



BBC Radio 2 Pause for Thought 29/7/22 by Bishop Mike Royal

The Commonwealth Games are finally here! Competitors and spectators will arrive from the 56 countries of the Commonwealth. It's fitting that it's being hosted in Birmingham, one of the most diverse cities in world!

But hosting games is nothing new! In the Christian scripture, St Paul writing 2000 years ago referred to the Isthmian Games in Greece when he wrote to the churches in Corinth saying "Do you not know that in a race, all the runners run, but only one gets the prize. Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who goes into the games goes into strict training."

These words remind Christians that it's the preparation that counts! You'll see some great performances over the next days. Maybe England in the velodrome, or Fiji in the Rugby 7's, Australia in the pool or the brilliant Jamaican women in the sprints. I'm second generation Windrush, so I'm hoping so! What you won't have seen is the wet, dark mornings training sessions athletes have put in to prepare for the games. Nor the tireless work of volunteers in preparation to host the games. In a world of social media where so much of what we do is on show, it's a salient reminder that the most important work is often done when no one is watching.

St Paul's words also encourage Christians to run our own race. How many times do we see sprinters distracted by what's happening in the lane next to them and tie up before they reach the line. I believe we all have a purpose. Perhaps it's public service, community work or teamwork in the workplace. We each have a vital contribution to make!

Finally, St Paul's words encourage me to be my personal best. It's great when you see a competitor celebrating not because they have won but because they have broken their personal best. St Paul is encouraging me to be the best version of myself, through the strength of God who I believe is with us all.

So perhaps Birmingham's mantra applies to all of us whether we are a Brummie or not. Be Bold, Be Birmingham and in every sphere of life. Now let the Games begin!