

Time for ourselves

Janet Bird

I often think that June is my favourite month of the year. The flowers are blooming, with luck the sky is blue and there is the whole of the summer to look forward to. Of course, having had spectacular weather over the May Day Bank Holiday weekend the weather may be ghastly by the time you are reading this!

Sitting looking out into my garden brings to my mind one of my favourite passages from the Old Testament

"To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:" Ecclesiastes 3.

These words and the verses which follow them were turned into a song by Pete Seager in the 1950s and then recorded, very successfully in the 60s by the "Flower Power" group the Byrds. The song adds just a few extra words to the original. Mainly the title Turn, turn, turn and the final words "a time for peace I swear it's not too late"

These words hopefully make us realise that our lives, just like the seasons of the year, go in cycles. Each cycle has its highs and lows, and each offers us opportunities to choose our way forward. Sometimes life seems perfect and we feel very happy and in control but at other times we may feel as though life is meaningless or as though we are completely out of control. Perhaps we are doing too much and don't know how to get off the treadmill. Perhaps it seems as though everybody is having a better time than we are (I don't do Facebook, but I get the impression that Social Media has a lot to answer for.)

When we really don't know which way to turn it often helps to talk to somebody who understands what we are going through. We may need to ask for help, even if we find it difficult admitting that we need help. Sometimes just standing back from a situation and giving ourselves time to think or breathe can put things in a totally different perspective.

Many of us need to get over the feelings of guilt if we take some "me" time. If we are able to take time out to read the Bible we can find answers. If we turn to God in prayer we can find comfort. Jesus had a very busy, very troubled and often dangerous few years before he was crucified and yet even he often made time for "me time" when he would get away from the disciples and the crowds and pray to the Father. Often Jesus would go up a mountain to get away from the crowds and having been to the Holy Land last year we saw just how peaceful it still is away from the hurly burly of life in the towns around the Sea of Galilee.

Often we may use the excuse of our busyness to avoid reality but if we can put aside our cares and worries and concentrate on the wonder of creation we can get things more into perspective. Looking out to sea is my favourite place for contemplation; others may prefer climbing mountains, like Jesus, or walking through a forest.

We need to learn to love ourselves just as God loves us and as Jesus taught us. Loving your neighbour as yourself means not only loving your neighbour but loving yourself as well.

Try to make time for yourselves during the summer months, whether you manage to take a holiday or not try to do something different, something which will leave you feeling fulfilled and more aware of God's wonderful Creation.

