

## Thought for the week

### How to Renew your Well-being

What are you doing to look after your well-being?

It's really important that we look after our own well-being. Yes, we want to live productive lives. We want to do well at the things that we do. We want to do things to help others. But we also need to look after our own well-being. Particularly as we've come out of lockdown. There is a risk that we just rush back into life and burn ourselves out. I appreciate that there are times in life when you just need to get that essay done and handed in or you have to finish your dissertation or revise for exams or perhaps you're at work and you simply need to work to bring in an income. But even then, there are simple things that we can do to attend to our wellbeing. So what can we do? What principles we can apply? And what does the Bible have to say?

At Penrallt Baptist Church we've recently started a renew-wellbeing drop-in called Renew 57. This has free tea and coffee and toast and is on a Thursday morning. It's under the umbrella of the organisation '[renewwellbeing.org.uk](http://renewwellbeing.org.uk)' which was set up by Ruth Rice.

Ruth is a Baptist Minister in Nottingham and she created a model for these drop-in cafes after having a breakdown herself. This flowed from a desire for better well-being for all in the whole community. It is based the 5 ways to well-being – as affirmed by mental health experts and the mental health charity and others too. Connect. Connect with other people. Be active. Do something physical each day. Take notice – focus briefly on the things that bring you joy. Keep learning and give – give of your time, your presence and your words. These cafes have grown. There are now more than 160 renew spaces across the UK helping people in lots of different walks of life. From those taking a break from their busy lives all the way across the spectrum to those who are among the most anxious and the most vulnerable in society. And it's these people who have benefitted the most.

We see these 5 ways of wellbeing very much affirmed in the Bible. In the Old Testament of the Bible, we read that God's desire is for us to have 'Shalom'. That is complete peace. The word Shalom is used in the Bible as a greeting and as a blessing. It is a desire for complete wellbeing. The prophet Isaiah gives us a beautiful vision of what perfect shalom might look like in his Chapter 65 verse 17 to 25 which inspires us with hope for heaven, but we also begin to understand that even when all things are not equal, even when we are not well, we can still know well-being. And we understand that things will not be perfect until we get to heaven, but we can know something of the heavenly blessing of God today. As Christians, we believe that we find this in Jesus. He has made a way for us to be reconciled to God – offering us forgiveness. He has shown us on the cross that he loves us. And if we accept him into our lives as Lord, He secures for us a place in heaven and promises us that nothing can separate us from him eternally. That offer is open to anyone who will receive him. Jesus wants the best for us. So as Christians, it is in Jesus that we ultimately find our peace and our wellbeing.

And we journey with Jesus in everything that we do. We carry Jesus with us throughout our lives: when we are connecting, when we're being active, taking notice, learning and giving. So as Christians, we commit ourselves to prayer too. To remembering the presence of Jesus with us.

We're hoping to create something of this in our renew 57 space at Penrallt.

Following Ruth's model, we have space for people to bring quiet table-top hobbies and activities. We have free tea and coffee and toast. And we also have a prayer space. This is a separate room and completely optional. You can just go in and find some space in the prayer room, or at the beginning and the end of the session you can be led in a simple 5 minute prayer. Renew 57 is a place to come however you feel. Whether you feel ok, or whether you don't feel ok. It's usually Thursday mornings – but check the website [penrallt.org](http://penrallt.org).

Jesus calls us to seek to improve the wellbeing of everyone. To bless them. I wonder how can you bless someone today?

Well, I do hope that you're able to drop in at Renew 57 at Penrallt sometime. It'd be great to chat with you more. And whatever you do, do something for your wellbeing. And I pray that as you do this, you know something of the presence of Jesus and I pray that you know more and more of the heavenly blessing of God through Jesus in your life.

The University also has a 'well being team'. Details of that can be found at [www.bangor.ac.uk/studentservices/wellbeing/index.php.en](http://www.bangor.ac.uk/studentservices/wellbeing/index.php.en)

Shalom.