

WEEKLY SERMON

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Share your losses with a trusted listener

As I write this, the Covid rate in the area is still rising and has led to a slowing of the release of restrictions and words of caution from the media. For schools in our diocese this is another change in the yo-yo journey to restriction-free education.

The latest guidance to schools in our area feels very much like a precursor to another loss of experiences and opportunities for families and children.

The summer term is usually a term of occasions of celebration and often involves the drawing together of the community around key events and activities. There are usually summer fairs, sports days, celebration services and, of course, Y6 leavers' services.

It was with great sadness that schools realised that these opportunities that had been missed previously would again be disrupted and that parents and the community would again miss out. For the loss of each of these events we experience a form of grief. Not the deep hurt from the loss of a loved one of course, but the strong feeling that something has been lost that cannot be regained.

In speaking to children of various ages about their experiences of restrictions, it is these lost moments that weigh heaviest on their hearts. Things like missing out on a prom at high school and the leavers' disco at primary are two examples of the many occasions children will lament.

One of the Old Testament readings for this Sunday, depending on which thread churches are following, is taken from 2 Samuel and contains the lament of David over the death of Saul and Jonathan.

It is an impassioned tribute to the loss of dear friends but also offers us a way to process both the big losses and the smaller ones. David speaks out. He talks of the loss and what it means to him. Too often in this country we simply think we need to get on with it ourselves and not make a fuss, but we know that talking about things we find difficult or hurtful is a good way forward.

So, as you read this, I would encourage you to share your losses, whether big or small. Perhaps not in a poem like David, but with a trusted listener and of course with God. As David reminds us: *God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Ps 46:1*

Stephen Whittaker,
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