

17th July 2020

Friends

**“An elegant sufficiency, content,
Retirement, rural quiet, friendship, books.”**

James Thomson, The Seasons

Books are like old friends. You've spent time with them and come to like them a lot. They've spoken to you, encouraged you, informed you, moved you, excited you, changed you and offered you wisdom. They were around at significant stages in your life, altered the direction of your thinking, clarified things when decisions had to be made and brought you much-needed comfort when you were down. You go back to them, again and again, because you know what your relationship is with them. And when you hold them once more, they reveal new things to you, insights you hadn't picked up on already. Even though you may not have laid eyes on them for a long while, they're always there when you need them, waiting patiently, still prepared to offer what they always did – and more! Yes indeed, books are like old friends.

I've been reacquainting myself with some of these old friends during this lockdown. I have far fewer books than I once did, so the books I've kept are very important to me. Space now determines how many books I have. My wife tells me I've not to buy a new book till I put an old one out. But, how can you discard an old friend just because a new one comes along? Some of the books that are scattered here and there will just have to hang around for a bit till a place is found for them to stay.

That's one of the things about friends – they hang around, exerting no pressure on your time, commitment, contact or love; they are there, ready for the friendship to be drawn upon when needed. Yes, books are like old friends. But old friends are also like books. They will *always* matter!

Today I thank God for friendships given and received throughout my life to which I know I can always return, for wisdom, support, insight and encouragement.

A prayer for today

Today, loving God, I offer my thanks for friends, old and new, near and far-away, for all they give me to sustain my life and my loves, in spirit, emotion and truth. And I pray that as they draw upon my friendship, I won't let them down. Amen.

An original reflection by © Tom Gordon
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