



A family tree

Julian Smith *reflects on* 2 Samuel 7:1-14a

The television series *Who Do You Think You Are?* reflects a growing interest in genealogy. Viewers seem fascinated by the family trees of celebrities, hoping to find links to notorious ancestors or some noble lineage.

The Bible, too, is interested in family trees, as the seemingly endless lists of "begats" testify. It is important that these genealogies place Jesus in the direct family line of King David and our reading explains why.

Israel is enjoying a period of peace and prosperity. David is king and has built a palace in Jerusalem, but God's dwelling place, the Ark of the Covenant, rests in a tent, as it did during Israel's long years of wandering. David wants to build a permanent resting place for it and confides his wishes to the prophet Nathan. But God appears to Nathan and tells him that David will not build a "house" for God, rather God will raise up a "house" for David. David will not build a temple for God, but God will raise up a dynasty of David's descendants and his son will build the Temple. "He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever."

In this solemn covenant between God and David rests the promise and hope of the Messiah fulfilled by Jesus, which is why his family tree contains carpenters and kings. 🌿

Lord Jesus, David's son and Messiah – you came to bring God's love to a dark and troubled world. Shine that love on us today and help us to be lights for you in the places where we live and work. Amen.

Making Ordinary Time anything but

by Caroline Hodgson

Last week we started to compile a list of "ordinary" activities. So now let's start to think and pray about how to make a real change in our life. The objective is that from now on, daily life is going to be anything but mediocre and mundane. If making a necessary

change means having a difficult conversation with someone, don't shirk from it, but do pray that God shows you a way to communicate with tact, integrity and, above all, love. This is about getting our relationships out of a rut, as well as our lives. And if you've decided that it's appropriate that you do a certain activity, think about how to revitalise it. Because a chore done prayerfully can – truly – be transformed into a pleasure. It will almost certainly take practice and faith to really discover that, so stick with it and keep finding fresh approaches to everyday activities. 🌿

Finding God on the smallholding

by Jeni Parsons

Have we had summer yet or is it still to come? Last year winter was wet, spring was hot and summer was mixed. "The seasons aren't what they were," says my farming neighbour. So the anxiety around getting the hay cut, dried, baled and stored is often very high. Our

hay meadow is the glory of our tiny farm at this time of year – a bit of grass, lots of wild flowers and "weeds". The weeds are really tasty for sheep and cattle when dried and fed in the dark winter mornings. Our field made ten big bales last year. We kept one and the neighbour, who did the work, took the other nine as a gift.

Turning weeds into delicious fodder is a miracle of the ordinary kind you can see each day, but it speaks of God's transformation of the ordinary into glory of you and me into workers in the kingdom. 🌿

“Make sure you are doing what God wants you to do – then do it with all your strength.”

George Washington (1732-1799), first president of the United States