View from the Vicarage May 2018

The first part of Jeremiah 6 verse 16 says this

This is what the LORD says: "Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls….

As I reflect on these words, the point that I come back to time and time again is that the world seems intent on us not be able to find the time to ‘stand and look.’

The constant busyness, in schools the constant fear of Ofsted inspections, in business, the constant battle against falling profits, in our health service, the constant struggle to meet an ever growing demand, and indeed in our churches with priests being spread ever more thinly, we are seeing a work life stress that for many is becoming the norm.

In our home lives, the noise of the television, the demands of emails and phone calls, the constant battle of working parents, struggling to bring up their children, means that we seldom ‘stand at the crossroads and look’. As busyness grows in home and work lives, parents become stressed, children become stressed, and anger and aggression grows both within families and within our communities.

If you are not sure you agree with this, just look at the current mental health statistics, particularly those of children, where currently in America one in five children is said to have a diagnosable mental health issue.

How do we counter this as Christians? Jeremiah was a prophet writing in the 7th and 6th century before Christ, so some 2600 years ago, and yet in this one verse he sums up our need, and the solution, so neatly.

"Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls….

Unless we as individuals, as parents, carers and grandparents spend more time in quiet reflection, asking ‘where the good way is’, I suspect there will be very little rest for our souls.

With every blessing