

Chris's Testimony



I was born (an only child) in 1950 to very loving parents. I was brought up in a home with strong morals standards. Whilst Jesus was spoken about my parents didn't actually attend church on a regular basis. My grandmother (my mother's mother) was a regular worshipping member of St. Peter and St. Paul's Church, Swanscombe. At the age of 5 my parents offered me the chance to attend Sunday School. I was taken along to a very cold, dark and dingy church so decided that I didn't want to go any more, and I wasn't made to.

I met my husband, Terry, when I was 15, who I came to discover, had regularly attended church as a child and then when older, once a month as a Sea Scout. We talked at length about our future together and made a decision that we didn't want to be Match, Hatch and Despatch people and so we began to regularly attend St. Peter & St. Paul's Church at Swanscombe. We became very involved at the church and I was in the choir, was a bellringer and we attended confirmation classes and were confirmed just before our wedding.

After we married we moved to our first home in Northfleet and had to put our car off of the road to enable us to be able to afford our home. We continued to worship at St. Peter & St. Paul's Swanscombe. We would either have a 1/4hr. walk across the fields or catch a bus. Then I became pregnant and 8 months later our beautiful daughter Lara was born. Still we continued to attend Swanscombe church. Then after 3 years of married life we decided to move to Flowerhill Way, on Istead Rise.

The first thing that we did was to attend the local church of St. Barnabas. As Terry worked shift-work and unfortunately this sometimes involved Sundays it meant that I would have to attend church without him. I had grown so used to "high church" that I struggled with the services and very soon ceased to attend at all. Terry continued to attend 8 am. whenever he could.

I then spent a 12 year wilderness experience, until in July 1986 we went on a holiday to Bude in Cornwall. We travelled to Cornwall over-night on the Friday and arrived in Bude early on the Saturday morning. Terry and Lara went for a walk up to the town whilst I stayed in the car in the car park. When they returned they asked me to guess who they had seen in the town.. "How am I supposed to know, we are in Bude in Cornwall?" was my reply. They had seen Stuart Wright (Lara's Pathfinders Leader) from St. Barnabas. Lara regularly attended Pathfinders on Friday evenings. We checked into our accommodation and the next morning made our way to the beach. Who should come up to Lara but Stuart Wright asking if she would like to go and join in some activities down on the beach. It transpired that there was a Scripture Union Beach Mission in Bude. So off she went and came back, having had a great time, with a programme of events for the whole month of which we were there for the first fortnight. We went along to the very first bible study of the month the next morning and continued to join in all the events for the whole of the fortnight. And guess what, there were about another ten people from St. Barnabas, Istead Rise there for the Mission. During the fortnight we received wonderful teaching, love and guidance and were able to get to know the St. Barnabas folk. When we returned home I joined a women's morning bible study group (of which there were about thirty members). We would have wonderful times studying God's word, sharing together, laughing together, crying together and praying together. I also regularly attended St. Barnabas and went on to do some specific ministry training.

When I look back on my journey, I see that my initial years as a Christian were actually worshipping a distant God (even though I was heavily involved in church activities), I then had

my wilderness experience where I was wandering about totally lost, but our loving gracious God never lets us go, and I am so grateful for my Lost Sheep experience, where God came all the way to Bude, in Cornwall to meet very powerfully with me and bring me home into the flock where he intended me to be. It is through this experience that I developed my personal relationship with my wonderful Saviour Jesus.

Of course God didn't come all the way to Bude in Cornwall because He is everywhere. He was right beside me all the time but I had turned my back on Him but in His great mercy He knew how He would get my attention.

Are you walking your life with God or have you turned your back on Him? He has a perfect plan for each and every one of us. I encourage you to seek His will for you. It will bring you a peace beyond understanding (particularly in the difficult times), joy in your heart, and a spring in your step. He created YOU and He loves YOU that much that He knows the number of hairs on your head.

Christine Loker
Evangelist, St. Bamabas Church, Istead Rise