

## Attending to God

DISCIPLESHIP - Engaging with the world

Members of a congregation were once asked to mark on a map where they were at 10am on Sunday, Monday and Saturday. All the dots clustered on the Church for Sunday, but were scattered far and wide on Monday, while Saturday's dots identified all the centres of leisure, sport and shopping.

Belief in a God who created all that is and loves it, and who expresses his solidarity with us by sharing our human experience in Jesus the Christ, implies that life on Monday and Saturday is every bit as important as what we do on Sundays. So, discipleship matters.

In the past the emphasis has been on ministry and its associated training, which focuses mainly on the nurture, development and leadership of the church. Discipleship, the way people follow Christ in their lives, has been seen as second-best, or merely as a preparation for ministry.

So, as a starting point for thinking about discipleship, a report called 'Formation for Ministry in a Learning Church' may sound unpromising. But this Church of England Report, known as the 'Hind' report and involving also the Methodist and United Reformed churches, has set in motion talks about 'Education for Discipleship'. And discipleship means the way Christians respond to Jesus Christ. It is about the way in which they serve God and his mission in the everyday world.

A 'learning church' needs to explore what it means to concern ourselves with God's world, its creation and its redemption. Education for discipleship includes the aim that disciples should be more Christ-like. And in this process, they should become more effective as signs of God's kingdom.

And what signs they can be! Individually, and as the church at large. Ministry may focus on the church gathered together, but discipleship means the church in action, spread throughout the community.

*Elizabeth Goodridge and Ian Yearsley*

### **How much does God love you?**

If God had a refrigerator, your picture would be on it.

If He had a wallet, your photo would be in it.

He sends you flowers every spring and a sunrise every morning.

Whenever you want to talk, He'll listen.

He could live anywhere in the universe, and He chose your heart.

What about the Christmas gift He sent you in Bethlehem;  
not to mention that Friday at Calvary?

Face it, He's crazy about you.

And always remember: God answers Knee-Mail.