

Meeting of the **EGGS** on Monday 10th February 2020  
in the Harvey Goodwin Suite, Church House, Westminster

**Notes for a Bible Reading at EGGS February 2020**

“Better is open rebuke than hidden love.  
Wounds from a sincere friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.”  
Proverbs 27:5-6

People generally don't like the sound of their own voices – arguably General Synod is an exception!

I remember as a child having to record a Christmas and New Year's greeting on a cassette tape to be sent to relatives in Mauritius. Felt more personal than just a card, cheaper than a long-distance call. Family gathers around the tape recorder – we say our bit.

Then Dad rewinds the tape back and we listen to ourselves. And we all say “I don't sound like that!”  
But that is how I sound. I cannot hear my own voice properly.

I need someone outside of me to tell me what I sound like – to know whether my words are true or not.  
That is why I am grateful for sincere, honest, prayerful, like minded friends in ministry and right now – here at Synod.

Friends who will challenge what I say, or what I have not said. Not just up there in the Hall, but the conversations in the corridors, over lunch and dinner. Friends who'll admonish my tone, my snarkiness – my hypocrisy... my lack of trust in a Sovereign God!

We need men and women around us who'll be able to speak truth about ourselves that we'd otherwise miss – who'll say, “when you say that – you're not sounding like yourself”.

And it might be that those words will hurt us – better is open rebuke than hidden love. Wounds from a sincere friend can be trusted – or as the King James has it, “faithful are the wound of a friend”.

It's like in the old westerns – someone gets a deadly snake bite, and the travelling buddy has to get the knife out, cut into that bite, deeper so they can suck the poison out and save the life.

Have we got friends who'll do that?

People who'll be doing that out of love for me, and out of a desire to the reputation of Christ upheld amongst his people.

I've been discouraged recently to read about ministry failures, some high profile – some not so. Something I'd noticed, a common link – they didn't do peers. Not saying that was the decisive factor for them. But you know what I'm getting at.

Here at Synod we need each other, at EGGS, in other groupings, to speak truth to one another – to say the hard things. All the while remembering it was Jesus who first spoke truth to our hearts who exposed the sin and poison in our hearts – but was then wounded so we could be healed.

*the Rev'd Mark Murthen*