Time

**"Time is
Too slow for those who wait,
To swift for those who fear,
Too long for those who grieve,
Too short for those who rejoice;
But for those who love,
Time is eternity."**

Henry Van Dyke, Time is too slow for those who wait (1905)
A poem read at the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales

Many years ago, a theological student, on a training placement with my congregation, began a sermon thus:

> *Today, before I begin, I invite you to remove your watch from your wrist, put it in a pocket or a handbag, and only put it back on when I'm done.*

I can remember the frisson of tension that went around the church, as people complied with his request and all watches were removed. *And* there was no wall-clock in the church as a substitute timepiece either.

It wasn't that the student was criticising people for their surreptitious glances at their watches during a sermon (come on, own up, we've all done it ...) or to indicate that he didn't want people to know whether he'd broken the church record for the longest sermon ever. It's simply that his sermon was about time, our use of time, how we are governed by time, and whether we might be the better for looking beyond time to the things of eternity. Of all the sermons a succession of students preached in their training with me, this is the one sermon I remember.

So today, guided by a student's thoughts and, indeed, by the poem from the American Presbyterian minister and writer, Henry Van Dyke, quoted above, I invite you to remove your watches, if not for a whole day, then for a part of the day. Give yourself to a process not governed by time. And I'll do it too! We'll see how hard it is, even for a short while. But we might also find that, taken *out* of time, we're taken *beyond* time, to think of deeper things, and maybe even to take a glimpse into eternity.

A prayer for today
*"My times are in thy hand; my God, I wish them there." (W F Lloyd, 1824)
Yes, this time, and for all time, that's good enough for me. Amen*