



Dunedin Methodist Parish

Finding Good in everyone Finding God in everyone

www.dunedinmethodist.org.nz

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PARISH BULLETIN

23rd SEPTEMBER 2012

WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY 30th SEPTEMBER 2012

9.30am	Mornington	Combined at Wesley
9.30 am	Mosgiel	Combined at Wesley
11.00 am	Glenaven	Combined at Wesley
10.00 am	Wesley	S. Pole / O Tanielu
1.00pm	St Kilda	Combined at Wesley
4.00pm	Broad Bay	Combined at Wesley

MORNINGTON WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

The September Meeting will take place on Wednesday the 26th of September - in the Church Lounge at 2 p.m. The Guest Speaker will be Mrs Gillian Vine - the subject - European Gardens. Please remember the Fellowship of the Least Coins. All Welcome.

If you are into reading & knitting you may like to read - "Knit One, Purl a Prayer". A Spirituality of Knitting by Peggy Rosenthal - you will find it in Dunedin Public Libraries - City Library - 1st Floor - at 248.88 ROS. In America there are a lot of Knitting Prayer Groups. I found this in a copy of Touchstone this year & suggested it for the Library

EXPLORERS GROUP

Will meet 4-30pm on Sunday 30th September in the Mornington Church Lounge. All welcome

WORLD DAFFODIL CONVENTION – SOUTH ISLAND NATIONAL SHOW



Friday 28th – Sunday 30th September at the Edgar Centre. Entry \$5.00 adults, children free. Friday – 2.00-5.00pm, Saturday – 10.00am-5.00pm, Sunday – 10.00am-4.00pm. Also includes South Island Camellia Show, Dunedin Horticulture Society Spring Show and South Island Bonsai exhibition.

COMBINED METHODIST SERVICE

Will be held on Sunday 30th September at Wesley Church, Hillside Road, Dunedin at 10.00am. This will be led by Rev. Siosifa Pole and the Vice President of the Methodist Church, Olive Tanielu, will give the Address. Following the service morning tea will be served and contributions of food towards this will be most appreciated. Thank you.

Story from the Mission

After progressing from being homeless to now residing in a flat client K is feeling much more settled and certainly a lot better about himself, so much so, that he has arrived at a place where he has asked for support to help improve his lifestyle by learning some basic self-care and household tasks. Up until he recently had no need to improve his lifestyle because he believed he wasn't worthy of anything better. His main interest and motivation over the years has been around obtaining alcohol and while this is still a feature of his day to day life he is now open to giving new things ago. One of his goals has been to learn how to use a washing machine so he can present himself in the community as "looking half pie decent". To assist him with this goal has been our 3rd year social work student. Over the last few weeks she has established a trusting relationship with K where he feels comfortable in receiving her support. It was such a pleasure to drive past his home last week to see his washing flapping around on his makeshift clothesline.



FEAU: A TONGAN CONCEPT OF COMFORT FOR A GRIEVED FAMILY

I am intending to ponder on this concept of comfort during a time of grief for any type of loss because of my experience of many deaths in the parish this year and also the death of my wife's youngest sister in the last two weeks. It is through the support of many people that our grieving family feel comforted. This feeling of comfort and encouragement denotes the notion of *feau* as a Tongan concept for peace during a time of a death.

Feau has a lot of meanings from Tongan perspective. There is no one single English word that could capture that whole meaning of this word. In general terms *feau* is used as a noun and it refers to “wholeness” or “self-sufficiency”. It reflects an experience of someone who is in the comfort zone. There is nothing to worry about, for everything is provided. However, in a funeral context, *feau* is using as a verb. It is a term that describes all the actions that have been done before, during and after a funeral in order to bring healing and wholeness to the grieved family. There are various terms in the English language that depict the meaning of *feau* in the Tongan context. These terms are; to comfort, to grieve with, to mourn and to weep with, to share the load with, and to share responsibilities with. It seems that all of these terms in one way or the other exhibit the nature of *feau* in the Tongan funeral, which gives comfort to the grieved family.

Because *feau* in the context of funeral is a verb, it could refer to every action that everyone offers to support a family during their time of sorrow because of a death of a loved one. *Feau* is not a once and for all action, but is a process that involves everybody. One of the obvious expressions of this process in a funeral is the actual participation. Any participation in any capacity at a funeral gives comfort and encouragement to the grieving family. Here are some of the participations that people provide in the process of *feau*; contributing food, providing financial assistance, serving the visiting families and friends, and taking part in cooking and providing food for visiting people. When I was in Tonga I saw people every day come with food, people who helped in cooking, those who were willing to offer financial assistance, and those who provide hospitality to the visiting guests. These actions demonstrated a communal participation as strength of the Tongan community, in order to ease the sorrow of the grieving family in their time of loss.

Being present in a funeral is a vital part of the *feau* process. Without being present there is no comfort. In the Tongan view point, the more people who come to your funeral the more comfort you may experience. It may cost a lot for a grieving family to feed a multitude of people coming to a funeral, but it cannot be compared to the peace and encouragement that they may receive from them. These concerned and caring people may come and go for five to ten days and they may put pressure on the grieving family but their presence affirms the support of the wider community. It reminds the grieving family that they are not alone in their sadness and sorrow. There are people who care to share with them by being present with them in their time of need. These people usually come with stories about their relationship with the dead person to share with the

family. As they share their stories they bring all the memories of the past, which connect the family and their loved one. This conversation and sharing certainly comforts the family in the midst of their despair.

In the process of *feau*, time is very unique. The significance of time for Tongans is not the same as for the Europeans. On one hand, the Europeans view time as something to be restricted and fixed. On the other hand, the Tongans view time as something is flexible. That means, it doesn't matter when to start or when to end any task, but when it is completed. Time to be with a grieving family in the eyes of the Tongans is so important for their wellbeing during the mourning period. Those who go and spend time with the grieving family usually stay for long hours, even days, or even weeks to offer support. This is an experience of those who have close relationship with the grieving family, either blood or friendship relationship.

The church plays a vital in providing pastoral care during the mourning period. It is a normal expectation for the minister and the whole church to be present to pray with the grieving family for days before the end of the mourning period. The mourning period is the three days after the burial. Spending time with the grieving family helps them to cope with their grief in a positive way. In the short time I was in Tonga, the minister and the church offered prayer and singing hymns and Christian songs with the grieving family every evening of the three days of mourning. These supports certainly helped the husband of the woman who died and the children to cope with the loss of a loved one that is so dear to them.

Feau is a Tongan concept of comforting a family who have experienced the loss of a loved one. I am sure this concept can apply to any culture and any context. The three important aspects of action, being present, and spending time, are important part of the role of those who offer care and support during any kind of loss. Evidently, these aspects can apply to other contexts. It was the action of our friends and families, your willingness to be present and to spend time with us that gave us comfort in our loss. These actions of kindness remind me the words of prophet Isaiah to a people who had lost everything except their God. "Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God." (Isaiah 40:1) *Feau* cannot be completed until God is involved in it, and I believe that it is through your thoughtful prayers that God gave Naomi and the family comfort during this time of mourning. Thank you for your action, for your presence, and your spending time with us in our sorrow.

Rev. Siosifa Pole