

20<sup>th</sup> August 2023

## Tap

**"I'm trying to tap into some wisdom,  
Even a little drop would do."**

Paul Simon, *Wartime Prayers*

I don't usually think about prayer when I'm in my local Co-op, but I did today. I wasn't praying that they hadn't sold out of my newspaper of choice, nor that the Post Office wouldn't be closed for a random coffee break. I was simply popping in for a few items, with the intention that I would use the "self-service checkout" and be promptly on my way.

I went to a free "card only" position, scanned my items, pressed the button which indicated I didn't want a bag, and went to use the "tap-and-go" card machine. But nothing happened. I tried again. Same result. So (now somewhat irritated because my quick scoot in and out of the Co-op had been thwarted) I put the card in the machine and realised that, because I use the contactless facility more often than not, I was struggling to remember my pin number. I got there in the end, but not before my irritation levels were touching the top of my scale.

That's when prayer came to mind – even in my local Coop store! I wonder how often we use the self-service checkout in our prayers – when it suits us, a quick in and out, a couple of petitions, tap-and go? It's OK when it works or satisfies our needs in the moment. But when it *doesn't*, and if there's a technical hitch so that we're left unsatisfied in our time with God, when "a little drop" isn't nearly enough, what then?

I have no definitive answer to that, other than to highlight the problem of the "tap-and-go" approach to prayer – prayer on our terms, when it suits our needs, desires, timeframe or purposes. Does our relationship with God not deserve more than that? Might we benefit more if we abandoned our "quick scoot in and out" in our contact with God, and waited, and listened, and deepened our relationship for a while?

Tap-and-go is fine in my local Co-op, and *even* better when it works properly. And, indeed, tap-and-go might work most of the time in our prayers too. But, if you don't like being too long in the Co-op, and waiting to be served is an inconvenience or a burden to you, why not give that time to waiting with God? That, surely, can never be too long ...

### **A prayer for today**

*Lord, I'm sorry this prayer is so short. It's all I have. But I'll have more time later ... Amen*

*An original reflection © Tom Gordon*

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