

## Don't just do something, sit there!

Extracts from 'God among the Ruins' by Mags Duggan (p72-74)

The word 'wait' is an important biblical word; it appears over 100 times in the scriptures and most of these references relate to waiting for God. Our patient waiting seems to allow God the opportunity to act, to respond, to speak, to renew our perspective, to restore courage, to rebuild hope in our hearts for the journey, to transform our lives and fulfil his purposes. So much happens in the waiting, through the waiting, so its perhaps not surprising that this theme of waiting seems to thread its way through the lives of the men and women who inhabit the Bible ...

Waiting involves the willingness to take whatever time it takes for whatever it is that God wants to reveal to us, to shape in us or in the lives of those we love and care about. Such waiting invites us into the landscape of trust and hope. We have to trust that the time spent waiting, the time of seeming inactivity, is worth it. We have to trust that the healing, the restoration of hope, the rebuilding of trust, or whatever it is that we long to see and which only God can accomplish for us, will take place as we wait patiently with God, for God, to act ...

Waiting may require patience, but it is not to be confused with passivity. One of the most common uses of the word 'patient' in the New Testament is rooted in the Greek word *hupomeno*, which has the connotation of bearing with, of actively enduring something until the endurance produced something worthwhile. Waiting on God in the places of our brokenness and confusion and distress is an intensely active posture which holds hope in place. In fact in Hebrew, the words 'wait' and 'hope' are often interchangeable ... So we wait and hope with the kind of anticipation the night watchmen of Psalm 130:5-6 feels as he waits for the morning sun to signal the end of the his watch. No matter how many hours of darkness he has to wait through, the watchman knows from experience that morning will come. He is alert to the danger of the night while every fibre of his being leans toward that coming dawn. His eyes have become practised in recognising any movement across the landscape outside the city walls, his heart practised at recognising the first ray of sunlight on the horizon.

This is how we are invited to wait for God – with longing, with expectancy, with alert awareness; our whole self straining to catch the earliest possible glimpse of this God who is guaranteed to come to use as surely as the dawn comes each morning, and with his coming brings hope and possibilities of transformation.

### Reflection:

We started off 'Deep calls to Deep' with the thought of tracing the rainbow through the rain – thinking about how God was on our case and pursuing us even before we were aware of it.

Spend some time this week, reflecting on some of the harder times and experiences you have faced, the waiting you have been through, and ask:

- What was God doing in those times?
- What did I discover about God during those times?
- What did I discover about myself during those times?
- How did God show up in those times?
- Did my relationship with God grow deeper or more distant as a result of those times?