

### It's the little things

*“Brown paper packages tied up with string,  
these are a few of my favourite things”*

One of the things I enjoyed and looked forward to in lockdown were the Friday night streamings of classic musicals on YouTube; everything from *Jesus Christ Superstar* to *Phantom of the Opera* and *The Sound of Music*, from which the above lyric is taken. Amongst all the joys of being out of full lockdown there are a few little things I still miss from before, including inviting a mixed group of friends around to my house (as opposed to standing about a garden in the rain), spur-of-the-moment trips to places you haven't pre-booked a time slot for, singing hymns and songs in church. Sometimes the bigger adjustments are easier – wearing a facemask everywhere at least means you can go shopping otherwise 'as normal'.

As time passes, I find myself also missing some things about the lockdown that were pleasant; little things that brought enjoyment or lifted the spirits. Hearing the birds singing for example. Less traffic noise. Not having to drive anywhere. More time to spend in my family support bubble or on much-neglected hobbies. A better work/life balance. These and things like them that enhanced our lives are all good and precious things that, if we were fortunate enough to experience them more in lockdown, are things we should hold fast to and not let them go easy in the face of those old familiar drives to work longer hours, be more productive, and so on. Those ways we lived life and how society operated that were not wholly good, should not be simply accepted back unchallenged and unquestioned, when we saw in lockdown that things did not *have to be that way*. Making the good things about lockdown permanent changes to everyday life will require some big changes and adjustments to the way things are done though. Sometimes the bigger adjustments are harder – but no less worth doing, and can often lead to the beautiful little things too.

Jesus once told his followers<sup>i</sup> not to worry too much about everyday life, what to eat or what to wear, but instead to strive after the fundamentals of creating a just and compassionate society where the right things are done and everyone is freed to live a wholesome life – what he often called “the kingdom of God”. He didn't say this because food, clothes and the everyday little things of life didn't matter, but to emphasise if we get these big things right, then these little goods will happen too. If everyone's working practices are such that they are able to earn enough to meet basic needs and also spend time with

their families and friends, on social clubs or sports, volunteering or participating in a faith community, everyone's quality of life is raised – as will the quality and commitment of everyone's work. People being able to work more from home will reduce hours spent commuting, reduce traffic, reduce pollution and allow us to hear the birds more (for example).

These things *can* happen. It took a major event like a global pandemic to make them all happen at once, but so can all of us working together in little ways to encourage and shape big societal change that enables all of us to live better and enjoy little moments of beauty. Whether that is writing to our MP or a government minister, signing or starting a petition, peacefully demonstrating, changing our personal way of life – driving less, recycling more, working with our staff or managers to encourage more life-giving working practices and routines... These are just examples I have seen people doing in recent weeks; you can probably think of your own. There's always something we can do, even if it seems a little thing; a lot of little things can add up to something big that gets noticed and starts a movement. If you've ever disturbed an ant colony or wasp's nest, you'll be able to picture that really well.



Are we disturbed enough by how the big things have been for so long to band together to bring about real and lasting change, little by little, so we can all enjoy more of our favourite things?

I'd love to talk with you about it, if you are.

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<sup>i</sup> Matthew 6:25-34.