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There is a common myth in some Christian circles these days, that the busier I am, the more effective I am as a Christian. The same myth can apply to local churches too, where the temptation can be strong to run a whole range of activities, which may be entirely worthy in themselves, so as to gain a positive reputation in the neighbourhood.

So the myth becomes established: "busyness", be it in a single Christian life or in a local church, becomes used as the major indicator of both spiritual "livingness" and spiritual effectiveness. Often linked to such busyness is its fellow-traveller, what we could call "hip-and-happening-ness"! - in which local Christian fellowships end up competing with each other over which of them is regarded as being the ultimate place to be. So, fashions come and go, the reputation of local churches can rise and fall for the flimsiest of reasons, and genuine, long-term commitment to any one local church becomes rare amongst the local Christians. This is hardly a healthy state of affairs!

The Lord Jesus knew much about this roller-coaster of popularity. At the start of His ministry the crowds could not get enough of Him. From a glance through the early chapters of Mark for instance, we clearly pick up the mood of bubble and excitement all around Him - how so, so easy it would have been for the Lord to be taken in by all this euphoria and start shifting His precious, Father-entrusted ministry away from its Source and towards these adoring crowds. After all, hadn't Satan at the start dangled this same carrot of quick popularity as the obvious road for Jesus to follow to achieve all His goals? (eg Luke 4.1-13 and parallels).

And then, surely coming as no surprise to Jesus, things changed. After spelling out to the multitudes, including the Jewish "movers-and-shakers", precisely who He was and what that was to mean in practice for all His hearers, we read these words - "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him" (John 6.66). For the first time there was a whiff of failure around Jesus, so much so that Jesus asked His inner circle if they too were going to abandon Him: to which Simon Peter blurted out his wonderful reply - "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (verses 67-68).

We notice that the Lord did not panic, or change tack, or turn to super-busyness. He carried steadily on with the vital ministry entrusted to Him by His heavenly Father, irrespective of the "crowd-count" each day. For the Lord, faithfulness was far more important than busyness or fickle popularity.

Christopher Columbus, on his long voyage westwards across the Atlantic, kept a daily journal, in which we gather that one of the most frequent daily entries is simply the words, "Today we sailed on". At first sight it appears that nothing happened on such a day, but that is quite wrong: on such a day the ship and all within her actually functioned perfectly! - and nothing needed to have been done any better. No wonder "Today we sailed on" said it all, and serves as a simple compliment to all concerned.

Here is a reminder that there is nothing wrong with us, or with our Christian faith or living, if our lives contain many "Today we sailed on" journal entries. Such entries actually suggest that each such day was lived as it should be under the Lord, with our getting steadily on with our Christian responsibilities faithfully, cheerfully and effectively. Any lack in the journal entry of either high drama or frenzied busyness is simply irrelevant.

We see from His own Gospel ministry that the Lord has no interest in mere busyness or crowd-pleasing efforts. What He seeks instead is our daily response to His simple call, "Come, follow me", whatever that following may turn out to involve.

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