

## As I See It by Joan Barnett

### Don't Forget the Fish!

Psalm 39:7 NIV. But now Lord, what do I look for? My hope is in You.

For many years I have enjoyed phoning various people with sight impairment. One particular lady, Peggy moved from Surrey to Wales some years ago to live with her son David in a cottage situated in the mining area of the Rhonda Valley. Her sight had deteriorated and this arrangement was a practical one.

Over the years we continued with the phone conversations, one year calling in to visit them for lunch on our way home from a family wedding in Aberystwyth. We had a look round the garden, full of brightly coloured flowers thoughtfully planted by David with his mother's failing sight in mind.

Moving on a number of years, Peggy is now into her nineties and experiencing frailer health resulting in a few weeks hospitalisation, well cared for although wanting to return home once the care package has been organised.

During this time one of the fish in the garden pond died, David duly reported this to his mother who promptly said he had to get another one.

My weekly phone calls continued with David reporting on the situation. While relating the story of the fish he casually mentioned that it was one for me to write about. Not the first time I have been given subject suggestions.

At his next visit to Peggy, David mentioned he would be going shopping. 'Don't forget the fish' was the prompt reply. No problem with memory when important purchases are required. The next comment was somewhat unexpected. 'Will you bring it in to show me?'

Ever the dutiful son, David did as he was asked. The assistant in the pet shop was very helpful making sure the correct size of goldfish was purchased and how long it would last in the bag before going into the pond. 3 hours was safe.

The fish was duly placed safely in its bag and carefully put into David's rucksack. Arriving at the ward he went to Peggy's bed and announced that he had a visitor to see her. The fish in its bag was removed from the rucksack and holding it close to Peggy's face she was delighted to be able to see the bright gold colours and fan tail as it swam around. Then a couple of nurses came along to see what was causing all the excitement. 'Can we look?' More laughter as they also watched the swimming fish. The bag was carefully replaced in the rucksack. Peggy then enjoyed one of her favourite Mr Kipling cakes before they were all surprised to find another couple of nurses plus matron coming along to see what was happening.

The fish was once more removed from the rucksack for the newcomers to observe. David apologised for bringing in the fish but matron was more than happy for her patients to enjoy some normality. After all it was not intensive care and perfectly safe.

Eventually David left to go home. Of course, as soon as he arrived, he removed the fish from the rucksack only to have Pepe, their cat leap onto the work surface assuming lunch had arrived. More like cat's television. The fish in its bag was soon taken to the pond and placed in the water to acclimatise. Half an hour later it was removed from the bag. Spotting the other 3 fish it swam over to

them and is still enjoying the company of its new friends a few weeks later. The assistant certainly knew his job.

Fish are mentioned many times in the bible although more often as part of miraculous meals. The verse from the psalm seemed more appropriate for this little story. We all have times in our lives where we find ourselves doing something out of the ordinary.

Now, how to tell Peggy it is not possible to bring Pepe in for a visit, much as she would like that!