

Lectionary readings: Jonah 3: 1-5, 10; Psalm 62: 5-12; 1 Corinthians 7: 29-31; Mark 1: 14-20

For reflection and prayer

- **Jonah 3:** There is never a dead end with God, always the chance of a new beginning. God didn't give up on Jonah, and He won't give up on us either. The people of Nineveh, although living evil lives, saw their need of God and repented. We may look around our society today and think it's too far gone, but we may be surprised by those who respond positively to any talk about God. How willing are we to share our faith? God responded to the people of Nineveh with love and forgiveness, as He always does. This is a story of God's grace, a God who always responds in love to those who turn to Him. Is this the God we know?
- **Psalm 62:** v5: *'I wait quietly before God, for my hope is in him.'* (NLT) *'For You alone my soul waits in silence; my hope is in the Beloved.'* (Psalms for Praying)
Waiting on God in silence - how we need to make time for stillness and silence in our lives. The Psalmist is full of confidence in this God of unfailing love. This God is our Beloved. Let's spend time this week in silence and stillness, reaching out in love to God and letting God love us.
- **1 Corinthians 7:** A very apt message for the present time. We have trusted in our wealth, and greed has characterised our lives. Paul urges us, as he did the Corinthian Christians, to live to please God. How can we live more simply, sitting loosely to the things of this world? We need to let God shape how we live. *'Time is*

of the essence.' (v29 The Message) Let's reflect this week on how we spend our time and let's bring God into our ordinary everyday lives and concentrate on the things that have lasting value.

- **Mark 1:** *'Time's up. God's Kingdom is here. Change your life and believe the message.'* (v15 The Message) God has broken into human life. When the disciples responded to Jesus' call to follow Him, their lives changed for ever. They had to let go of the past and go into an uncertain future. They were embarking on a journey of faith, setting out into the unknown - a scary thing to do. But they were going with Jesus and that must have given them courage. We, too, are called to follow Jesus. This is not just a matter of belief, but a journey through life hand in hand with our Beloved, who is full of unfailing love and whom we can trust utterly. Let's reflect on our response to Jesus' invitation: *'Come with me.'* Let's reflect on how we can bring God into every aspect of our lives and walk with Him through each day. How would that change your life?

A prayer

Merciful God, we have promised to be followers of your Son, Jesus Christ. Forgive us, we pray, for all in our lives that denies our promise: for being slow to care and quick to criticise, for being slow to love and quick to despise, for being slow to give and quick to take, for being slow to stand for justice and quick to settle for compromise. Forgive us for being slow to do your will and quick to follow our own desires, for being slow to worship you and quick to glorify ourselves. Forgive us, we pray, and free us from the weight of the sorrow of sin's guilt. Speak to us again your word of new beginning: that if we are truly sorry, you truly forgive, in Jesus' name. Amen.

(Donald Hilton)