

## GOT THE RIGHT STUFF TO BE PICKED?

As a parent I am often reminded about feelings and experiences of my own childhood as I observe the lives of my own children. Can you remember back to your school years when a team was being picked? Two would be nominated as captains, then take turns choosing their teams. Can you remember the feelings you had as the team was being picked? If you were like me, sport was not my greatest subject, it was a horrible time. You hoped like mad that you would not be left standing there as the last dregs that the unlucky team had to have. The feeling of not being picked first often hurt in a way that you would not dare let anyone see.

In many ways throughout our lives we face this team picking scenario, over and over again. Whether it is finding a partner for life, or joining a club or organisation. There seems to be invisible pecking orders. As we get older, we learn ways of coping and avoiding the hurt it can cause. I suppose the thing we feared back at school and in our adult life is rejection and the pain it brings.

One person who is no stranger to pain is a person who was rejected as a loser. The favoured people of the day rejected him. Many even despised him because he threatened to upset their power and challenged the things they held important. This man chose to hang out with those who were described as the losers; prostitutes leapers, slaves, fisherman... To these people he offered love and hope. The man you might have guessed is Jesus.

As I watch my boys being picked for teams and think of the feeling I used to have as I waited to be picked. And indeed if I am honest still feel at times as I face possible rejection, I am glad that God knows and understands how it feels. Because he chose to humble himself and walk amongst us, to live a life on earth. To experience life as we do, even to the point of being rejected. That's how much he cares and loves us.

Thinking of picking teams, if we see Jesus as the captain then the church is his team. What a mixed bunch we are. There are some that seem to have it all together, while others clearly don't. But in this team we are not picked on our ball handling skills or our even on our own merits. Instead we are given the invitation to belong by the captain who has already won the game. It has been said the church could be described as one beggar telling another beggar where to find food. There is even great rejoicing in heaven when we make the choice to belong. As a team we will often look rough, and definitely not Super 12 winning stuff. But we know if we march with the captain, despite all our faults we'll make an eternal difference.