

**Church of the Ascension, Hilton
Sunday 11 July 2010**

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**Luke 10: 25 - 37
The Good Samaritan**

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**Unrelated Intro:**

It's been quite a month – Loong school holidays, the Soccer World Cup  
Many names have become household names:

Kaka / awful French coach Domenech /  
Boateng (Germany) and Prince Boateng (Ghana / Ba-Ghana ~] /  
Antics of Maradona / strikes of Forlan and Robben  
Greek players Papageorgacopoulos and Salpingidis  
As I said, household names ☺

Two quotes about the World Cup from this past week:

Paris Hilton, the American socialite arrested for being in possession of dagga,  
ought to have been charged by FIFA with “ambush marketing” – doesn't she  
know that the official FIFA product is COKE!

I am getting a bit annoyed!  
Every time I go to a Vuvuzela Concert  
Some rude people stand up and start playing soccer!

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Today: Familiar passage and story of Jesus: “The Good Samaritan”

You've heard it often before, I've preached on it before
So here's my take on it for today, not picking up on every aspect of it but...

Most of us are middle-class and do not face a daily struggle for survival or wonder if we'll get a meal at the end of the day. If people like us are asked, “What are your most valued commodities in life?” these would be some likely responses:

Food, vehicle, home, jewelry or other prized or sentimental possessions, job,
unit trust & pension package, family / children / grandchildren [4 limited time
periods... ☺]

What about TIME?

It is a highly valued commodity, esp. for people like us. We're busy. Life makes heavy demands on us; we make demands on ourselves, and we live in a time-urgent society. Most of us are desperately short of time and would love more of this valuable commodity.

Time for what we HAVE to do
 Time for what we NEED to do
 Time for what we WANT to do

Selfish about its use

[We all need time alone / to do things that “feed our soul” – we can become physically and emotionally ill if we don’t have it. So don’t misunderstand what I’m saying as being critical of all of us having at least some time in that way]

But it is a “commodity” in short supply
 Can’t buy more of it... only so many hours in the day
 Squeeze more into the day

We even pay people to do work we could do ourselves – maybe we don’t have the inclination (ironing), also because we don’t have the time, or to give us leisure time to do more of what we want to do, when we’re not so busy doing the things we have to do (working / feeding the family / shopping / sorting out the accounts and payments etc)

Several issues in Jesus’ story to answer the question, “who is my neighbour”.

One that is not clearly stated but suggests itself and “speaks to me” is TIME

Those who came by may have had several reasons not to stop, including fears, ritual purity laws, not wanting anything to do with a stranger, etc.

But also quite likely: All in a hurry, no time to stop
 Certainly that’s how I relate to the story and also how I apply it to my life.
 Often we have too little time to give people; when faced with a choice to show mercy or to be efficient and get on with what we’re busy with, we may prefer the latter!

Give people time – a gift
 Important relationships and friendships require it
 Necessary to avoid taking important people for granted
 Giving someone the “time-of-day”
 Listen
 People in distress
 Children – a very important issue. Damaging to brush them off frequently or not have time to “hang around” – it sends a message of not being valued

Two recent experiences

- Person recovering from a stroke (elaborate)
[Requested to visit; describe circumstances and the process]
- Adult person in the parish whose brother in his 60's has been in institutional care most of his life (mental handicap, and now physical handicap probably as result of minor strokes, plus host of other difficulties). Went to "place of care". Not first time – but not in a long time hence hugely aware of what we take for granted.

I was made aware not only of what this man experiences, but of what his family (esp. his sister) experiences in assisting with caring for him, ensuring his well-being, etc. His sister is one of the few people he still knows and recognises. Burden / many laughs, some joy, but much concern. Walking for just a short while in the shoes of someone else...

Doing what was natural - no extra effort, no heroics
I was embarrassed that the people involved thanked me for my time and trouble, even though it was not out of my way (elaborate on some of their comments)

But I was reminded of the importance of time to people
Expression of compassion, of being with people, of knowing something of their struggles and issues, "walking in their shoes" even a short way

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**How we live is important to Jesus**

Even if we think we are important, the needs of others matter

**On the highest throne in the world, we still sit only on our own bottom.  
[Michel de Montaigne 1533-1592]**

In his story, Jesus made a radical point about who we consider to be our "neighbour" and how we respond to our neighbour.

As people of faith, striving to be followers of Jesus, none of us are more "high and mighty" than the one who called us to serve others. How we respond to others around us is a mark of our discipleship of Jesus, who also took time out for the people considered un-important by society.

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