

Bible Study for the week of Sunday, 17th May

This week we explore another famous phrase from scripture. Before you start, take a moment to notice what first comes to your mind when you hear these words:

“In him we live and move and have our being.”

And now,..... I have some dance for you! Don't worry, I'm not asking you to film your own performance, but to watch the linked video.

What does it say to you about us living and moving and having our being in God? (It's also worth reading the dancers' 'thank you list' in the article which accompanies the film.)

<https://www.classicfm.com/discover-music/periods-genres/ballet/dancers-film-enchanting-romeo-juliet-sequence/>

Do you ever deliberately use your body to pray or pray while walking, running, dancing or kneeling etc?

Do you find it helpful to engage your body in prayer? (There is a prayer exercise at the end which you may like to try and which I will use at our Tuesday morning YouTube prayer.)

Now take time to read the scripture passage. You may like to consider these questions:

- What are the things our society has a tendency to worship? Has this changed over recent weeks?
- What can we learn from how Paul seeks to connect with the people of Athens? How should we try to communicate our faith to others?

Acts 17:22-31

²²Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, “Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. ²³For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, ‘To an unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. ²⁴The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, ²⁵nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. ²⁶From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, ²⁷so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. ²⁸For ‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we too are his offspring.’

²⁹Since we are God's offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. ³⁰While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, ³¹because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”



Saint Paul in Athens, Raphael

Praying with the Body

You may like to experiment with this physical prayer. Don't feel you need to use words at all, unless you wish to. Allow your body to do the praying.

Stand or sit somewhere you feel comfortable and allow your own breathing to calm you.



Deliberately and consciously *put your hands together* in the traditional gesture for prayer. What are you saying to God with this gesture?

Repeat our phrase to yourself:

In you I live and move and have my being.....

In you I live and move.....

In you I live.....

In you.....

Gently *place one fist on your chest*; offer to God anything for which you wish to ask forgiveness.

Clench both your fists; bring to mind any current anger, frustrations, and disappointments in your life, acknowledging them.

When you are ready, *slowly uncurl your fingers*; offer all those feelings to God.

Hold your open hands in front of you: what do you want to communicate to God with this gesture?

Lift your hands higher; what are you offering to God now?

Finally, *join your hands with your fingers interlaced*; consider what this gesture of connection is saying today. Pray, with or without words, for as long as you wish.

