Reflection Written by Brian Anderson.

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Sight Loss Sunday is a great opportunity to reflect on the impact of visual impairment on people in your fellowship.

Sight loss is often described as a journey, usually by people who are not travelling that particular route. If it ***is*** a journey then many people’s experience will have been a series of cancellations, delays, poor service and disappointments. Like the Rail Replacement Bus things are never quite as good as you would want them to be. Perhaps describing some sight loss journeys would show what I mean.

There comes the day when glasses don’t seem to help any more, the light is just too bright or the room too dark. You realise that you are getting a little clumsy, you bump into things, you are over cautious when making tea or using a knife in the kitchen.

Your friends ask why you don’t speak when you pass them in the street, you can’t pick out your own children on the sports pitch, you find your job more difficult. You go for an eye test and are told you have to hand in your driving licence, now you can’t get to work easily. Your boss doesn’t think you will be able to do your job as well as your colleagues and makes life difficult.

For older people the impact of sight loss may be increased by bereavement, not only losing your life partner but also the driver who made it possible for you to visit family and see grandchildren, the handyman, cook or the money manager have gone from your life.

This isn’t a path any of us wants to take. As Christians we chose another journey. When we trust in Jesus we have that wonderful assurance that our destination is Heaven. We know this because Jesus said so.

In Psalm 121 we witness another journey, with the pilgrims going up to the temple in Jerusalem. The first 2 verses could be sung with personal assurance that the Lord is our help in times of distress (v1 I lift up my eyes to the mountains - where does my help come from? v2 My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth). We can sing the remaining verses to encourage each other along the way.

Through faithful preaching of the gospel, sound  teaching and praying for one another we can share our journeys, knowing that our God is watching over us (v3 He will not let your foot slip - he who watches over you will not slumber). This is true every day and every night (v4 indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep). We have a caring guide (v5 The Lord watches over you - the Lord is your shade at your right hand) protecting us from danger (v7 The Lord will keep you from all harm - he will watch over your life). Nothing can take this away from a believer (v8 the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore).

Are you on that journey with the folks in your fellowship who are living with sight loss? Can you make their journey less difficult by including them in all areas of church life, serving them and finding ways they can serve you?

For those with sight loss, have you thought how you can serve others, what does your sight loss demonstrate about Christ in you and how can you be fully involved with the life of your church? How often does your fellowship sing:

**Brother, sister, let me serve you;
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to
let you be my servant too.**

We are all on different life journeys, with unique problems and stumbling blocks along the way. For physical and practical reasons church can be a hard and lonely place for people with sight loss to feel fully involved and accepted. Some are walking away.

Hebrews Chapter 11:1-13 reminds us that so many faithful people faced situations we can barely imagine and their faith was sufficient to overcome. Unlike the Hebrews who were in danger of turning away from God and needed reminding of what Abraham, Noah, Sarah and other ancients did by faith, we have Christ and the reassurance that He is all we need.

## Fellowship with faithful believers and a sense of belonging is a wonderful bonus when any of our journeys seem daunting.