

CREATING MARGINS

Making time for what's important in life

Meditation on Psalm 131

Psalm 131

¹ *My heart is not proud, O LORD, my eyes are not haughty; I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me.*

² *But I have stilled and quietened my soul; like a weaned child with its mother, like a weaned child is my soul within me.*

³ *O Israel, put your hope in the LORD both now and for evermore.*

David Powlison (2003) writes: 'This man isn't noisy inside. He isn't busy-busy-busy. Not obsessed or on edge. Pressures to achieve don't consume him. Failure and despair don't haunt him. Anxiety isn't spinning him into free-fall. Regrets don't corrode his inner experience. He's not stumbling through the minefield of blind longings and fears. He's quiet.' This is a Psalm 'of David'. Think of everything you know about the life of David. Was it a quiet life? Did he retreat from the world? Was it problem-free? This is a still and quiet heart in the midst of a fraught and busy life.

¹ *My heart is not proud, O LORD, my eyes are not haughty; I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me.*

Think of the opposite of verse one: 'My heart wants to be valued, I'm looking for recognition; I'm concerned to be great and do wonderful things.' Powlison (2003) says: 'Your biggest problem is proud self-will. That's the noise-machine inside you.' The desire for recognition, significance, achievement, to be valued and accepted – these are the noises in our hearts. Powlison (2003) asks: 'Are you quiet inside? Is Psalm 131 your experience, too? If your answer is No, what is the "noise" going on inside you? Where does it come from? How do you get busy and preoccupied? Why do you lose your composure? When do you get worried, irritable, wearied, or hopeless? How can you regain composure?'

² *But I have stilled and quietened my soul; like a weaned child with its mother, like a weaned child is my soul within me.*

Imagine a nursing child hungry for its mother's milk. She is grouchy, restless, irritable until she can suckle. One moment she can be chuckling happily on your lap. But once she wants milk, no amount of bouncing, singing or funny faces will calm her. If you try to hold her, she wrig-gles, cries and squirms. She shows anger, frustration, anxiety and jealousy. But David is like a weaned child who is no longer restless. David has weaned himself off the noises of his heart. He has shushed quiet the desire to justify himself; to control his life; to achieve glory.

³ *O Israel, put your hope in the LORD both now and for evermore. This is the secret of a still heart.*

In verse 1 David stopped hoping in himself. Instead he hopes in the Lord now and for ever. Often we can do 'for ever' – we have hope that God will save us on the final day. But what about 'now'? What about tomorrow in your work-place? What about the next time you want to prove yourself? What about when you face the next deadline? What about when you feel you have to make it up to God? Or when someone questions your commitment? Identify now the truths you will cling to in those moments.