatre, the 'Clown Doctors' came along to entertain us. At first my thoughts were 'Oh no, we can do without this' but they were just what we needed and once again helped us by taking our minds off what was happening to Ben and Karen for a short while.

This whole experience had been immersed in pray, people in the Cathedral were praying for us and our family, folk I did not know, friends of friends in various parts of the country and indeed the world, were surrounding us in pray and we lived with hope that all would go well.

Now, five years later Ben is a robust teenager at Queen Elizabeth High School. Through the surgery that he endured and masses of medication that he will have to take for the rest of his life, he has been transformed from a waif of a boy with black circles around his eyes, pale skin and a small skinny body, to a healthy young man who is enjoying life, who longs to be able to play rugby but sadly, even with his shield, is not allowed.

I continually give thanks that we live at a time when medical science has advanced so that parts of the body can be replaced in situations like Bens otherwise we would not have him with us. Verses like Ephesians 5:20 are reminders that God is with us at all time and he loves us and how grateful we must be. 'Always give thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ'. 'Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his love endures for ever', Psalm 118 1.

Even in the dark stormy night we have just experienced and the days following with electricity outages and no water for a few days, all of these can pale into insignificance compared to Ben's life and what he has lived through.