

Attending to God: Discipleship in a small planet

When God in Christ entered his own creation, he was underlining the covenant made with Noah in Genesis 8 and 9. An ecological covenant, that gave humankind God's blessing to enjoy the fruits of the earth, but laid a responsibility on us all to take care of this planet.

In the past half-century we have seen an energy crisis, the effects of global warming, the burgeoning of debt and the onset of terrorism as factors which seem almost to be spinning out of control. Yet as Christians we worship a God to whom we pray for our daily bread and our well-being.

And in February the General Synod called upon the Church of England's members to make "care for creation, and repentance for its exploitation" fundamental to "their faith, practice and mission". Repentance means a change of direction, and an important part of the way we follow Christ will emerge from the decisions we take about the future of our planet.

Such a change of direction will not only involve individual lifestyles, but the way we do things at corporate and global levels too. Economics, which is another word for 'housekeeping', will become as much a part of our discipleship as matters we now regard as essentials of faith.

All this is part of our worship which, as we saw last month, extends far beyond the ceremonies of the Church and into the things in life to which we assign worth and value. Yet the very idea of worship is strange to many people and many in church find it a difficult idea to handle.

So in the coming months we shall look further at worship. What does it mean, where do we find it, how do we play our part and contribute to it? And who do we worship?

**Elizabeth Goodridge and Ian Yearsley
conclude their series on discipleship.**

Strong Woman vs. Woman of Strength

A strong woman works out every day to keep her body in shape ...
but a woman of strength kneels in prayer to keep her soul in shape.

A strong woman isn't afraid of anything ...
but a woman of strength shows courage in the midst of her fear.

A strong woman won't let anyone get the best of her ...
but a woman of strength gives the best of her to everyone.

A strong woman walks sure footedly...
but a woman of strength knows God will catch her when she falls.

A strong woman wears the look of confidence on her face ...
but a woman of strength wears grace.

A strong woman has faith that she is strong enough for the journey ...
But a woman of strength has faith that it is in the journey that she will become strong.