

Pastoral Letter July 2011

Time for a check-up

From time to time we might visit the doctor for a check-up in order to make sure that things are well with us physically. If it turns out that in any ways they are not, then, hopefully, something can be done about it to improve the situation. How important it is as well to have a periodic check-up spiritually. For this, we do not go to the surgery, but to the word of God. The way to do this is to come humbly and privately before God in the manner of David, and say: 'Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!' (Psalm 139:23-24).

Yet even if persuaded of the benefit of this spiritual activity, we may still be unsure about how to proceed in detail. A way of great potential profit (again, to see if all is well, and so that something can be done about it if it is not) is to put serious questions to ourselves from Scripture. To give us some ideas and point us in the right direction, here are a dozen examples. They are intended to assist, not to legislate. May we all be helped by them.

Am I rejoicing and resting in God alone as the God of my salvation? (Psalm 68:19)

Do I rely entirely upon the all-sufficiency of his grace in every circumstance? (2 Corinthians 12:9)

When did I last meditate upon all that I have been saved from, and the One I have been saved for? (1 Thessalonians 1:9-10)

Do I recognise that without Christ I am nothing and can do nothing? (John 15:5). Is he the most precious of all to me? (Matthew 13:45-46)

Is belonging to God's church an honour to me? (Isaiah 62:12; 1 Peter 2:9-10). Are God's people those whom I regard most highly and blessed of all? (Psalm 144:15)

What of the means of grace? (Acts 2:42). Do I continue in them and cherish them at every opportunity? (Hebrews 10:25)

Do I realise what God requires of me if I am to live in consistent fellowship with him? (Psalm 24:3-6)

Although sin still troubles me (all too much), yet do I hate it more and more and desire increasingly to be holy through and through? (Romans 7:21-25)

How do I regard God's Word? (Psalm 119:30-35)

Do I care about those who are not yet saved? (Ephesians 2:12-13)

What do I exhibit, as the years go on, of the marks of a Spirit-filled believer? (Matthew 5:3-12; Colossians 3:12-17)

What weight do I attach to being a stranger here, whose true home is in heaven? (Hebrews 11:13-16).