

Talk: I am the vine

I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. – John 15:5

In this world of Facebook and Instagram and all the other social media platforms, whatever you might think of these ways of communicating with each other, one good thing to emerge, has become very clear – that it's important for us to be connected with each other. But I've got a news flash for you! Social media didn't think of it first! Actually, it was – you guessed it – Jesus!

But we were not created to be self-sufficient. We were created to live connected to God the Son and to each other. Let me read to you a bit from the Bible, from John chapter 15...

"...If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

The important bit here is where it says, 'remain in'. But what does that mean? Well, how about this? "If you stay at home in me and I stay at home in you, you will bear much fruit." Jesus needs to become so much a part of our daily living, that when you hang out with him, it feels like you're home. Talking to Him becomes like talking to your best friend. Being with Him becomes as comfortable as being at home sat in your favourite armchair.

And by spending more and more time with Jesus, we gradually become more like him, bearing good fruit like compassion, caring, willing to stand up for the underdog and fight for justice, loving, kind... We do all of this by simply spending time with Him. Bearing fruit then just happens — because it's ultimately His fruit, not ours.

To make this point even stronger, Jesus says the same thing, in a different way: There is nothing we can do in terms of bearing fruit by ourselves. Nothing. Zero. Zilch! And we need to let that sink in because it will change us.

So, how do we practice remaining in... hanging out, with Jesus?

Here are four suggestions to get you going. Try one and see where it takes you:

If you need help using these resources, please contact: igniteenquiries@diocant.org

Find our Ignite resources: <https://canterburydiocese.org/ignite/ignite-resources>

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1. Before you go to bed each night, check out how your day has been. If we haven't been remaining in Jesus, then we were probably somewhere else less helpful — maybe anxiety, anger, fear, shame, ambition, whatever. Ask yourself, “*Where was I today?*” Then talk to Jesus about wanting to remain more in Him.
2. Remaining happens as we just start the day with a conversation with Jesus. This is called praying! It's nothing fancy – just a couple of minutes, chatting to Jesus. And if you can, try and read a few bible verses, maybe from Mark's gospel, 'cause it's fast moving and exciting. And ask Jesus, “*What are you saying to me?*” Jesus is always trying to speak to us, but often we don't take the time to listen.
3. Take some time to regularly say thank you. Give thanks to God for what you have seen, then what you have heard, then what you have touched with your hands, where you've been to, what you have loved doing and what you have learned.
4. Finally, try and sit quietly for 5 minutes each day. Maybe practise the meditation technique that we use here in Ignite... breathe in, breathe out... As thoughts come up, don't try to avoid them, or hold them. Just let them go. Be still. Gradually you'll begin to begin to notice more of Jesus' presence already alive in you.

And if you want to, you can say amen!