Notes for Life Groups: Series: 'Spirit Empowered People' Sunday 22 June 2025

'LIVING AS AGENTS OF TRANSFORMATION #2

My Oxford dictionary provides two definitions for 'agent', namely as 'a person who acts for another', and 'a person or thing that exerts power or produces an effect.' Both definitions suit our purpose today.
Our Bible passage is taken from Romans 12 and is divided into two sections, and I suggest we look at these sections one at a time.

Read Romans 12: 1-2 Paul opens this passage, as he frequently does, before setting out the challenges that follow, by reminding his readers of why they need to respond. 'In view of God's mercy' he writes – in view of the invaluable, immeasurable, unquantifiable gifts He freely, lavishly pours upon us. *This is the place to start, the foundation on which to build our consideration and response to what Paul has to say. Take a few minutes to dwell on the depth of this.* Our response, Paul writes, should be a total transformation, mind, body and spirit; to no longer allow the patterns of lifestyle that exclude God, that have become normal around us, to dictate our thoughts, lifestyle, and actions. This is our true worshipping response to 'God's mercy.'

Only then, having been transformed, can we take up the role as His agents, to act on his behalf, to exert power and produce an effect, our true worship. By the relationship we will then enjoy with God, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, we will be able to 'test and approve what God's will is.' *This sounds very straight forward, but is it? How easy do you find it to discern God's will? What tools, if any, should we use?*

Read Romans 12: 9 – 21 Here Paul lists the challenges; he outlines some of the detail of what needs to outpour from the transformed person. This will take deliberate thought, prayer, and actions on our part, directed and supported by the Spirit. As we take on the very public agent role, there will be good times and bad, successes and some failures. *What should we do with both successes and failures? Can you remember any that have happened to you which you can now, subsequently, place into context?*

As a group, divide the challenges listed into those you think are directed to be enacted especially 'Christian to Christian', and those more general, 'Christian to all.' *With those you selected as Christian to Christian, is there learning here for our church? If so, what?* For the challenges selected as 'Christian to all', *how difficult do you find this? What response do you find/anticipate from the community?*

Prayer: *Most merciful Father, you have called us to be a caring Church, reflecting in our lives your infinite care for us your children. Help us to fulfil our calling and to care for one another and the world around us in an unselfish fellowship of love. We ask it in the name of Christ our Lord.* (adapted from a prayer by Michael Ramsey)

In a new development for prayer, we ask the Life Groups when they meet, to pray for the charity identified by our church for prayer support each month – *Please pray for The Taunton Area Debt Advice.*