

9th October 2020

Legs

**“If you could see my legs when I take my boots off,
you’d form some idea of what unrequited affection is.”**

Charles Dickens, Dombey and Son

Lilly Reynolds was an elderly widow who lived in a rambling Edinburgh house. She was increasingly unsteady on her legs and used a Zimmer (a “walker”, for my American friends) to get about. I was, like many others, concerned for her safety at home. It was no surprise when I learned that Lilly had had fallen and broken her hip and was now in hospital.

She was sitting up in bed when I visited, and I asked what had happened. “Well,” she related with relish, “I was watching snooker on TV – such a gentle game, and easy to follow – and there was a break in play. So I decided to get cup of tea. But when I got up, *my* legs got tangled with the Zimmer legs, and the Zimmer legs got tangled with the table legs, and I didn’t know which leg to move first, so I fell over!” When Lilly got home, she was certainly more careful on her legs than she’d been before.

Legs matter! A table with a wobbly leg is a danger. A three-legged stool simply doesn’t work on two legs. Zimmers are a godsend for those whose own legs don’t do the job they were designed to do. Legs matter!

But legs matter in a metaphorical sense too. What are the legs on which we build our lives so that we are stable and able to function as we should? Faith? Upbringing? Family? Role-models? Ethics? Deep-seated principles? Self-awareness? Whatever they are, we need them to work well to support who we are and the way we live. And what are the stable legs on which society is built? Mutual respect? Democracy? Shared beliefs? Freedom of speech? Care for one another? A moral code? They all matter. If any one of them is wobbly, there’s a danger of everything falling down.

Personally, and corporately, let’s make sure the legs we need are fit for purpose. After all, it would be a tragedy if we didn’t learn from Lilly Reynolds, to be careful on our legs, make sure the important ones are working OK, *and* use them properly, so we don’t fall over again.

A prayer for today

*Lord, set my feet to your purposes; help me to move in your service as I should;
strengthen my legs as I go forward in faith; and help me when I stumble. Amen.*

An original reflection by © Tom Gordon

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