

## Time on our hands

One of my heroes is William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury from 1942 to 1944. His untimely death took from the Church of England one of the outstanding Archbishops of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, if not the most outstanding Archbishop. Churchill described him as a “*sixpenny article in a penny bazaar*”. He wrote a wonderful commentary on St John’s Gospel which is both scholarly and deeply spiritual. One of the many things he said was this:

*We batter at the doors of heaven, demanding audiences for our proposals whereby God may save His world, or promote His purpose. But faith consists in leaving Him to take His own way.*

Rt. Revd. William Temple

How often do our prayers consist of long lists about the woes of the world or our communities, family and ourselves. St Benedict counsels against this, he reminds his followers that their prayer is to be approached in a spirit of humility and that we will be heard, “*not because of the eloquence and length of all we have to say, but because of the heartfelt repentance and openness of our hearts to the Lord whom we approach. Our prayer should, therefore, be free from all other pre-occupations and it should normally be short...*”

Julian of Norwich said something similar:

*Then the way we often pray came into my mind and how, through lack of knowing and understanding of the ways of love, we pester him with petitions.*

It is about trust and love, if we trust that God hears our prayers and “knows our needs before we ask” we can rest content in the arms of a loving God who has heard, and will love. Love is the key, if we know we are loved we can rely on the goodness of God in all things. We don’t come with a list of requests into the company of someone we love, we talk, we laugh, we cry, we rest in silence because we trust and love each other.

Julian says:

*The best prayer is to rest in the goodness of God knowing that that goodness can reach right down to our lowest depths of need.*

That’s why she can say, “All will be well, and all manner of thing shall be well, and all will be well.” She knows the love of God deep down in the depths of her soul and her deepest need. So for us; can we throw away the shopping list, (I am not saying that intercession is not important, it is, but prayer is much more than talking with God) and spend time in the silence with the one who loves us deeper than we have ever been loved, who knows us deeper than we have ever been known and who wants to fulfil our deepest needs as we grow in His love.