

What are you waiting for?

It's a question we tend to ask when we're hoping to pitch ourselves or others into action. There's no time like the present, the question suggests. Grasp the nettle. Strike while the iron's hot. Do it now.

But there's another way to respond to the question. After all, we're actually waiting for lots of things. Like me, you're probably waiting for spring to come. Perhaps you're waiting for a hospital appointment, or for exam results, or just for a bus.

Waiting is an experience with which we're all familiar. 'Your call is important to us. Please stay on the line. You are currently number 17 in the queue...'

I'm terrible at waiting. Waiting feels like a frustrating hiatus between desire and fulfilment, or a period of anxiety and dread. We desperately want to end the wait, to reach our goal, to have our call answered, and we fill the 'meantime' with distractions.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus tells his disciples to wait for him while he goes on alone to pray. These days, the disciples, instead of falling asleep, would more likely fish mobile phones from their pockets and fill the wait by scrolling through Instagram or checking the headlines, the weather forecast, cricket scores, stock prices.

Here in the Savernake Team we're waiting to hear news about the vacant role of Team Rector. The other day, after a joyous service to celebrate the achievements of our young Ride & Stride team in Shalbourne, I asked the Archdeacon if there had been any interest in the advertisement for the Savernake Team Rector role in the *Church Times*, any applications. 'It's early days, Colin,' Archdeacon Alan said, kindly. 'Be patient.'

And he's right. Whether we fill our waiting with sleep, like the disciples in the Garden, or with distractions, we're wasting the waiting. The waiting is important.

In his wonderful book, *The Stature of Waiting*, R.H. Vanstone writes, 'Waiting can be the most intense and poignant of all human experiences – the experience which, above all others, strips us of affectation and self-deception and reveals to us the reality of our needs, our values and ourselves'.

Over the last few months and across all the parishes of the Savernake Team, Jo and I have encountered again and again a renewed sense of collaboration and fellowship, a rediscovery of our shared needs and values and hopes. There's anticipation, of course, but also a revelation of *who we are*. It's in the waiting that we discover ourselves, as disciples.

Yours in the queue, and in Christ,

Colin