

Florence - Facts, Faith & Fame



Facts about Florence Nightingale

- Florence Nightingale had a Christian faith. She felt God called her.
- Florence Nightingale was born 200 years ago.
- Florence Nightingale's parents were from Sheffield. She also spent her youth at Tapton Hall and Norton Hall in Sheffield, her grandparent's houses.
- Florence's grandmother is buried at All Saints Ecclesall in Sheffield.
- Florence Nightingale was home schooled!
- Florence Nightingale reformed nursing.
- Florence lives from 1820 to 1910.
- Find out more facts about Florence Nightingale. Watch this short clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UEXkTK9xJQQ> (12 minutes).

The Faith of Florence Nightingale

When Florence Nightingale was 16 years old, she felt that God spoke to her, calling her to future "service." From that moment on her life was changed. She often talked of Luke 1:38 to summarize her calling:

“And Mary said, Yes, I see it all now: I’m the Lord’s maid, ready to serve. Let it be with me, just as you say. Then the angel Gabriel left her”. Luke 1:38

At first this call disturbed her. She did not know what ‘service’ she was supposed to carry out. She was scared that she might be not be good enough for whatever it was she was called to and she worried about the frivolous life that her mother wanted her to live. While she thought about it she spent all her time visiting the cottages on her family estate and bringing neighbouring poor people food and medicine.

Florence stopped going to church in her early 30s, but doing God’s will was still her deepest motivation. She was also influenced by rationalism and this too pushed her towards action. She believed that the call of God on her life was to sacrifice whatever was necessary, in order that she could do good.

Florence Nightingale’s commitment to nursing was deeply affected by the Bible, which she studied throughout her life

The Fame of Florence Nightingale

‘Nightingale fever’ seized the country. Prints of her portrait were sold as keepsakes, and poems were written about her. Florence did not like her new-found fame; she returned to Britain from the Crimea anonymously as ‘Miss Smith.’ She did know that her fame could be useful, but her reluctant relationship with celebrity continued throughout her life.

She became the first woman to receive the Medal of Honour in 1907. In 1910 she died at the age of 90, having lived to see the success of many of her nursing reforms.

Feedback about Florence

What did you find interesting, intriguing or surprising about Florence?

How important was Florence’s faith to the way she lived her life?

What influences your choices in life?

What does the word vocation mean?

Florence did not like being famous. Why do you think that was? Would you like being famous? Why or why not?

What 3 questions would you like to ask Florence Nightingale?

What lessons can we learn from the life of Florence Nightingale?

In the film Florence says, 'I had the idea that I would do something with my life and I wouldn't let it go?' What do you think you might do with your life? Is there something you would find it hard to let go of?

Read these 5 short quotations from Florence Nightingale. Which one do you find most meaningful? Why did you choose it?

'God has spoken to me and called me to His service.'

'I think one's feelings waste themselves in words; they ought all to be distilled into actions, and into actions which bring results.'

'The good of an organisation depends on every individual who is in it. School, hospital, coffee-rooms, institutions, district nursing must depend on the living life and love which are put into them.'

'Unless I am, a fellow-worker with Divine Power, who is working up all our poor little puny efforts into a whole — a whole of which our efforts are only parts, and worth anything only in as much as they are parts — shall I work at all?

To be a fellow-worker with God is the highest inspiration of which we can conceive man capable. But how can we be fellow-workers with God if we do not know His plan?'

"I don't think any words have had a fuller possession of my mind through life than Christ's putting himself in the place of the sick, the infirm, the prisoner."

Written by Fiona Walton