

6<sup>th</sup> May 2020

## Stay

**"I am a kind of burr; I shall stick."**

*William Shakespeare, Measure for Measure*

I've never been a soldier, but I'm proud of the Gordon Highlanders, the Scottish regiment which bears my clan's name. Their motto, and the clan's, is *Bydand Forever*. The Gordons originate from Huntley in Aberdeenshire, so "Bydand" comes from the Doric language familiar in that part of the country. The original motto was "Byde (bide) and Fecht" (Stay and Fight), but over time "fecht" was dropped, as it was assumed if you stayed you would be fighting anyway! The discipline and bravery of the Gordon Highlanders inspired no less a man than Winston Churchill to call them "the finest regiment in the world." High praise indeed!

Whether I am sufficiently disciplined or brave to be a proper Gordon is for others to judge. But I do like the "bydand" tag, for it speaks to me of an important attribute, no matter what my clan. Stay! Stick with it! Hang in there! Don't give up! Over the years, these injunctions, and others like them, have been recurrent themes in my ministry, counselling, parenting, friendships, and now in my work in bereavement support.

Some tasks we choose to take on. Some are forced on us. Some are responsibilities we're given. Some we would be happier to do without. But, the question is, will we stay at each task as we're expected to, or will we give up at the slightest hint of pressure or difficulty?

What good is an infantry regiment if they retreat when the going is tough? What good are we if we back off when things are hard?

There's a song sung by a young woman who is *very* taken with the Gordon Highlanders on parade: *A Gordon for me, a Gordon for me, if you're no' a Gordon, you're nae use to me*. I'm not sure I'd go *that* far. But if you're prepared to live by "Bydand, and "stay at it" no matter what, then I'd be happy for you to become an honorary Gordon any time!

### **A prayer for today**

*Loving God, you stay at your task of loving me, no matter what.*

*Help me to stick to my promise to be grateful,*

*to hang-in-there with my service, to stay at it, even when things are tough. Amen.*

*An original reflection by © Tom Gordon*

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