

Did you make any new year's resolutions this year? How are they going? By now, even the firmest of resolutions will have been tested and if you are still sticking to them, give yourself a big pat on the back – you are probably the exception! January is a time of year when we tend to be full of plans and good intentions, wanting to be the best version of ourselves that we can be or to tackle issues that have been bothering us or to make the most of the year ahead. But February can be a time when we are reminded of our fallibility and lack of self-discipline, as our plans meet the reality of life and don't always survive the test.

That's not something to beat ourselves up over in my view. There may be things we can learn – about how best to form good habits or what sort of support we need to make change happen or how to be realistic in our goal-setting. If we didn't dream and plan and aspire, we wouldn't get anywhere – and if we do dream and plan and aspire, then we might at least move forward from where we are and achieve a little of what we aim for.

This year, in our family services, we are looking at the theme of the Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). The last of the nine fruits is self-control. The ability to use our will to good purpose, to discipline ourselves to achieve something worthwhile or avoid those things that are bad for us, is a godly characteristic. As we develop our dreams and plans, or indeed if we find ourselves looking in dismay on good intentions that have already fallen by the wayside, we are reminded always to bring those before God and to involve him in them – whether we are anticipating success or struggling with failure. He is the one who knows us best, who longs that in Him we should know life in all its fullness (John 10:10) and who knows what we most need and desire. When we submit our hopes, fears, plans and dreams to him, he will help us to see what matters most and to find the path that he is leading us on. That may or may not be the path we would have chosen but if we are following his lead, we can step out confidently, trusting that he knows best and that he will give us all we need along the way: self-control, strength, peace, his gifts and his grace.

Above all, he gives us his love. Whatever our past has been and whatever our future holds, this year and beyond, we can be sure of his love surrounding us, of his forgiveness and acceptance and faithfulness. His plans may or may not be the same as our plans but they are plans that are good – above all, that we should know him better and become more and more like his son, Jesus Christ.

As we travel onwards through this year, let's keep our sights set on him. Whatever our starting point, let's seek to move closer to him. Whatever our hopes for the year, let's put him at the centre of them.

With love in Christ
Katie

**Friends of St Andrew's Church
Halstead**

NOSH & KNOWLEDGE QUIZ

Come to a Fun, Light-hearted Quiz

Saturday 24th March

7^{pm} for 7.30^{pm} start

**St Andrew's Church Centre
Parsonage Street Halstead**

**Teams of 6
£36 per team**

**Includes Ploughman's Type Supper
Bring your own Drinks**

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