

Lean On Him

We recently had a very wet weekend. All morning, the rain had been lashing down and the forecast for the rest of the day was heavy rain and lightning, so we had given up hope of getting out for a walk. Luckily, a bit later on, there was a break in the cloud, and so, armed with our wellies, we headed out.

We were very glad that we had taken the opportunity when it came. On this particular occasion, we went to the National Trust woodland at Alderley Edge. We love the beauty of the landscape here; enormous beech trees, woodland streams, and fantastic views across to Manchester. It's not difficult to be reminded of the wonder of nature.

As we walked along, we saw what appeared to be a dead and fallen tree. The trunk of the tree lay horizontal along the earth, looking old, rotten, and lifeless. However, when we looked skywards, we noticed that the trunk of the tree continued to grow upwards, supported by a careful prop and that right at the top were fresh new branches and green leaves. It seemed incredible that such a dead-looking tree could have continued to produce new life. Somehow the tree had managed to retain some intact roots and, with some support, it had overcome its hopeless situation and had been enabled to carry on growing. It reminded us of the enduring power of nature and of God's love.

There are many examples of perseverance in the natural world, from plants such as cacti which can survive with hardly any water, to plants such as gorse which can regrow after being completely burned to the ground. There are also those plants which persevere, even when we wish they wouldn't, like the weeds which keep springing up around the patio, no matter how many times we try to dig them up!

It isn't always easy to keep going or to keep trusting God, especially when we might feel worn out or disheartened. The Bible reminds us, "Those who trust in the Lord for help, will find their strength renewed" (Isaiah 40: 31). When we take the time to look, there is inspiration all around us.

God is there to support us, like that prop, if we make space and open our eyes and ears to the support and hope that He provides, directly or from those around us. "For God has said, 'I will never leave you; I will never abandon you'" (Hebrews 13: 5).

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