



**COMMON
GROUND**

In this edition Stephen Taylor writes our leading article. It also appears in the magazines of Bromley Methodist Church & Bromley URC

Dear Friends,
The end of another year has arrived. We look backward. We look forward. We evaluate the past year to determine if we did everything we planned to do. We wonder what the New Year will bring.

Did we miss it again?
Did we miss an opportunity with our family?
Did we miss the opportunity to show our family how much we love them? We promised we would. We started the year with grand ideas of what we were going to do, but work, recreation and other 'distractions' kept us away more that we were home. We missed it again.

Did we miss an opportunity with friends?
We were going to visit our friends this year. We talked about it. They invited us to visit. We set aside time and money. Then, something happened (we can't remember what it was) that cancelled the visit. The year is ending and we never got together. We missed it again.

Did we miss an opportunity to show kindness?
This year began with plans to help someone and do something kind for them. We talked about it. We even prayed about it. We had everything in place to really do something meaningful. But, we never did it. We missed it again.

Did we miss an opportunity to share Jesus?
When the year began we made a commitment to share Jesus with at least one person. We read a book on how to do it. We attended a Bible study at church that gave us instruction on what to say and what not to say. We had the perfect opportunity to mention Christ, but we didn't. We missed it again.

Did we miss an opportunity to live better?
As the clock struck midnight twelve months ago we promised God and

made a personal commitment to stop that unhealthy habit — eating too much, viewing inappropriate material on television or the internet, smoking, drinking, doing drugs. By midnight the next day or the day after or the next week or ... we had blown it. We missed it again.

Not very encouraging stuff is it? Life is like that sometimes. We tally up the score of how we've lived and realize there are more negatives than positives. We don't feel very good about life and how we've handled it. We missed the mark again. We were going to pray more, to read our Bible more, to act in kinder way toward others, and to live a more pure life. But we missed it.

Don't give up. There is hope. We are on the verge of another year. Tomorrow is a new day. There is still time in this day. You can start over ... right now!

If you do find yourself feeling somewhat less than thrilled with your performance over the course of the last year, maybe Paul's words from Colossians 4 as you enter into a new day, a new year, a new opportunity will be helpful to you:

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.
Colossians 4:2-6

Though you may have missed it last year, there is no reason you have to miss it next year. Give it another try. Shalom – Salaam – Peace.

Stephen Taylor