



## Welcome



We recently conducted a survey with some of our Bible reading notes subscribers to find out how they came to be subscribers. A personal recommendation was cited most frequently as the catalyst: an enthusiastic family member, friend or church leader had first prompted them to try daily Bible reading notes for themselves. But what made the habit stick?

A revealing article by Jake Forquer

on LinkedIn cites a number of research papers which indicate that reading the Bible can have a whole range of positive outcomes. Jake writes:

‘By providing individuals with a sense of meaning and purpose, guidance and support, and spiritual wellbeing, the Bible can have a positive impact on mental health, relationships and overall wellbeing.’\*

And our Bible reading notes devotees agree: daily Bible reading brings a life-enhancing stability and purpose even on dull days, and sometimes even proves life-changing. Every subscriber will attest to moments when a Bible verse and commentary spoke directly into their situation in a moment of spiritual clarity or affirmation. So powerful are these moments that people often write to tell us about them. ‘The reading was just right for me today,’ they say, ‘Spot on!’

So I was particularly moved by this message, received just after Easter:

‘We were really touched by the Good Friday reflection this morning. We have a number of situations we have been praying for in our community and this was a very insightful encouragement. We have been using the notes for 40 years and have saved this email address so that we remember to feedback more in the coming years.’

If Bible reading notes have made a difference in your life, could you recommend them to someone: a friend, family member, colleague or acquaintance – or even a stranger whose path you happen to cross. As an encouragement to do so, we’re offering a free copy of the current (May to August) issue of our popular notes, *The Upper Room*\*. It could be a tiny gift with enormous potential to change someone’s life.

**Karen Laister**  
Head of marketing, communications and strategic relationships

\*Order at [brfonline.org.uk](http://brfonline.org.uk) and use code **UR100** at checkout

### JULY 2024

A gift to share

On the road for Anna Chaplaincy

Ears of wheat in the city

Transformation in Crawley

Finding Flourishing

and more...



## Fond farewell to Claire

We said a fond farewell to Claire Proudman in April, when she retired after 16 years. Claire joined BRF Ministries in 2008 as PA to Richard Fisher and Karen Laister and soon moved to become full-time PA to Karen. She had several different roles in the years that followed and was most recently in supporter services ‘with a lovely team of colleagues’. As Claire left for new adventures she said: ‘It’s been a privilege and joy to work here. Talking to our supporters every day, and sometimes hearing their stories of faith or challenges in life, has been so encouraging and rewarding.’ We thank Claire for everything she has contributed to BRF Ministries and wish her every blessing for whatever comes next.

## Pray with us...

Using this prayer from David Cole’s *The Celtic Year*\*

*As the light of summer surrounds us, may we know your Divine Presence, God of night and day. May we know the joy of you near us and lifting us. Amen*

■ Our prayer resources can be found at [brf.org.uk/pray](http://brf.org.uk/pray)

■ \*[brfonline.org.uk/the-celtic-year](http://brfonline.org.uk/the-celtic-year)

\* Jake Forquer, ‘Reading the Bible produces positive outcomes’, [linkedin.com/pulse/reading-bible-produces-positive-outcome-3min-read-jake-forquer](https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/reading-bible-produces-positive-outcome-3min-read-jake-forquer).

*Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us.*



# Hello from Julie and the fundraising team



Our heartfelt thanks to everyone who has supported our annual appeal. Every donation, large or small, is greatly appreciated and your generosity enables us to continue to deliver and develop our four ministries, impacting the lives of people of all ages across the country. There is still time to donate

to our appeal: you can give online at [brf.org.uk/donate](http://brf.org.uk/donate), post a cheque made payable to BRF Ministries or call our friendly fundraising team on 01235 462305.

Thank you also to all those who have become a Friend of BRF Ministries by making a monthly donation of £2 or more. A regular gift helps us to plan ahead which really does make a difference. We are reliant upon fundraising and gifts in wills to deliver our ministries and we are especially grateful to those who have remembered BRF Ministries in their will.

A gift of 1% or more in your will helps us to continue our work for future generations.

This year, we are celebrating the tenth anniversary of Anna Chaplaincy for Older People joining the BRF Ministries family. To highlight this important milestone, Anna Chaplaincy lead Debbie Ducille is planning a sponsored walk in the September to celebrate all the wonderful achievements and continued growth of this ministry. You can read more about her plans on the next page. If you would like to sponsor Debbie and support Anna Chaplaincy, please look out for details of her Just Giving page which will be published soon, or go to [brf.org.uk/give](http://brf.org.uk/give).

While enjoying the summer months we are busy planning our Christmas campaigns! Our range of Christmas cards, along with our popular Everyday cards is available to order now at [brfonline.org.uk/cards](http://brfonline.org.uk/cards) and your paper order form will be in the September issue of BRF Ministries News.

Sending very best wishes from Julie and the fundraising team.

Julie MacNaughton, MCIOf (Dip)  
Head of fundraising

## We think of you as a friend if...



BRF Ministries is built on relationships: a vast network of supporters, subscribers and volunteers; church leaders and ministry leads; writers and readers, speakers and facilitators; organisations and individuals who share our values and vision; staff, trustees and vice presidents. Without them, we wouldn't exist. We don't have a conventional 'Friends' scheme. Rather, we think of you as a Friend if you make any kind of regular gift to help support our work, no matter how small.

## Our friend Colin



Colin Bezant works for one of the 'Big Four' accountancy firms and is training to become a licensed lay minister. He decided to support our work about six years ago, having used our *Guidelines* Bible study notes since 2006:

'I was introduced to *Guidelines* through a reading scheme organised at our church. One of our parishioners was reading it and bought multiple copies for people: maybe four or five of us. Then she was poorly for a while, and I took out a subscription in my own right as I really liked the notes.'

Colin told us why he decided to support BRF Ministries beyond renewing his annual subscription:

'Two reasons. Obviously, one, I've benefited from this work. But then, along with my subscription to *Guidelines*, I get the magazines, the newsletters and see all the other initiatives, Anna Chaplaincy, Messy Church and so on, and they all look like good things. Also, it seems like BRF Ministries is reaching out to people who wouldn't otherwise necessarily be reached out to. I know some very big and successful churches that attract people to them, but it's also about how do you go out to people who have a need, but who can't necessarily come to you. So that's what appeals to me: those things just resonate with me.'

Become a regular giver: go to...  
[brf.org.uk/give/friends](http://brf.org.uk/give/friends)

# These boots are made for walking...

On 15 September 2024 Anna Chaplaincy lead Debbie Ducille will set out on a five-day, 60-mile hike from Alton in Hampshire, the birthplace of Anna Chaplaincy, to Abingdon in Oxfordshire, home of BRF Ministries. It's a way to mark the tenth anniversary of Anna Chaplaincy joining the BRF Ministries family, to spread the word about Anna Chaplaincy, meet up with network members along the way and raise vital funds for this growing and much needed ministry. There will be cake and Compeed and lots of companions on the trail. Debbie told us more:

'It's going to start with a service in Alton on Sunday 15 September, with our founder Debbie Thrower and end on Friday 20 September with a celebration in Abingdon. We hope to connect with as many Anna Chaplains and supporters as possible along the way.'

The hope is that many other Anna Chaplaincy supporters will organise fundraising walks in their own areas and 'walk alongside' Debbie as she heads north out of Alton and then east, following in part the Thames Path.

Debbie has done some walks of 20 miles or so in the past, but, she says, 'I've never walked in this way before. The distance is fine, but to walk day after day will be more of a challenge.'

To prepare for that challenge Debbie is walking regularly with a friend, Kate Arden-White, who will start out with

her from Alton. Whatever the weather, however rough the tracks, Debbie is most looking forward to meeting people who support Anna Chaplaincy. 'We say that Anna Chaplaincy is a "ministry of presence" and this walk reflects our core value that "we don't walk alone", literally or spiritually. And I'm looking forward to the walk itself, the beauty of the trail.'

'I really hope this is something the whole Anna Chaplaincy network will get behind, virtually, physically; praying that we get maximum coverage and raise as much money as we possibly can. If that happens, it will be well worth a few blisters!'

**If you would like to sponsor Debbie and support Anna Chaplaincy, please look out for details of her Just Giving page which will be published soon, or go to [brf.org.uk/give](https://brf.org.uk/give)**



## Staying in Alton!

Kate Powell is today's Anna Chaplain in Alton and she writes a regular column – 'Growing old gracefully' – for the *Alton Herald*, introducing some of the older people in the community and celebrating their varied and always fascinating stories. Recently she met David Chuter, 96, a retired farmer. 'I loved farming', says David, 'and I loved my four children and especially enjoyed the bedtime routine of bathing the boys, reciting their times tables, reading at least two stories and then going back out to milk the cows.' Still healthy, still driving and still gardening for clients, David hopes that if a time comes when he can no longer manage on his own he will move in with family: 'Being part of a household filled with a younger, forward-looking generation would give me hope the future will carry on even when I'm gone.'

**Read more of Kate's stories in the Anna Chaplaincy blog: [annachaplaincy.org.uk/blog](https://annachaplaincy.org.uk/blog)**



Debbie Ducille (right) and Kate Arden-White (left)



# Nothing less than transformative!

There's a close synergy between the work of BRF Ministries' Parenting for Faith team and the nationwide network of church children's and family workers. At the beginning of 2020 we were delighted to publish *The Essential Guide to Family Ministry* by Gail Adcock, family ministry development officer with the Methodist Church of Great Britain. Four years later Karen Laister, our head of marketing and communications, met Denise Beer at the Hand in Hand conference. Denise had an extraordinary story to tell about the impact Gail's book was having on her church in West Sussex. As children and family worker at Crawley Baptist Church, Denise was more than happy to share her story.

'Crawley Baptist Church (CBC) has always been a family church,' Denise says, 'ever since it was founded in 1865. All the old, black and white photographs show that, and we've been blessed with families ever since.' But like many churches, post-pandemic, CBC struggled. 'Our church, our community, was very different. As a town, Crawley was hit very hard and not everyone came back.'

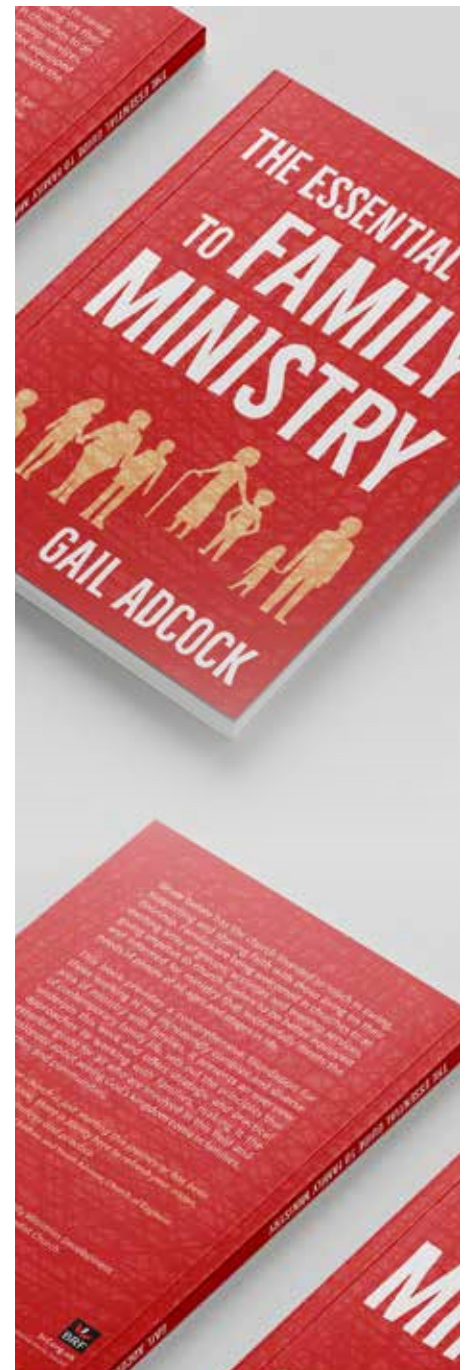
Denise and her colleagues did an exercise to work out how many children and young people were attending various groups during the week and on Sundays, and where they were coming from: church families or the wider community. It turned out most of the children were coming from the wider community. 'Our community families – 187 of them – were saying "this is our church", but they might only be going to the parent and toddlers group, or the young people might only be going to the youth group. Then our local primary school asked if they could grow a partnership with us. There was so much to process, we ended up thinking, how do we "do church" in this community?'

And then Denise made a well-timed trip to the Christian Resources Exhibition and came away with a copy of *The Essential Guide to Family Ministry*.

'I started to read it but had to stop because I thought, this is BIG! I need some help here.' So she and a colleague created a little team and bought copies for everyone. They spent six months reading, journaling and discussing. 'And you won't be surprised that God seemed to be saying something similar to all of us: we needed to change and we needed to focus on this community congregation and how do we get this community and the Sunday congregation together.'

'It challenged us theologically because it made us realise that family ministry isn't just about a little group of families from primary school, it's about the whole church and it's about people's lives from conception to death.'

The church leadership is currently in a state of transition, but Denise and her group have drafted a presentation based on their work with Gail's book. 'I really want to say thank you to Gail, because she's basically going to change the life of this church!' Watch this space!



Order the book here: [brfonline.org.uk/family-ministry-guide](http://brfonline.org.uk/family-ministry-guide)



## Olympic lessons

What can we learn from the Olympics? How can sport be a helpful tool as we disciple the young people in our lives? Parenting for Faith's article 'Learning from the Olympics' helps you think through these and other sporty questions.

Go to [parentingforfaith.brf.org.uk/learning-olympics](http://parentingforfaith.brf.org.uk/learning-olympics) for four helpful ideas to consider

Two Parenting for Faith podcast episodes also focus specifically on sport, with guest Richard Shorter – a Baptist minister and elite sports executive. They are: season 8, episode 7 and season 4, episode 6. Search 'Parenting for Faith' wherever you get your podcasts.

# Messy Church Goes Wild in the shadow of the O2 Arena!

If you think Messy Church Goes Wild is just for rural churches, think again. On the smallest pocket of land between the O2 Arena and the entrance to the Blackwall Tunnel, Messy Church lead Aike Kennett-Brown's own Messy Church has been growing wheat!

They meet on the first Wednesday of every month after school and none of the families come to Sunday church: 'It's a totally different group of people, very international, a lot of single-parent families. A lot of them have no garden and maybe not even a balcony, and many of them have never grown anything before. We thought it would be really fun to explore Easter through growing wheat, based on Jesus' saying in John 12:24: "Very truly I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds." So we wanted to live that out.'

The first challenge was sourcing the seeds: 'Getting hold of wheat, unless you want two tons of it, is really hard!' Eventually Aike tracked some down and they planted it in two raised beds. 'It's quite a process because we had to level off the ground and scatter the seed, then we put a layer of soil on top and then we covered it with cardboard and the kids jumped up and down on it to bed the seed in.'

When, in time, the green shoots began to appear Aike was concerned she'd bought the wrong seed: 'It just looked

like grass!' But when they came back after the summer holidays they had two beds of wheat (as well as the tomatoes, courgettes and pumpkin they were also growing).

They harvested their crop at the first meeting of the new term, snipping it with shears and scissors. In October they threshed it – 'some of the lads really got into that!' – then winnowed it. In November they ground it in pestle and mortars, and even a pepper grinder, and ended up with a small box of flour. 'That was a real eye opener for everybody. It made us realise how difficult it is to grow food and the volumes you would need to really feed yourself.'

The whole project culminated in cooking dampers round the fire pit, made with their very own wheat flour. 'We looked at the story of Jesus' saying "I am the bread of life" as we cooked dampers and shared the bread together.'

For Aike, the project was a joy: 'The look on the kids' faces when they saw the things they'd grown! And it's made them more eco-aware as well. They appreciate so much more what it takes to grow food and how we need to care for the planet.'



Find out more about Messy Church Goes Wild at [messychurch.org.uk/goeswild](https://messychurch.org.uk/goeswild)

## Messtival: calming the storm!

Our online Messtival gathering in the spring was a great success, beginning with a Bible reflection and craft activity based on Jesus calming the storm and ending with a symbolic setting sail in paper boats named after participants' Messy Churches.

In between, the morning sped by with a wonderful range of workshops, a lot of learning and sharing, and a great deal of fun. As people launched their boats in bowls of water, they remembered how Messy Church is precarious and vulnerable at the best of times, but unless we dare to set sail, God can't use us as part of his rescue plan for the world.

We want to say a huge thank you to all who made Messtival possible, and to the Messy Church leaders and teams who joined us. A few sent in feedback:

*'Thank you for this wonderful morning – it was really inspirational and brilliantly organised.'*

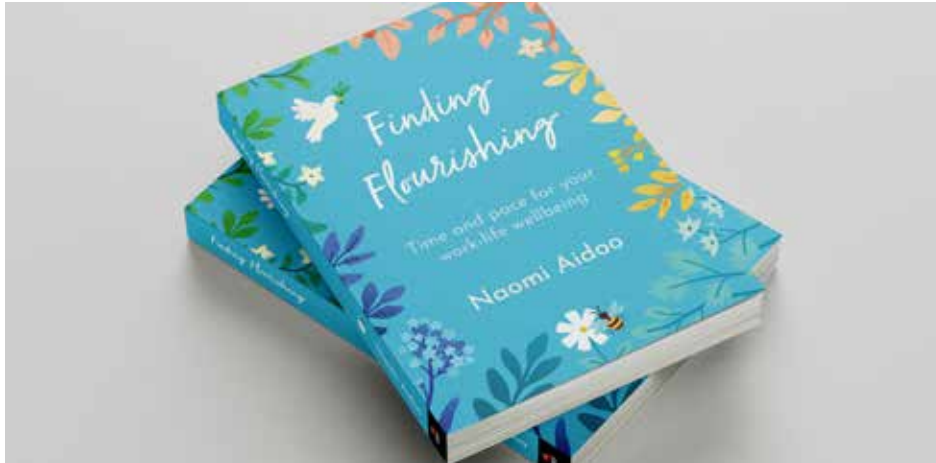
*'It was an excellent morning – very useful and most enjoyable. I feel blessed and have some great ideas to ponder on.'*

*'We came away informed, enthused and feeling part of a big Christ-centred Messy family.'*

Look out for upcoming Messy Church events here: [messychurch.brf.org/messy-events](https://messychurch.brf.org/messy-events)



# Finding Flourishing



**Naomi Aidoo introduces her thoughtful and thought-provoking new book about the true nature of wellbeing: *Finding Flourishing: Time and pace for your work-life wellbeing*, published on 19 July 2024.**

All too often, the idea of wellbeing and work are pitted against each other as though our work can't be a part of our holistic health and indeed, our wellbeing. Given this false dichotomy, the notion of work-life balance is tirelessly shared and with

that comes a striving to obtain it. But what if obtaining work-life balance isn't meant to be the ultimate goal? What if, instead, God would have it that we flourish and thrive in all areas of our lives and that doing so contributes to our wellbeing, whether at work or play?

This is what my book *Finding Flourishing* seeks to explore.

A lot of books and podcasts on wellbeing are centred on what we've been conditioned to think about when we hear that word: massages, manicures and mindfulness. While there's nothing wrong with any of these, our wellbeing is about so much more.

One of my favourite verses has long been John 10:10, which says: 'The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.' Life to the full! God doesn't only show up when we're in prayer or on mission. He's interested in every aspect of our lives and so why would he not be interested in our wellbeing as something holistic, not divided and compartmentalised?

When I saw little about God's perspective on wellbeing in the resources and content already available, I decided to write *Finding Flourishing*. Because 'wellbeing' often comes up as a theme in 'new age' and 'alternative' spaces, I think Christians may tend to shy away from it, rather than exploring what God might have to say about it.

As a working mum who most certainly finds a sense of purpose and satisfaction in my work, as well as in my family, *Finding Flourishing* is rooted in the TIME framework I've created to explore my belief that our goals and intentions have just as much to do with our wellbeing as our rest and relaxation. I firmly believe God thinks so too!

■ To order go to: [brfonline.org.uk/finding-flourishing](https://brfonline.org.uk/finding-flourishing)



Bible notes to give away!

*The Upper Room* subscriber David Scaling wrote to us and his story was so moving we asked for his permission to share it. Happily, he agreed:

'For years I've subscribed to two copies of *The Upper Room*. One copy is for me, one copy was for my mum. Mum left us in 2018 at the age of 91 to be with her Lord. I continued to order two copies though. When Covid arrived in 2020, our small village chapel stopped meeting. We are small in number and old in age. Very faithful people though. Of course there were online services available but one of our congregation, a 97-year-old farmer had no internet or computer. I rang him every Saturday night. As he was getting no Christian fellowship or material, I asked him if I could send him the spare copy of *The Upper Room* which Mum had previously used. He said yes so I posted it to him. I called him a couple of days later to see if he'd received it. It had arrived the previous day and he'd read it already! I explained that you're really supposed to read one reading per day! Bless him. He said he'd never had anything like this in his life! My friend went to be with his Lord in September 2023, a couple of months after his 100th birthday. He had his 100th birthday party and received his card from the King! Now he's at home with his King!'

## Give a gift that changes lives!

To get a free copy of *The Upper Room* to give away go to a family member, friend or somebody new to faith, use the code **UR100**

As a charity, we rely on fundraising and gifts in wills to deliver Anna chaplaincy, Living Faith, Messy church and Parenting for Faith. Your gift helps us impact thousands of lives each year. Please support our work.

[brf.org.uk/give](https://brf.org.uk/give) +44 (0)1235 462305



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