**Ministerial Meandering**

*Dealing with disappointment*

It is a sad fact that we don’t always get what we want - I guess many neglected children (and adults) can attest to that over many years of missed birthdays and Christmases. It is worse when you are forgotten, but being ignored can make us feel pretty unhappy too.

Over the last few weeks I have been trying to find a special present for a friend of mine. This present is not easy to get hold of, and twice recently I have thought that I have managed to acquire it, when it has, for one reason or another, slipped from my grasp at the last minute.

Perhaps I wouldn’t have minded quite so much if the individuals involved had taken the time to inform me that the item I was after was no longer available - but there was no communication whatsoever until I initiated further enquiries, to be met with, “So sorry, that’s no longer available. We didn’t have time to inform you.”

Not good enough, in my book. If we have to let someone down - be it that we can’t make their dinner party, can’t go for coffee, or make the appointment - whatever, I think it behoves us to have the courtesy to tell them. If people don’t show up for their scheduled surgery and don’t tell the surgical team they are not coming, they are wasting the time (stealing) from the whole team and another patient who could have had their surgery instead.

Communicaton is a social skill and it needs to be instilled into the young (along with their manners) at an early age. When I was at Britannia Royal Naval College, training to become a Naval Officer, it was salutary that amongst other things we were taught were etiquette and manners. If we were invited out to dinner, a letter of thanks was mandatory *the next day*. Any later than that was rude, and no further invitations would be coming your way. The same was true of Mess Dinners; no matter how foggy you were when you went to bed, it was expected that a letter of thanks would be posted on the establishment’s Notice Board the following morning. I could go on about punctuality and other such things, but it was all good training for life.

So letting people down is not something we should gloss over. We all have to do it from time to time, but I think I would have been a lot less put out if the organizations I was dealing with had taken the trouble to make contact - however brief, even an automatically generated email - to let me know that what I was hunting for as a present was no longer ‘on the menu’.

When I get disturbed by things like these, I try to look at the life of Jesus and see if ***ever*** he let anyone down - and, if he did, did he forget or omit to tell them?

I haven’t managed to find any instance of such in my New Testament - can you?

Philip+