



Pastor's Page

“A Good Sense of Direction”

It was Friday afternoon and my friends and I were off to a conference centre in Ludlow for a Leaders' retreat. Knowing the importance of this event and the need to get there in time for an evening meal I decided to download two sets of directions to the centre from their website and also some instructions from Google maps. As well as this I had a road atlas in the car and a Birmingham A-Z just in case all else failed! Then as my colleagues arrived I proudly handed my clip file with three sets of directions on it to the front seat passenger. Next as I went to help load some bags into the boot I spotted another passenger wiring up an obscure piece of equipment from my cigarette lighter to the front windscreen. “Erm what's that?” I nervously inquired, wondering if we were going to have some ‘in-flight entertainment!’ “Oh this is the Sat-Nav” (Satellite Navigation system) he said. “I thought it might be helpful!” Helpful? – that'll be fantastic” I replied. He switched it on and first of all a map of the route to the venue appeared on the screen with a moving arrow which showed you where you were at every stage of the journey. Then a small illustration of each roundabout to be negotiated and the exit to be taken appeared in another corner and a bell rang each time you approached a speed camera! But by far the best feature of all was the nice lady (Mrs SatNav) who said things like “in half a mile you will approach a roundabout, take the second exit at this roundabout and continue on the A449” Absolutely wonderful! What an invention! So there we were, 4 seasoned travellers, with three sets of detailed directions, two mobile phones and a top of the range Satnav programmed to take us straight to our conference centre in Ludlow – so how come we ended up in Sainsbury's Car Park in Kidderminster?!!!

Well eventually we did arrive at Ludlow and though we were late at least we had a good supply of “buy-one-get-one-free” items!! But the amazing thing is the fact that Mrs Satnav still got us back on the right route despite our diversion!

At the leaders retreat itself we were seeking to discern God's guidance regarding the direction of Selly Park Baptist church. As we explored with the help of a facilitator various avenues of church life and God's mission I felt sometimes as though I could do with a spiritual Sat-Nav. I don't find discerning God's will easy but a good place to start is by looking at what God has already revealed. In Paul's letter to the Romans chapter 8 verse 28 he reminds his readers that “in all things God works for the good of those who love him” . Well that alone is very good news but he goes on to say “those who have been called according to his purpose” This is getting exciting... so what is God's purpose for those who love him and have been called by him? (Christians) Paul tells us the answer – “to be conformed to the likeness of his Son” (8:29) God's will for you and me, if we are Christians, is to make us like Jesus. So how are we doing? It's God's work but we have to remain in Christ if we are to grow in Him (John15: 1-8) That's God's purpose for you and me and the work for us to do is to “Make disciples of all nations” (Matt 28:19) So how are we doing? What we now have to discern is what that looks like in Selly Park. How does that work out in our corporate life and our individual lives? I believe the Lord will guide us if we seek his face and are willing to trust and obey him. So let's be very prayerful and remember that we have the Bible so we don't need a Sat-Nav!

12th October 2008