



Monthly Reflection, September 2014

New year, new beginnings

I didn't really enjoy school, but one thing I did get excited about at the beginning of each new year was the prospect of a nice clean exercise book. I always pledged to keep it neat and tidy and use my best handwriting. It was a chance to make a new beginning. Study harder, get better results and all in all be an ace student! Of course by week two, my new book was as scruffy as my old one and I had slipped back into my old routine of scrawly handwriting, and homework done at the last minute!

A lot of school work is done on computer now but a new school year still affords us the opportunity to start again. It offers us a chance to renew our commitment to one another and to God, to give our best, in our studies, our friendships and our prayers. It gives us a chance to begin again. To renew our determination, not just to think about ourselves but about the wider world. For many of us, who are well beyond our school years, the start of a new term does mark the start of a new season. It perhaps serves as a reminder to help The Children's Society in their endeavours to offer every child the opportunity to be nourished, to be safe and to learn. To bring every child hope that their circumstances can change, that they aren't forgotten.

Making a new beginning isn't just about trying harder, or even working harder. God wants us to have fun as well. God wants to bless us through our friends, to refresh us through Scripture and to renew us as we take time out from our everyday life to enjoy the things that excite us. It's hard not to get ground down by daily life. It's hard to keep the sense of anticipation a new school year can bring. Tiredness creeps in. Anxiety hovers over our work. For many in our country just finding enough food, let alone a clean uniform will be a struggle that takes all their energy and all their strength. So how can they and we refresh our sense of purpose each day and feel upheld by God?

Jesus knew about busyness. Healing, and teaching about the Kingdom, he got exhausted. So early in the mornings he would find a quiet spot and pray. Amidst all the rush he knew he needed to step aside to recharge his batteries, and renew his relationship with his heavenly Father.

Maybe as a new school year gets under way, we could follow Jesus' example. Perhaps we could make a moment each day to pray. Perhaps choose one of the prayers for this month and pray it ourselves each morning, to remember especially children for whom a new school year is not a time of excitement but one of dread.

As we say the Lord's Prayer with others or on our own, may we all know God's refreshing Spirit in our lives and be renewed day by day as we begin again and again.