

WEEKLY SERMON

communicate@blackburn.anglican.org



Who has 'mothered' you? ...

Often, we hear the phrase spoken in tribute of someone that 'she was like a mother to me'; used to describe their loved one.

I heard this recently from a person who said that their Aunt had been like 'a mother' to them. This personally resonates with me as my Auntie was very much like a 'second Mum' to my brother and I when we were growing up. So, on Mothering Sunday I always remember my Auntie, my second Mum, with much love.

In reflecting on what being a 'mother' is and how we honour our own Mothers, I was reminded of those very special people in our lives who may not be our parents, but who have 'mothered' us by demonstrating their love and care. People who have been there for us, shaping and moulding us to be the people we have become.

We can see this played out in the Old Testament reading from Exodus 2.1-10, the story of Moses being found in the papyrus basket in the river. Pharaoh has decreed that all male Hebrew babies should be thrown into the Nile because the Israelites, by their growing number, were becoming a threat to Egypt.

Moses' mother has managed to keep the baby hidden, but as Moses reaches three months old, his mother makes a basket for him and places him in the river. It is a courageous but risky action; but she does this in order to try and save Moses' life.

Pharaoh's daughter arrives at the river to bathe and sees the baby whom she takes pity on; Moses' sister, watching what is going on, ingeniously says she knows a Hebrew woman who is able to nurse the baby.

Of course, this is the baby's own mother who takes back her child until he is weaned and grown up. Moses' mother would then give up her child again, this time permanently, so that he can be brought up safely as the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

In this story, the strong female characters have all 'mothered' Moses, from the Hebrew midwives who were letting the newborn male babies live, to Moses' sister and Pharaoh's daughter, as well as Moses' own mother. All have been instrumental in his survival, care, and nurture, often taking risks and making great sacrifices in order to save and preserve his life.

Let us today, honour those women who have, similarly 'mothered' us, giving thanks to God in gratitude for their courage, comfort, and care. We also give thanks for those who play a vital part in the young lives of those who are most vulnerable, who give their love and support where sadly there has been no one to 'mother' them.

Rev Karen Herschell

Hurst Green and Mitton (in plurality with) Ribchester St Wilfrid

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