

Roy Ludlow and I were engaged in taking a close look at the Story of the Prodigal Son, as recorded in Chapter 15 of Luke's Gospel.

As a key element within this morning's 'Refresh' we had folk present engage in a group reading of this parable, re-written in a mildly light-hearted manner as in the poem printed below, with table groups then invited to compose their own 'extra' verse about how the *elder* son coped with the situation, and to consider the sort of emotions *he* was experiencing. Possibly a risky corporate exercise but I think the results speak for themselves!

Bob Williams

THE PRODIGAL SON

There was once a father who had two sons,

They lived on a farm and had lots of fun;
The younger one came to his father and said:
'Give me some money, I'm off to the Med!'

Well, his father cried! and he wept all day,
But then in the end he said: 'o.k.'
So off went the son with money in hand,
Travelling 'post haste' to a far off land.

He raved all night and he partied all day –
Riotous living – hey! hey! hey!
Spent all his time in 'painting the town'
And wasting his money like a fool and a clown.

Then one day his money ran out,
So did the food, because of a drought.
His friends all left him feeding the swine –
And that's when he knew life wasn't so fine.

He thought of home in days gone by,
Where they'd had baked beans and apple pie.
His father had servants whom he never would sack.....
Then he came to his senses and said: 'I'll go back!'

He ran all the way to his father's land;
Knelt at his feet then kissed his hand
And said he was sorry for being such a berk:
'Do you need a servant? – 'cause I need the work!

His father hugged him and wept for joy.
He shouted out: 'Look, here's my boy!
Put rings on his fingers and shoes on his feet
And let's have a party with plenty to eat.'

(The contributed verse would sit here...)

So, ... what's the point of this little poem?
Who's the son who ran away from home;
Who left his father in a real old stew?
Have you ever thought that *IT MIGHT JUST BE YOU?*...

And some of the responses received, as that 'extra Verse 8'...

I've toiled and I've worked for many a day,
Never receiving my full rate of pay!
I've done my best by day and night
To praise my brother; just doesn't seem right?

And what of the son who stuck things out?
To 'sow & hoe' (yet scream and shout!)
'Til Dad *assured* him that all was fine;
"Your bro is back; we're ready to dine!"

The brother's nose was out of joint
But in the end he saw the point.

What a party, what a fine ball;

A wicked time was had by all!

But the elder bro thought - 'Too much to bear'
He told his old man that this was unfair.

'How can it be you chose him over me?'

And off he stamped unhappily!

The father said 'Son, all will come good';

We'll be fam'ly again, as we should'.

The eldest son was angry and sad;

He'd worked so hard and *never* been bad.

He sulked and simmered; went off in a huff

'Til his father came out and said *That's enough!*'

.....So faithful and true,

I DO love you too.

All that I have

Will be left to you.

And a couple of contributions from the youngsters present -

**The elder son, who had worked all night,
looked out the window, one day, in fright.
His younger sibling was welcomed back**

So the youngster could get life on track.

By Finn van der Luit

The older son said 'Give me money'!

He was cross when his brother came back,

On his way home, coming up the track.

It was night... and it gave him a fright!

By Anna van der Luit