

Quiet Time in Ramallah Quaker Meeting

December 2010



The first ten days of our time here in the West Bank as EAs (Ecumenical Accompaniers) seemed to be so full of a mixture of the worry of preparation, the weariness of travelling, meeting the interesting new people who would make up our Team 38, trying to remember their names and countries and taking in more information from the Jerusalem Co-coordinators. A few days out in our placements, back to Jerusalem for further orientation, the Handover Service in St

George's Cathedral and then we were off to take over from the previous teams.

Did we want to go to Quaker Meeting in Ramallah on Sunday? Patricia asked. She and Sue were going and it would be on our way. Helen and I were grateful for this opportunity to be shown the way and to spend a bit more time with our UK training group friends before they left for home and we started our new work.

Ramallah is a large, busy town and it seemed so much busier and noisier than when I was last there at Christmas 2004 and I was glad to be shown the way from the bus station and through the streets heaving with people. The noise increased as we got nearer to the Meeting House as the whole road was being dug up and we had to pick our way through the rubble to get to there.

We were welcomed into the plain building that has white church like pews in a semi-circle facing the table and I was delighted to see the simple Advent Wreath made of branches from the tree outside with all the candles alight for the last Sunday of Advent. The small group that met for worship was made up of a few local people and Internationals involved in various kinds of work in the area, some of whom were leaving the following week.

The time of silence was so welcome after all the business of the past few weeks. Thanks were given for time spent amongst the Palestinians, for the gifts and opportunities shared and signs of hope offered. The tree of Life picture on the back wall and the lights of the candles seemed so appropriate to focus on as we reflected on the three months ahead of us in the West Bank alongside its people.



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