

29th April 2020

Time

**“A poor life this if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.”**

William Henry Davies, Leisure

When I was a hospice chaplain, I participated in a “efficacy study”. Management wanted to know how team members used their time, and while it raised “big brother” issues for some, it was essentially an information-gathering exercise, to ensure the hospice was working well.

Over a two-week period, the study necessitated recording my working day in fifteen-minute segments. The “types” of work had been listed and numbered. No 1: *direct patient contact*, No 2: *family support*, No 3: *interaction with the team*, No 4: *record-keeping*, and so on, down to No 15: *consultation with external agencies*. Unused to such detailed scrutiny of my time, I found this process exacting – and time consuming! *Time taken to fill-in the study at the end of each day* wasn’t on the list!

So, on the one hand, it was a chore, but, on the other, it was a revealing exercise. The “chore” part I’ll leave for now. But what I recall of the “revealing” part is not the descriptions for the fifteen-minute segments, but which categories *weren’t* on the list. Where was “thinking” time? Where was “self-care”, debriefing from a difficult situation? Where was the space, the “in-between” bits, the prayer, all integral to my day?

Management was interested in “doing”, with everything being categorised and measurable. And while I can understand that, it lost sight of the “being” and the “unmeasurable” which were still important.

Many of you will be too busy, even in this time of social isolation and restrictions. I know I am. So, make sure you have “being” time as well as “doing”; allow yourself space to think, reflect and pray; be kind to yourself; take time to “stand and stare”; give yourself room for things that have no measurement, other than the restoration of your own soul. And you’ll not pin *that* down to fifteen-minute segments either!

A prayer for today

God for whom a thousand years is but a day, take these few moments, and make them into a thousand years of restoration and renewal for my busy life. Amen

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