

Thoughts from the Manse 30th April 2021

It hardly seems possible that we are a third of the way through 2021. I imagine for many time has dragged, as it has since this time last year when we had to abandon most of our usual activities and learnt the art of hibernation, but for me and many others time moves swiftly. A large part of this is having defined weekly requirements, such as preparing worship three ways. That sounds a bit like a cookery programme, fillet of beef with cauliflower three ways, but in our pandemic world we are seeking to serve as many people the best way we can and so preparing worship requires a multiple approach and this does take time, add zoom meetings, and the ever present schedule of Synod and Assembly based work plus keeping up with the news and it is no wonder that we find ourselves at the end of April.



This makes it doubly important to care for self. The pandemic life has made it difficult to keep 'days off' so instead you find yourself squeezing in other things and this does not help to relax. We have grown up with the notion that on the seventh day God rested and this is wisdom, what does it mean



to rest? For some it may be doing nothing at all, for others it means having the space to relax with a book or be creative, for some the essential element is getting away from the normal, a day out perhaps. What all these have in common is that they involve doing something different, or not doing something such as opening your phone or laptop, checking your emails, answering the phone etc.

I used to be good at that but now I find that each day merges into the next, I read at bedtime and usually fall asleep reading, I crochet whilst listening to the television which in part stops me falling asleep watching the television, and I grab time over lunch to do some puzzles. All this means I do not rest and recognising this I know I need to make changes. I wonder how many of you are finding the same thing. Without the opportunity to do the things we used to do we have become neglectful of caring for ourselves. We have all taken care, been safe, had our vaccinations but we have not really cared for ourselves. We have been creative in our new approach to life, but we have not taken the time to simply be creative, to relax and offer ourselves the space to breathe, reflect and let God talk to us through our creativity. So, I offer you a reflection on which to ponder.

Recognising need

In the maelstrom of life, I need to watch the ripples.

To find a pool and stop

watching as insects touch the water and create a pattern with their interaction, to find a pebble and dropping it into the water sit and watch until stillness returns, all ripples cease and time brings peace.



In the rushing wind of the day, I need to watch the patterns.

To sit back and watch the waving of leaves, the clouds as they drift and change, to imagine castles in the air.



In the constant demands of the timetable, the diary and emails, I need to create space.

To plan for rest and not simply fall exhausted at the end of the day.

To be able to sit and give thanks for life in all its fullness

and not simply that I made it through the day giving thanks for the list of tasks achieved.

I need to breathe and be, to care for others and myself,

to know the value of rest

and to create the space that gives form and structure to a life lived well.



If I do not do this, I neglect myself and I ignore God,

I ignore the very reason to be and that makes no sense for it would be to ignore life.

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