

SILENT PRAYER MEETINGS?

All right – what exactly happens?
People do ask hard questions!

We have opportunities for Silent Prayer during most church services and often fail to notice them but, during Advent, at the lighting of the Advent candles, silence received particular emphasis. With the candle burning, these words were spoken: "We are quiet and we wait upon God". All of us in the congregation were being encouraged to take part in this Silent Prayer, simply waiting, listening and experiencing. It was a 'taster', as it were, of what happens at the Silent Prayer Group meetings and we could experience it for ourselves.

GOD is the best listener, you don't need to shout, nor cry out loud. Because he hears even the very silent prayer of a sincere heart.

If anyone wants to know what we actually "do" the answer is simple but sounds very banal. Bearing that in mind we'll risk it:

The group gathers together, sitting comfortably but attentively, and one member who has volunteered will draw our minds away from our everyday concerns with a quiet reading, perhaps a short poem, a paragraph from a favourite book, or verses from the Bible or they might play a snippet of music from a CD; anything which has been helpful to them and which they would like to share. We then sit in silence for about 30 minutes or so.

Each of us uses the time as seems suitable for us but being aware that we are simply waiting on God. We close our eyes if that is our custom for prayer or we steady our thoughts by focussing on a candle placed in the centre of the group (we could have a small cross or flowers or a picture). There is then music to bring us out of silence and we close, usually by saying the Grace together.

Afterwards we have a "cuppa" and biscuits and have the chance either to talk about something arising from the praying or just general chat.

Sadly, such a bare outline, though it says what we "do", cannot nearly describe what is happening – that needs us to "taste and see". When Sonia did a review of the group last autumn our feedback was very positive. Obviously, many folk practise silent prayer in private but it was encouraging to hear the view that silent prayer with others around us deepened and enriched what we had experienced. We warmly welcome all who feel they would like to "taste and see" for themselves.

Details:

Venue: The New Room at Oakwood Church

Next few dates: 28 January, 25 February and 25 March all at 14.00

***It is easy to contact Mary Brown (0113 265 0100),
Astrid Fielden (0113 273 5865) or Kathryn Fitzsimons (0113 225 6702).***

Sonia Kasibante is compiling a folder which is kept in the bookcase at the back of church and has examples of the readings etc. chosen to introduce some of our meetings. Please do feel free to take a look at it.