

Worship and status

Status is important in today's world, but what do we mean by status? The Oxford English dictionary says that it is rank or social position in relation to others, relative importance, superior social or other position.

What gives people status is something that makes them feel more than others: more powerful, successful, important, richer in monetary and material terms. In many societies the way to go is up, making it to the top, gaining fame and fortune along the way. Those few that reach the top of their particular tree often find it rather hollow. Those that never have the opportunity or ability often spend their lives in awe or envy of those that have it all.

This is nothing new. In Jesus' time people were arguing over who was the greatest, even his followers began to compete with each other for who was the most important. There was the meal in the Pharisee's house where, as each guest arrived, they picked the best seat for themselves; they worshipped status just as many worship status today, and Jesus needed to remind them of the consequences.

Jesus, Son of God, has the highest status of all humans, yet he came to live among us and wash our feet like a servant. He shows us downward mobility, how to choose the last place. He tells us that if anyone wants to be first he must be the very last and the servant of all, and those who exalt themselves will be humbled; yet those who are last will be first and those who lose their life for his sake will find it.

Jesus chose powerlessness over power, and that is what he is offering us, if we accept it we will find greater riches than we have ever dreamed of.

**Elizabeth Goodridge and Ian Yearsley of Southwark Diocese
continue a series on worship.**

When raindrops keep falling on your head

One rainy afternoon a father was driving along one of the main roads in his local town, taking those extra precautions necessary when the roads are wet and slick. Suddenly, his young daughter spoke up from her position in the back seat. "Dad, I'm thinking of something."

This announcement usually meant she had been pondering some fact for a while, and was now ready to expound all that her six-year-old mind had discovered. Her father was eager to hear. "What are you thinking?"

"The rain," she began, "is like sin, and the windscreen wipers are like God wiping our sins away."

Taken aback, but intrigued, her father ventured: "The rain keeps coming down – what does that tell you?"

The little girl did not hesitate: "We keep on sinning, and sin all around us makes our path in life dangerous and slippery. But - if we keep going with God anyway, God just keeps on forgiving us."

Remember that next time you turn your windscreen wipers on.