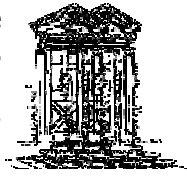


Chester Retreat ~ 2006

"Refreshment in the Desert" was the theme of our special weekend together. Once again we experienced the presence of God and unity amongst the carers. It is a privilege to be able to lead such a time together. More and more we are becoming like a family together. A couple new carers joined us and it was such a blessing to share with one another



Peace be to this House



I to r: (sitting) Charles Christopher, Lily Dixon (standing) Freda Cheetham, Judy Steel, Barbara Chambers, Penny Livingstone, Bev Meadows, Valmai Williams, Ray Jones, Jean McGealy, Mary McLeod, Jenny Dean (in front), Rosemarie McLeod

The weekend included times of reflection &, times of worship, a special time of prayer in the chapel, but also time of relaxation, fellowship and laughter. Saturday also saw us involved in a Bible Study led by one of our carers in the morning, free time in the afternoon to explore Chester or 'just be', and in the evening we gathered together for some creative craft. We certainly laughed as we tried making 'pipe cleaner people' to represent ourselves sitting by the waters in the desert being refreshed by the Lord's presence. We even cried together, shared worship and communion on the Sunday morning, and blessed each other with our experiences and sharing in the presence of the Lord. Being next to the Cathedral also enabled those who wished to, to attend the special services there. We had a very special prayer time on Sunday morning as we looked at Psalm 1 and how we are like trees planted by streams of water, yielding our fruit in season. (see Heavenly Hug for more!!)



Some of the feedback and comments I received following the weekend included:

- very peaceful atmosphere; enjoyable weekend of fellowship.
- a wonderful rest with like-minded friends.
- time went too quickly.
- I really enjoyed the communion at the end when I felt we all came together as a group. It helps when you can talk to other carers who have similar problems time.

These times of respite, rest and renewal are vital to us all. Charles blessed us once again as he shared some of his experiences but also presenting each of us with a folder containing poetic verses, and songs he had written. One example of his writings, based on 2 Cor. 12:9

"We often pray to be delivered from afflictions, and even trust God that we will be. But we do not pray for Him to make us what we should be, while in the midst of afflictions. Nor do we pray that we would be able to live within them, for however long they may last, in the complete awareness and assurance that we are held and sheltered by the Lord and therefore continue within them without suffering any harm."

He had also designed a special card with an embossed dove and our CCF logo superimposed. An amazing feat considering Charles is registered blind and deaf but manages at home with a special computer and magnifying scanner, and also carries his own portable hearing loop.

The Retreat House Warden, Valerie and her assistant Janet, were absolutely marvellous as always, catering for our every need.



Valerie and Janet, holding one of the cards Charles designed

The weekend is so much appreciated that we have booked 2 for next year! We will have our usual weekend in June, but perhaps with less formal sessions and more time to be quiet and 'just be', or to pray and have fellowship with each other. Having decided once a year was not enough we have also a weekend of just fellowship in November. Also booked is 2008!



If you would like to be a part of the blessing next year, reserve these dates in your diary:

8-10 June 2007
16-18 November 2007

Advance Notice: 6-8 June 2008

Retreat House Garden