

Stewardship link

Sometimes, a part of our role as stewards is to recognise that something has genuinely run its course and should be allowed to die. On other occasions, we realise that with the equivalent of a bit of pruning (and maybe tough pruning!) and manuring (or feeding) and lots of tender loving care, something might yet bloom and bear fruit again.

Prayer is crucial in ensuring that we make the correct judgement – and do not lose the good fruit that could have been God’s had we done the work before us.

To do

During our lives, God gives us plenty of opportunities to use our time fruitfully and yet sometimes we don’t plan our time as wisely as we could.

Try to spend some time each day this week becoming aware of how you have used time.

Do you need to spend more time in prayer, or is there someone you know who would benefit from some extra time from you?

This week, how can you be filled with compassion for others and for yourself?

Take some time to note your responses in your notebook.

Diocese of Portsmouth Stewardship Reflection 3rd Sunday of Lent Year C

‘I have been coming to look for fruit...’

(Luke 13:7)

Opening prayer

Leader:

Let us pray
for confidence in the love of God
and the strength to overcome all our
weakness.

Response:

**Father,
you have taught us to overcome our
sins
by prayer, fasting and works of
mercy.
When we are discouraged by our
weakness,
give us confidence in your love.**

(Opening Prayer for Third Sunday of Lent)



To share

What insights have you had in the last week? Is there something in your notebook that you would like to share with others in the group?

To listen

Luke 13:6-9

To think about

The fig tree has “exceeded its sell-by date.” The landowner has run out of patience waiting for fruit from it.

How do we respond to the urgency of the landowner?

Does this fit in with our image of a God of infinite patience?

Or is it an uncomfortable wake up call to act when decisive action is needed?

To reflect on

Think of an occasion when you have come close to pulling up a plant in the garden and have given it a second chance.

Think of a time when you have come close to giving up on a job or a project that seemed to be going nowhere. Did you give it a second chance - or did you give up?

When have you felt that your patience has run out with another person – a friend, a colleague, at work, within your family, in the parish?

Often we can be our own most severe critic. When are you harsh with yourself and want to give up? Why?

To discuss

How and where do you experience God’s compassion and love in your own life?

How are you being compassionate and loving this Lent in your use of time, to allow you to pray, fast and to give alms?

How has your understanding of the call to ‘bear fruit’ been transformed by this passage?

What is the difference between patiently trusting that God’s plan will unfold in God’s own time and sitting back and not playing our part in it?

How does this passage help you to see what you might need to do to make full use of your time, talent and treasure?



Closing prayer

Together:
**The Father of mercies has given us an example
of unselfish love
in the sufferings of his only Son.
Through our service of God and neighbour
may we receive his countless blessings.
Amen.**

(Adapted from Solemn Blessing for First Sunday of Lent)