



February 2025

markyate baptist church

Friendship and Faith...

I'm a keen sports fan and last weekend watched the American tennis player Madison Keys win her first Grand Slam tennis tournament at the age of 29. In the on-court interview, following the Australian Open final, Madison was quick to thank "her team", who had always believed in her, throughout a long career that has been punctuated by several serious setbacks.

I was struck again by the level of support that competitors have invariably received in reaching their goals. Success rarely, if ever, seems to be the work of the individual alone. Time and again specific and heartfelt praise is given to the "backroom" staff: the friends and family, the coaches past and present, the encouragers and inspirers. These people help nourish the vision of future success required to motivate the athlete through the cold dark mornings of training, the strict dietary disciplines and the prioritising of time to mind numbing practice. What might we learn from this?

For me it is captured in two words: friendship and faith. These two themes come together in a quirky story of the healing of a paralytic man in Mark's Gospel (Mark 2 v1-

12). The house in which Jesus is teaching is so packed no one else can get in. Four men bring along their paralysed friend. Facing this situation they could have turned away perhaps promising to call back at a more convenient time. Audaciously they decided instead to get onto the flat roof of the house and start pulling it apart! Who knows what the owner of the house thought? At last the hole in the roof was large enough to let down the mat on which their friend lay until it reached the feet of Jesus. I try to imagine the reaction of Jesus to this strange sequence of events. I think he was probably amused and delighted, certainly he sounds it, "When Jesus saw *their* faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven".

Friendship can encourage and sustain the faith of others. We all need support. The challenge is to ask if I am the type of friend who is prepared to "go through the roof" to bring others to the feet of Jesus? The faith of the paralytic's friends brought him to Christ. Can our faith do likewise? I'm not sure our culture prioritises friendship but it is vital in a society characterised by aching loneliness. We need friends within the community of faith to encourage us to run our race well and refocus our vision on Jesus when the going is tough. Even more so do those outside the church need friends with faith.

Mark Buckley, MBC Leadership

What's On—February 2025

Sunday 2nd

10.30am Communion Service
With Mike Palin

Monday 3rd

MBC Café—open to all
10.30am—12pm

Friday 7th

MBC Café—open to all
10am—12pm

Saturday 8th

9.30am In Church Prayer Meeting
In person

Sunday 9th

10.30am Morning Service
With Andrew Openshaw

Monday 10th

MBC Café—open to all
10.30am—12pm

Friday 14th

J&J's baby & toddler group
10am—11.30am

Saturday 15th

9.30am Online Prayer Meeting
Ask for link

Sunday 16th

10.30am Morning Service
With Leo Santos

Monday 17th

MBC Café—open to all
10.30am—12pm

Thursday 20th

MBC Leadership Team Meeting
7.45pm onwards

Friday 21st

MBC Café—open to all
10.30am—12pm

Saturday 22nd

9.30am Online Prayer Meeting
Ask for link

Sunday 23rd

10.30am All Age Service
With breakfast—Heidi & Chris Trew

Monday 24th

MBC Café—open to all
10.30am—12pm

Friday 28th

J&J's baby & toddler group
10am—11.30am

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Working days—Tues and Thur.

Leaders:

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Our Vision Statment:

Growing Together by loving God, loving others & serving our community