

The importance of personal relationships - with friends, family ... and Jesus

I'm a big fan of WhatsApp – the social media messaging platform that allows a group of people to keep in touch with ease via text, pictures and videos.

I'm in numerous WhatsApp groups – both family and work-related.

One group consists of several mates back in Glasgow I've known since school; I'm in another as part of my work for the Lancashire Committee of the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) and we also have a family WhatsApp group which helps me keep in touch with relatives young and old(er), near and far!

I'm also in a WhatsApp group consisting of blokes from my church. We use it to keep in touch, as well as sharing encouraging words and extracts from scripture.

It's amazing how something uplifting can land in your inbox at just the right moment – it's called God's Timing.

All this got me thinking ... would Jesus (and His disciples) have used social media if it was available to them? Would they have been 'WhatsApping' or something similar?

The answer is most probably yes – but unlike so much of social media these days it wouldn't have been all about Him. No Jesus selfies!

And while I'm sure Jesus and His disciples would have used social media to keep in touch and share updates, Jesus is also about the personal and that means meeting people in person, where they are.

These days it often seems to me that the advent of social media has led some people to forget (or, depending on their age, perhaps they never learn) how to be relational and meet face-to-face.

Do you remember the Bible story of Jesus performing a miracle and feeding the 5000? These days Jesus might have sent an invitation to the 5000 via social media – but he would still have performed the miracle and met people in person.

You may have noticed a couple of paragraphs back I used the present tense when I said: 'Jesus IS also about the personal'.

That's because, following His resurrection on the cross, Jesus is still very much alive and you can have a personal relationship with Him if you want to.

You can't get in touch via WhatsApp of course, but Jesus does want to know you and through Him you can have eternal life.

If that sounds like something you'd like to know more about, just visit www.blackburn.anglican.org/share-the-christian-faith for advice and information.

Now, if you'll excuse me, I need to check WhatsApp to see if my mate in Glasgow has sorted a date for our next get-together!

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