

Do You Want To Be A S.T.A.R.?

In the story of Christmas, the Magi followed a star to find Jesus lying in the manger. Our hope is the people of Needham Market can make some simple lifestyle changes that might set them up on the same journey. These changes are designed to help us be more:

S Spiritual

T Thankful

A Activist

R Restful

Who knows where the Star can lead us all by next Christmas!

Spiritual

Human beings are made of more than just skin and bones. Invigorating our whole being is a soul, and this needs to be fed and exercised in order to grow. The simplest way to do this is by developing a relationship with God through reading the Bible and praying.

The Bible can be read as a book, or told through stories. If you have never read it before, or haven't read it for a while, we'd recommend starting with a Gospel (Matthew, Mark, Luke or John). There are many free Bible apps, which can help us to read whenever we have a spare moment, or even offer a verse for the day. Loads of suggestions come up if you use a search engine on the internet, or, if you prefer books, Church House Publishing, or Eden are good places to look for resources. Of course, Rev'ds Diane and Sarah also have their favourites and ideas, so feel free to ask!

We can pray (simply talking to God) at any time, and anywhere. Just work out a time or place which gives you space to think, and is something you do regularly enough to remind you to pray. Before you go to sleep? During breakfast? Out for a walk? You are only limited by your own imagination.

One of the advantages of going to church is that we are given readymade opportunities to both read the Bible and to pray. A car is a car whether it is in a garage or not, but it only fulfils its purpose when it is being driven. Just the same, you don't have to go to church to be a Christian, but being part of a church is the best place for a Christian to be. In the same way as a garage gives a car protection, servicing and fuel, so joining in with church allows God to protect us, MOT us, and give us fuel for life!

Thankful

When you knock over a glass, whatever is in it spills out.

It's the same with people – when we get 'bumped' into by other people or by life, what spills out of us?

The word and attitude of 'Thank You' are good things to have near the surface. Whether to family, or to people we simply meet, never miss the chance to say 'Thank You'. When anyone helps us or thinks of us, let us be quick to voice our gratitude. Especially in this time of pandemic.

When we say our prayers, let us first think of the ways we have been blessed and say 'Thank You'. One traditional way of doing this is through saying grace at mealtimes. Something like "For all your gifts, Lord Jesus, and those who help us, we thank you. Amen."

Activist

How can we make the world a better place?

One act of kindness at a time!

Whether one-off things or a conscious decision to change our lifestyle, let us commit ourselves to playing our part. How can we impact Global Warming, or avoid waste? How good are you at switching off lights or sorting out recycling? Saying 'Thank You' (see above), also fits in here as it brings joy into the lives of others. Supporting a charity (however small the amount) helps them to do good work on our behalf.

At the end of the day being practically active makes concrete the best of words and intentions.

Restful

In order to have the energy for doing the rest of the 'stuff' mentioned here, we need to make sure we are good at getting enough rest. Whether a good amount of sleep at night, or moments of 'switching off' throughout the day the human body (and brain) needs to recharge physically and emotionally.

Perhaps the greatest modern challenge to this comes with relationships with screens (especially handheld ones). Two of the advantages of living when Jesus did was that you got nowhere in a hurry, and when it got dark, you HAD to rest!

Perhaps life is designed to be lived at walking pace rather than going flat out all the time?

One thing Covid-19 has done for us is to force us to re-evaluate the way we live our lives, and what is important to us.

Let's use this opportunity to do just that. With God at the very centre of who we are and what we do.