

PLAYGROUND THOUGHTS

Recently the family went to the Children's playground in Tahunanui. I find it fascinating watching John at a playground. Suddenly there is plenty of energy and nothing is done at a sluggish pace. He runs between each piece of equipment. He approaches each with caution, like the plank leading down from the tower. After one or two goes, confidence grows and so does his speed. The equipment is placed there for the fun of the children and for their education. It is designed to stretch the child's ability and education. John certainly enjoys being stretched, though there are times when it is a bit scary (like the big long slide).

How similar is it to our Christian discipleship? We are eager to walk in the way that God calls us to walk. The call excites us and often we find ourselves trying to run as fast as we can along the path. Like the playground there are things that stretch us and often we find ourselves a bit scared by what is in front of us.

The neat thing is that just as John has a parent's hand to help him over the various challenges until he is confident so to we have God's by His Spirit with us every step of the way. One of my favourite scriptures that I recall when I'm staring at a challenge that is in front of me is Joshua 1:9 I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." (NRSV)

One way God is with us is by the example and encouragement of others in the Church. Just as John finds the strength and courage to climb to the top of the rocket because Dad is climbing and encouraging him, so we can be inspired and encouraged into a deeper walk with Christ by each other. This happens as we share our lives together. This happens in many ways from bible study to pruning a big tall willow tree.

Will you join me on the swings as we learn what God is calling us to as individuals and as a church?