# **Reflection on time**

This reflection has been prompted by a conversation a few days ago on Facebook between a friend of mine and one of her friends that went like this:-

“Today is the 89th day of March. How many days will April have?”

“About 300 days maybe – or that’s how it will seem. It’s no fun being stuck in on your own.”

“I think it might vary between people – depending on busyness, level of change/trauma, degree of isolation etc. It might seem a normal length for some, and 300 days for others. Perhaps this is always the case.”

This got me thinking about ‘time’ in general and how we perceive the passing of time. I happen to know that the friend who initiated this conversation is now finding that others are experiencing life as she has been experiencing it for the last 30 years, in that she has severe ME and is therefore housebound for about 99% of her life, with much of that time being in bed resting between short times of activity. She says she is finding it interesting to observe the reflections on life from those of us who were used to being busy and out and about all the time. The perception of the passing of time has changed significantly for many of us, but for some, nothing has changed.

There is a verse from the bible that seems relevant at this point. In 2 Peter 3:8 we read, “But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: with the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day”. I have not reflected much as yet on this verse, except to acknowledge that it says something very important about the narrowness of our understanding of God in so many ways. I will come back to it another day, but for today my thoughts have moved on.

Time really does seem to be passing differently to how it was before this vicious virus took hold of, and disrupted, our lives. And I have been reflecting on this aspect of life – how time feels so very different now for many of us. Another quote that someone put up on Facebook when a discussion was going on about how the passing of time is feeling all very strange is from C.S. Lewis who wrote, “The future is something which everyone reaches at the rate of sixty minutes an hour, whatever he does, whoever he is.”  It really doesn’t feel like that just now!

The pace of life has slowed considerably in many ways, but in other ways it hasn’t. If anything, it feels more frantic. For example, there are many more phone calls to make than usual, and there is a huge increase of activity on social media – and that has proved to be too much sometimes! There is an ever-increasing number of offers to join in with online activities via Zoom and that is proving to be overwhelming for me, and probably others too. What do we choose, what do we not choose?

Those of us who are in isolation, other than our one time of exercise a day, have total choice about what to do, or not do, each day. It is all too easy to drift. It is very easy to lose all sense of the rhythm of life. It is all too easy to become isolated in ways that are not helpful. For those of us who were used to being out and about every day for one activity or another, the days are probably feeling very strange still, and will do until we get into some sort of routine that will anchor our sense of time. For others, whose lives have been mainly homebound for whatever reason for some time, life might not feel very different at all. They already have a rhythm to their lives that has hardly been disturbed. Maybe these are the two different sections of humanity for whom that initial Facebook discussion is relevant.

My prayer is for all who are struggling at this time to find a rhythm in life. I pray for those who are finding that each day feels like a month. May we all know God’s loving and patient presence as we work out our new way of being and connecting with each other and God.

And finally, Ecclesiastes 3:1 says, “There is a time for everything and a season for every activity under the heavens.” I cannot help but wonder what we will learn from these times, and also, what time and season are we in just now? Maybe time will tell!