



From the
Community Co-ordinator :
Ian Ring

Lent 2013

Dear Friends

For many Christians Lent is a time for prayer, fasting, giving up food items we love or additional reading whilst for others it involves taking on something new. Lent focusses our minds on the time Jesus spent in the wilderness immediately after his Baptism. It was his time of final preparation for the ministry he was about to undertake. Forty days alone in the desert with out food and with only God for company. Matthew and Luke imply that it was at the end of these forty days that the Devil came and tempted Jesus to satisfy his bodily needs, test God, and achieve power by the wrong means. In all this he was being asked to focus not on God but on himself and on each occasion he responded by quoting scripture from the book we call Deuteronomy. Although we approach Lent from different perspectives there is much we can all learn from the story of Jesus' time in the wilderness as recorded for us in Matthew 4 vv 1-11 and Luke 4 vv 1-13.

Firstly prior to embarking on a significant and challenging experience Jesus spent time alone with God. If the Son of God felt this to be crucial so should we, yet so often we embark on grand projects with only a brief prayer to seek God's blessing on our plans. We should spend time seeking God's plans for us rather than submitting ours to Him. Secondly the intense experience of fasting and concentrated time with God in prayer left Jesus vulnerable to temptation. This should not surprise us, the body was weak through lack of food and we are most susceptible to temptation when we are close to God because it is then that the Devil sees his plans being thwarted. Finally in response to the Devil Jesus quoted Deuteronomy. We should know our scripture well because as Christians we need to be sure that everything we do is in accordance with God's will and the main way of doing that is to check whether our ideas are in accordance with scripture. The fact that Jesus was quoting from what we call the Old Testament, which was the only Scripture available to him, confirms its place in our lives.

So what about Lent 2014. Firstly we should make time to be with Jesus, to study the word of God in Old and New Testaments and pray for a revelation of God's will for us. We should expect some of the ideas that come to us to be of God whilst others are of the Devil and we need to test them all against Scripture to see which are of God. We should pray for the world and at the moment Ukraine, Crimea, Syria, Israel and Palestine should be high on our prayer lists along with poverty, injustice and oppression. Please also pray for God's will to be done through you and each one of us.

Yours
Ian Ring
