

# Atrium: Open Heaven. Open Hearts.

atrium |'ātrēəm|

noun ( pl. **atria** |'ātrēə| or **atriums** )

**1 Architecture** an open-roofed entrance hall or central court in an ancient Roman house.

• a central hall or court in a modern building, with rooms or galleries opening off it, often glass-covered.

**2 Anatomy** each of the two upper cavities of the heart from which blood is passed to the ventricles. The right atrium receives deoxygenated blood from the veins of the body; the left atrium receives oxygenated blood from the pulmonary vein.

We are pleased to introduce to you a new time and space throughout the month where we can gather together to wait before the Lord and listen for his voice. This gathering is going to be called "Atrium." As the above dictionary definition highlights, the word can be used to describe a space within a building often with a view opening up to the sky. Additionally, it also details the chambers within the heart that serve as 'pump primers' driving the blood into the main ventricles. Each of these themes are pertinent to what our meetings are going to be all about.

The Gospel of John describes Jesus as only doing what he saw his Father doing. We read of him being about his Father's business. When he begins his prayer in chapter 17 his body language speaks of yielded obedience as he lifts up his eyes to the heavens. Moreover, the other gospels depict his regular habit of prayer in the mountains. Mountains in scripture are often the place of vision.

Jesus is the author and perfecter of our faith. His life and ministry is our guide as his modern day disciples and learners. The popular phrase, often banded about in Christian circles, that "we can be so heavenly minded that we are of no earthly good" is quite frankly a lie! It is a lie because the things of heaven are coming down to earth (*your Kingdom come, on earth as it is in heaven*). God is looking for people who will know him, people able to listen to and recognise the sound of his voice guiding them into His Kingdom "blueprint plan" here on the earth, here in the Barclay Viewforth parish patch of town, here in our personal networks of friends and colleagues.

This is an invitation open to all. Don't worry! Atrium will not be about climbing mountains nor building monastic caves in cliffs! Instead it will be an hour long place of prayer and silent meditation, peppered throughout with teaching and practical exercises on listening to the voice of God and encouraging one another.

All of this is flows from being rooted in the 'beloved' of God. Here we arrive at the second theme of what Atrium will be all about. Returning again to John's gospel, in the prologue we learn that Jesus came from the "bosom of God," a place of eternal intimacy and affection. Jesus lived all of life in this continued love and affirmation e.g. "this is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," the words of a proud father who tore open the heavens on the day of his son's baptism. When his mission was complete, Jesus rose from the dead victorious, ascending back into the embrace of his Abba and was given the highest place of all honour in time and eternity.

If we, as disciples and learners of Jesus, are to grow in hearing his guiding voice, then we are also to sink our roots down deep in the love of God. All of mission and ministry flows from the place of rest and replenishment in our identity as children of God. Atrium will be a time and a place for us to run and retreat into eternal pleasure of God. What, after all, is the chief end of man?... To glorify God and *enjoy* him forever.

Let me leave you then with the practicalities. Firstly, and most importantly, we are not going to take ourselves too seriously in all of this! This will be a place of learning. Atrium will happen twice

a month in the Chalmers Hall in the Church centre, from 5pm-6pm on a Sunday evening. Folks will be welcome to stay on and attend the Evening Service if they wish but this is not a prerequisite in order to attend in the first place. The dates for the next meetings will be: 20th November and 11th December.

I really look forward to seeing you at Atrium and watching what will happen as we wait and rest upon the Lord.