



Pastor's Page

The Extra Hour

When I was a child I vividly remember school children wearing Diddy Jackets! (The worrying thing is that it seems only I remember them!) They were small, sleeveless, luminous orange tops that the pupil slipped over their normal coats. The reason? - so that they could be seen by car drivers in the dark winter mornings. It was the year in the 1960s when the government experimented with the hours of daylight by keeping the country on British summer time all the year round (Yes it was tried) In other words we didn't move the clocks back as we did last night (hope you remembered) heralding the arrival of winter. Personally I would love us to remain on British summer time (I must write to "Jim'll Fix it!") keeping the evenings relatively light as opposed to this sudden plune into premature darkness. Yes, I accept that moving back to Greenwich meantime makes it lighter in the mornings ensuing children are safe going to school and also providing farmers with an extra hour to do their work, but, couldn't we bring back the Diddy Jackets (they weren't that bad) and even provide some for Farmers and their cattle if needs be!

But I guess we all deal with this time honoured practice in different ways. I met someone on Friday who's been on Greenwich meantime all summer! When asked why she said, "well it just saves having to move my watch twice a year!" (I'm not sure if this is the height of ingenuity or laziness!) However, perhaps it's all a matter of perspective. There are those (my mother amongst them) who love moving the clocks back because they get an extra hour in bed! (Couldn't she just go to bed earlier?)

I admit there is something very appealing about the idea of being offered an "extra hour" because for most of us there never seems enough time. On Friday I was conducting the funeral of someone associated with this church. As I planned the service in conjunction with her loved ones, I gently reminded them that we wouldn't have a lot of time. Services at crematoriums have to be fitted into a strict half hour slot including arrival and departure, so the actual ceremony is about 20 minutes. (This is always a big challenge for me!) As we waited at the crematorium on Friday, my eyes were firmly fixed on the clock. Then the appointed time arrived but there was no sign of the hearse. The minutes ticked by, and still no sign. I even saw people arriving for the funeral following the one that I was officiating at and I tried to keep calm. Then with just 20 minutes to go before the next service started the horse-drawn coffin arrived. As I made my way into the crematorium ahead of the coffin and took my place at the front of the chapel I looked again at the clock and thought. "If only the Lord could give me some extra time." (He didn't, but we just made it!) I didn't think about it then but pondering it later I wondered if this Lady in those last few days of her life wished or even prayed for some "extra time" – even an extra hour to be added to her life – and if so what would she have done with it?

Following the night that we were given "an extra hour" perhaps we should think about how we might spend our final hour on earth. And once we've decided, resolve to live each hour like that, in the light of Gods' presence. The bible says "God is light, in him there is no darkness at all" (1 John1:5) Jesus is the light of the world and he calls us to follow him - no Diddy Jackets required!

28th October 2007