

## **Rector's Ramblings – July 2026 (Rooted in Rest)**

As we enter July, our countryside is in magnificent, full bloom. The hedgerows are thickening, the fields begin to be heavy with grain, and the long, sun-drenched afternoons present the perfect backdrop for a traditional summer.

For many of us, this is a season of intense activity - fêtes to organise, gardens to tend, holidays to pack for, and children to entertain during the school break. Our diaries quickly become cluttered, and our minds inevitably follow suit. Yet, amidst the vibrant busyness of midsummer, our faith calls us to pause and encounter a profound, sacred counter-cultural truth: the necessity of being rooted in rest.

In our modern world, we often view rest as a luxury, or worse, a sign of weakness. We wear our exhaustion like a badge of honour, measuring our personal worth by the length of our to-do lists. However, a Christian theology of rest teaches us that taking time for ourselves is neither selfish nor optional; it is a spiritual discipline and a divine command. When God established the Sabbath, it was not because He was tired, but to weave a rhythm of restoration into the fabric of creation itself. Rest is an act of trust, a declaration that the world can spin for a moment without our direct intervention, because it is ultimately held safely in God's hands.

*"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." — Matthew 11:28*

Jesus Himself consistently modelled this behaviour. Throughout the Gospels, we see Him repeatedly withdrawing from demanding crowds, seeking solitary places by the hills or the lake to simply pray and be. He understood that to pour out love, grace, and healing to others, He first needed to be filled up in communion with the Father.

If the Son of God required quietude to sustain His ministry, how much more do we need it to sustain our ordinary lives? Taking time for ourselves allows us to step away from the noise, encouraging our souls to drop anchors deeply into the love of God.

To be rooted in rest means allowing ourselves the grace to simply 'be' rather than constantly 'do'. It might mean sitting quietly in the garden listening to the blackbirds, taking a mindful walk through the woods, resting in one of our beautiful churches, or enjoying a slow cup of tea without checking our mobile phones. It is in these unhurried moments that we become attuned to the still, small voice of the Holy Spirit, finding the clarity and resilience we so desperately need.

This July, I invite you to intentionally carve out sanctuary space in your week. Let us relinquish the burden of constant productivity and reclaim the holy gift of leisure. By grounding ourselves in God's peace, we will find that we are better equipped to love our neighbours, serve our parishes, and appreciate the beautiful world we have been given.

With every blessing for a peaceful and restorative summer,

Yours in Christ,

Mark

The Revd Mark Woodrow (Rector)