

Monthly Devotion

MAY

“Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches.”

John 15:4-5



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Abide - by Craig Newton

There is something about places like Shallowford that gently changes a person's pace. It is often noticeable that guests arrive carrying far more than their luggage. Yet visible across the estate, creation moves with a rhythm that feels very different to the hurried pace many of us carry within ourselves.

Alongside the practicalities of everyday life come worries, responsibilities, pressures, disappointments, noise, and exhaustion. Many of us have become so accustomed to the hurried and constant movement of modern life, that stillness can feel unfamiliar.

And yet, in **John 15**, Jesus offers a strikingly simple invitation:

"Abide in me."

Not strive.

Not perform.

Not prove.

Abide.

To abide is to dwell in a state of enduring connection. Jesus uses the image of the vine and branches to remind us that life is not something we generate by human effort. A branch does not force itself to bear fruit through striving. It flourishes because it remains connected to the vine from which it receives life. Only His life-giving power can satisfy our deepest needs.

Perhaps this is why the words of St Augustine continue to resonate so deeply centuries after they were spoken:

"You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you."



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There is a restlessness that can quietly settle within the human heart, when life becomes dominated by productivity, or the pressure to keep going without pause. We fill diaries, answer notifications, move from task to task, and often forget that God's presence is not found in achievement or activity, but in quiet attentiveness to His Spirit.

At Shallowford, we regularly see the effect that space, silence, prayer, and creation have upon people. A walk through the grounds. A moment sitting beneath the trees. Conversation without hurry. Time to pray without watching the clock. Gradually, something begins to soften and shift.

The natural world itself reflects the wisdom of abiding. Trees do not rush their growth. Meadows are not anxious about tomorrow. The seasons unfold according to divine ordination. In creation we are reminded that God rarely works at the pace we demand of ourselves. The invitation of Jesus is not to do or be more, but simply to abide. To pause long enough to notice God's presence once again, and rediscover the transformative life that flows from remaining in Christ. For it is only there, in abiding, we find the grace to unburden ourselves of the pressure to perform, and the power to live life according to God's design.

To Pray

Lord Jesus Christ, in the midst of hurried lives and restless hearts, teach us again how to abide in you. When we feel weary or distracted, draw us back to your presence and help us to notice the quiet ways you speak through stillness and creation. Grant us the grace to slow our pace, to rest in your love, and to remain rooted in the life you give.

Amen.

This devotion was written by Shallowford's Director, Craig Newton. Susan Hutchinson writes most of our devotions.

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