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## Opportunities

### UNDER THE BIG TOP

Watch this YouTube [video](#) featuring high-flying trapeze artists, and the fun loving theologian/writer Henri Nouwen. The book this video is promoting is "Flying, Falling, Catching: An unlikely story of finding freedom."



### THE GOD WHO PLAYS Brian Edgar

You may like to order a copy of this [book](#) which offers a helpful and "playful approach to theology & spirituality".



### GODLY PLAY

A resource designed to use with children but an idea you could use to tell a Bible story or your own story. One video you might like to watch is [here](#). The "I wonder" questions at the end can be quite revealing.



### WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

Watch this short [video](#). You may like to pass the link on to others.

## Playful Spirituality

Most of us are getting back into our routines now the temperatures have cooled and summer has ended. Play time is being replaced by work, and other engagements are being put in the diary. These events could create a sense of anticipation and excitement, but along with these feelings could come a sense of anxiety.

The 10th of October marked World Mental Health Day. Looking after our mental well-being has been highlighted in recent years as celebrities and others have spoken out about the effects of stress.



**So I commend  
the enjoyment of life,  
because there is nothing  
better for a person  
under the sun  
than to eat and drink  
and be glad.  
Then joy  
will accompany them  
in their toil  
all the days of the life  
God has given them...**  
(Ecclesiastes 8:15)

As our summers may have been full of playful activities which relaxed us, so it is helpful to keep putting play into our agenda to help keep us on an even keel.

And as life can be taken a little too seriously sometimes, so can the way we pray. Our Protestant Work Ethic can spill over into our prayer making this relational activity feel like a duty and a slog.

I wonder what our prayers might look like if a little more play was injected into this relationship?

**"It is not only possible  
to say a great deal  
in praise of play;  
it is really possible to  
say the highest things in  
praise of it.....  
Earth is a task garden;  
heaven is a  
playground."**  
(G.K. Chesterton)

I wonder if there was an element of play when God created the world, and when Jesus attended parties, went out with the fishermen, walked up mountains? Play brings freedom, vulnerability, joy and pleasure. It puts us in a different space to open ourselves to God. And that opening to God helps our mental health.

**Laughter is part  
of the playfulness  
that is central  
to relationship with God.**  
(Brian Edgar)

So let's play!

## An Exercise

### LET YOUR CHILD OUT TO PLAY!

Go and buy some bubbles.

#### Imagine Jesus smiling at you:

- Take the bubbles, play with them, enjoy!
- Notice how free the bubbles are.
- See the rainbow colours.
- As you blow, watch where the bubbles land.
- You may like to chase them!

#### Let the bubbles be a reminder to you that:

- God is here and now.
- God is around you and within you.
- God is behind you and before you.
- Wherever you are God is.

#### With the above understanding:

- Blow more bubbles.
- Let each one be a prayer word coming from your heart to God.



### Impressions of Heaven Adrian Plass

Listen to this fun [poem](#) giving one metaphor of heaven. Reflect on how heaven could be a place of worship and fun.