

 THE CHURCH



Church and how the Church of England plays a role in his life.

**When did you start attending a Church of England church and why?**

I am from Pakistan, so I spent most of my childhood going to the Anglican Church in Lahore. (Church of Pakistan). I was born into a Christian family and was taken along by my parents. In Pakistan, more so than in the UK, your identity is defined by your religion. I knew I was a Christian and that was really important to me, but I couldn't really say that I knew what faith and being a Christian was about, I guess it didn't seem personal. When I moved to the UK to go to university, I started to go to St Stephen's in Selly Oak and gradually got involved there. This was where my wider family worshipped, and I felt like I fitted in.

**What was one of the best moments of your life and how did the Church feature in this?**

My wife told me I should say meeting her! But I think that it was actually at Spring Harvest in the early 90s. I listened to a speaker talk how it was really important not to be lukewarm about your faith, not to be lukewarm about who you thought Jesus was. This is when I really thought that I needed to consider this, as I didn't want to be lukewarm - if something was right and important and valuable, then you needed to be fully committed to that. Since that point, my faith has impacted many decisions that I have made.... and led to me meeting my wife and lots of other good things.

**What was one of the worst moments of your life and how did the Church feature in this?**

I recognise that I have actually had a very positive experience of life so far but even in that sometimes things don't happen as you might have planned. I think that is just part of life. But I think that we need to learn to trust God. I guess the Church has played a role in helping me see this, not the Church as a big institution but the Church made up of people like me, people with faith, people working out how to follow Jesus, people recognising that life has its ups and downs and we can learn from each other. There are people who I really look up to in the Church, who I regard as wise and who I see are faithfully following Jesus. I guess these people encourage me to keep going.

**What does the Church of England mean to you?**

My wife is ordained and through her I think that God has called us into the Church of England, warts and all. I think that what the CofE does do is root you in a community, whether it's a local community or a network, the idea that the Church is there for everyone, especially those who don't feel like they belong, those who don't fit in. As the saying goes...it's the only institution that exists for the benefit of its non-members.

**What is the relationship between your faith and your career?**

I trained as an engineer and work in London. I feel that God is with me in my work and wants me to be open about my faith and faithful in my work. I'm more of a doer than a thinker so like being busy and making a contribution. We've thought sometimes of where God is calling us both and I am open to being led somewhere else and doing something completely different but, having been made redundant last year and spending time looking for another job, I have to say I really like what I do, and the purpose work gives me. Sometimes, when your Church is very busy or

most of your friends come from a Church community, it can feel like you never meet any non-Christians. My work means that I am able to be a Christian amongst lots of different sorts of people and I enjoy the opportunity to live out my faith in that environment. I feel like my work is a blessing to me, even when commuting and the trains go wrong!

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