



Summer 2019

Dear Friends,

I was recently asked 'How do you experience God?' I can't remember my answer but depending on where I am physically and emotionally the answer may be different. As the summer ends I'd like to suggest a few ways you might have experienced a little of God this summer.

Summer is a time of open road - a time for exploration - for winding down some small road you've never visited before. You want to go there just because you're curious and it seems to call. God is down the road and can be found through exploration, by the curious.

We experience God through our free time. In summer we seek time to relax from our busy schedules. Schools break for the summer, have a holiday from the work and activity of learning, essay writing, studying for test, passing exams. It's ironic that the very word, 'Schola' from which we get the modern words, scholar and school, means 'Free Time'. Schools and scholarships were originally meant to interrupt our busy daily life and activity to create space, free time to contemplate the mysteries of life. Now school is a time of pressure and school holidays offer free time for the rarest of activities - free time to think.

In summer we experience God through rest. He's the God of the Sabbath who worked and then rested on the seventh day of creation. In Isaiah God says of rest - "*in returning to me and resting in me you will be saved. In quietness and confidence is your strength.*" He also says "*Be still and know that I am God,*" ... Be still, rest.

Summer is a time to experience the God of Play who creates an awesome variety of plants, flowers, hills and valleys, bugs and dogs, sandy beaches and wooded mountains, rippling brooks and frothy oceans. Summer is a time to give thanks for "the laughter of children who play in the summer grass". The God of Play delivers us from too much seriousness.

Summer is a time to return to old haunts and familiar places. To languish in memories of past times, people and places. A time to read old stories and to discover new ones. The bible is full of memories and stories of all genres which entertain and teach.

Summer is a time of work for the farmer who toils long, and hard knowing more than most the God of Summer. Aware of the rhythms of life, of how the seasons come and go and how dependent we are on the right mixture of sun and rain. Through the labours of the farmer we experience God's gracious gifts of fruit, vegetables, wheat, corn and more.

Summer is a time of friendship and faith, parties and celebration, hospitality and socialising. Jesus knew how to party. His ministry seemed to go from one meal to the next, one social gathering to the next. He even changed water into wine to allow the celebration to continue.

Lets be thankful for:

open roads and open spaces that peak our curiosity

free time to think

summer rest when we may be still

time to play

memories and time to make them

stories and time to hear to them

work and the gifts of the harvest

friendship and faith, parties and celebration, hospitality and socialising.

I hope these ideas open for you an awareness of the beauty and grace of God and that this summer time, however you experienced its rhythms, was a special and Godly time!

Rev'd Nicki