**Just a thought …**

…from Major David Betteridge, Director of Family Ministries

‘Many people long to know God personally, but imagine him to be a remote, impersonal being who cannot be known. Others yearn for a relationship with him but cling to the misconception that he sits in Heaven wearing a black suit and twisting his long beard as he glares down seeking to judge anyone who dares to smile on a Sunday.’ (Floyd McClung Jr, *The Father Heart of God*)

The Scriptures teach us that God is a loving Heavenly Father to us all and that he longs for us to know and feel secure in this relationship.

Bad experiences of an earthly relationship with others can colour our view of God as a Father but they do not change the truth of who God really is.

By God’s grace we can journey towards an intimate understanding and experience of God and his love for us. By that same grace we can come to a place where we accept that we are dearly loved children of God and he is a perfectly loving Father to each of us personally.

**Seven Scripture verses that reveal this father heart of God**

John 1:12-13:

‘Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God – children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.’

Ephesians 1:4-6:

‘For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will – to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.’

Galatians 3:26-27:

‘So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.’

Galatians 4:4-7:

‘But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “*Abba*, Father.” So you are no longer a slave, but God’s child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir.’

Romans 8:14-17:

‘For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “*Abba*, Father.” The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.’

Matthew 7:9-11 (*NLT*):

‘You parents – if your children ask for a loaf of bread, do you give them a stone instead? Or if they ask for a fish, do you give them a snake? Of course not! So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him.’

1 John 3:1-2:

‘See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.’

**Father’s Day Prayer**

Written by Captain Gary Lacey, Territorial Prayer Co-ordinator

Father,

You are amazing!

When I look at you, I see your father’s heart. I feel your fatherly love, and your fatherly touch strengthens me.

I thank you for the example you give as a father to us – an example that teaches us how to be fathers in this world to our own dependants.

Here, now on Father’s Day, bless us deeply as we allow your heart to touch our own families.

Help us to receive and to share your love in this world so that many will see and experience the Father’s love in abundance.

Thank you, Jesus,

In your name.

Amen.