7th December 2025

Busyness

"O Lord! Thou knowest how busy I must be this day:
If I forget thee, do not thou forget me."

Jacob Astley (English soldier and royalist)

A prayer before the battle of Edgehill (1642), *from 'Memoirs' by Philip Warwick*

In our church last year, a lady, rushing past with a plate of mince-pies at a Christmas Coffee Morning, said: "Oh, there's just *so* much to do. I don't even have time to think …" It's a sentiment we can all identify with. Indeed, as a Parish Minister, I sometimes got very anxious about Christmas. There was so much going on, I knew I'd be exhausted by Christmas Day. It was just *too* overwhelmingly busy. So what are we to do? Jacob Astley's prayer quoted above certainly helps. But, more than that, when we reflect on how much we have to do, might we give some thought to how much is given *to* us – both human and divine? Here's a poem I wrote on that theme for *With an Open Eye* (www.ionabooks.com). Entitled "So Much", it points to the necessary balance between how much we do, *and* how much we gain.

So much to get ready; so much to prepare.
So much to set up and to plan.
So much to provide for; so much to work out.
So much to arrange when I can.

So much to fit in when there's too little time.
So much that's expected again.
So much to accomplish; so much to create.
So much to uphold and maintain.

So much to be done as it's been done before.
So much that's the same as last year.
So much of tradition; so much that's the 'norm'.
So much – though it feels insincere.

So much – so I'll need to take time-out to think.
So much – yes, I'll try to unwind.
So much – how important the message to know.
So much – when there's meaning to find.

So much – when there's purpose I've still to recall.
So much – with more wonder to see.
So much – of the mystery, insight and love.
So much – and all given to me!

A prayer for today

God of Love, in the midst of so much busyness, help, me, to take time to be grateful.

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