

Shapes for Living

Week 5 Growing. Roots and purpose

What comes to people's minds where they think of the word 'growing'?

Gardening?

Work or business?

Grandchildren?

Trust, love, commitments – relationships/community?

Others ...

These are quite varied uses of the word 'growing'

Choosing one at a time, invite the group to think of what each needs if it is to grow and flourish.

Reflection: Viktor Frankl survived a concentration camp in the Second World War, and became a pioneering psychotherapist.

He noticed how some people survived much better than others in those camps. It wasn't that they were physically stronger, more popular, more cunning, powerful, intelligent – or just lucky ...

He noticed that those who survived better had a sense of inner meaning or purpose – something to live for, beyond themselves. Frankl found that people could do this in even the most difficult circumstances.

He spent his life developing this theory which he called *Logotherapy*.

Here are three quotes from his writings:

"Life is never made unbearable by circumstances, but only by lack of meaning and purpose."

"Forces beyond your control can take away everything you possess except one thing, your freedom to choose how you will respond to the situation."

“We who lived in concentration camps can remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms -- to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way.”

How do the group respond to Frankl’s idea?

Have they noticed the same in others?

Is that their experience?

‘Bloom (Grow) where you are planted’ is a quote attributed to Saint Francis De Salles, Bishop of Geneva (1567-1622) that has been used by poets – and even garden centres. It is about taking advantage of the opportunities in your life where you are, being grateful for the present situation and what it offers.

Ask the group

In your life at the moment – what does it mean to ‘grow where you are planted’?

Where are you planted at the moment?

What are the challenges to growing and flourishing?

What are the opportunities in your life at present to grow and flourish?

What sense of meaning to do you have in your life – where is your life rooted?

Some thoughts to take away....

Growing is about continuation and change. As you complete this course, think about how you might continue the journey it has set you on – to continue growing in grace to become the person God wants you to be; to not be afraid of change. Explore the themes further – one or more may have resonated more than the others – this is God speaking to you.