

The Brickhills and Stoke Hammond

Lent Course 2017

Pilgrims: Meeting God on the journey

A Prayer

Living God,
as Jesus welcomed Mary to sit with him,
and to listen to his teaching;
so may we recognise your presence,
and be attentive to your word for us,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

God of our pilgrimage,
you have willed that the gate of mercy
should stand open for those who trust in you:
look upon us with your favour
that we who follow the path of your will
may never wander from the way of life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Next week

5. Bartimaeus: What do you want me to do for you?

Mark 10. 46-52

4. Martha and Mary: One thing is needed

Luke 10. 38-42

These were the Bible readings for Holy Communion on Sunday:

Genesis 18. 1-10a

Abraham welcomes three passing strangers, and hears God's word for him and his family.

James 2. 1-5

A call not to judge by appearances, but to value every person, and to be open to meeting God through them.

Luke 10. 38-42

Martha welcomes Jesus, and Mary listens to his teaching.

The gospel reading tells us of how Jesus was welcomed as a guest in the home of Martha and Mary. And, in a place and time when men and women were often kept carefully segregated, and when many people thought that religious learning and serious discussion was men's business (and for men *only*), Jesus welcomed Mary to sit and listen to his teaching, to be his 'disciple'.

But, you might want to ask, what about Martha? Was Jesus being critical of her, and devaluing or rejecting what she was doing, in working hard to offer hospitality to her guests? Perhaps he was just saying that there are times when other things matter more, and that what is really important to be aware of the greater priority in each moment and situation.

The Greek of the New Testament uses two different words for 'time':
chronos, which means the practical measurement and keeping of time
and *kairos*, which means the critical time, the moment of crisis and opportunity.

In different situations, one or other of these may be more important – on many occasions other things may be more important than the 'clock-watching' time that we can easily become so obsessed with.

Some questions for reflection

As you hear the gospel reading, do you feel more sympathy for Martha, or for Mary?

Try to put into your own words what you think we can learn from this gospel passage.

What do you think in response to the comments about 'two kinds of time' on the previous page?

Look at the other readings, from Genesis and the letter of James. What do they say to us about our attitude to other people, and our openness to meeting with God?

And bear in mind this verse from Hebrews (13. 2):

Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. (King James Bible)