

Christ Church West Wimbledon

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Sermon 27 March 2022

Mothering Sunday

Good morning everyone, it's lovely to see you all on this still quite bright and warmish March morning. And why are there more of us here than usual? Because it's Mothers' Day! Or, as many of the grown-ups here would prefer, it's Mothering Sunday. So what's the difference? I'll explain.

Hands up everyone here who has a mother – either here at church, or somewhere else looking forward to the time when they next see you? Ahh – you are the lucky ones. Lots more of us here no longer have mothers here on earth – a lot of our mothers got too old or ill to go on living, and had to die and go on to heaven. But that doesn't mean that we don't go on thinking of them with a great deal of love – thinking of all the things they gave us – giving us things like:

- love and affection, praise and reassurance and comfort when we were sad;
- an understanding of right and wrong, and how to say sorry when we had done something unkind or unfair;
- looking after us physically, providing food, warmth and a safe place to live; and
- giving us new experiences. Especially when we were very young – everything is new to a new baby. But it doesn't stop there – Mothers go on teaching their children to love new things.

And these things are what comprise a proper definition of “mothering”. It is what “mothering” is. Our mothers almost always provide an awful lot of all those things, but for most of us there are other people who also provide some or all of them. Fathers, of course, but also grandparents, aunts and uncles, school teachers, grown up friends and neighbours, older brothers and sisters. And that is what we are here today to celebrate. Mostly our mothers, but really everyone who helps in the mothering of children.

But is it just children who need tender loving care? Grown-ups can also need a bit of mothering as well. And children can help in providing it: beginning with finding people's glasses; showing older people how to do new things on their mobile phones; making them feel loved and appreciated. So all in all, it's everyone's job to help love and care for other people.

One of the places where you should always be able to find love is at church. So much so that people used to talk about “mother church” to express the role of the church in loving, nourishing and protecting people and their faith. God, of course, loves us all, knows us all individually and by name. He listens to our prayers, helps us to think things through and is always there for us to talk to, take encouragement from, and expand our consciousness: our feeling of His presence. Praying to Him can help us to sort out and acknowledge what we have done wrong, and what we need to do to set it right. But God needs us to provide more concrete things. For making tea and supplying biscuits, explaining mobile phones, giving a helping hand, He needs people on earth. I hope that everyone here has found love and care in this church, and that everyone is prepared to take their part in loving and caring for the people we meet here, and everywhere else – as part of the whole church on earth.

Dear God, help us all to love and care for each other, in the knowledge of your love for us. In the name of your son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.