

# +WEEKLY SERMON

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## Off-grid but switched on to real life

Earlier this summer my wife and I escaped the noise of modern life and headed to Northumbria, staying in a small lodge nestled in the woods near Bamburgh.

I'm not saying it was all rustic charm – in fact, it was a lovely architect-designed place with many mod-cons inside (no TV though)!

But it was still a retreat into simplicity; no constant notifications, no emails, just the quiet rustle of trees. It was a great place to relax, to take time out to pray and to be still, while feeling at one with nature.

One evening we sat watching a buzzard flying in endless circles as it searched for its latest meal. Another day we shared our breakfast time with some curious hares and later we saw some deer.

As we strolled local beaches; walked the trails and sat by the lodge fire, I found myself reflecting on how people lived in this region 150 years ago.

Life was slower, more local, and deeply rooted in community.

Villages were self-sufficient, and the pace of life allowed for reflection, connection, and rest. There was no internet, no social media, and certainly no artificial intelligence.

Contrast that with today's world, where everything moves at lightning speed. We're connected to everyone and everything, yet often feel disconnected from ourselves and each other.

The rise of AI technology has brought incredible advancements, but also new questions about identity, creativity, and purpose.

In the midst of this whirlwind, I was reminded that God's presence remains constant. He sees us, knows us, and loves us - whether we're in a bustling city or a quiet forest.

Jesus Christ, God's son, came to Earth to bring peace to our hearts. And that peace is still available today, even in a world that never seems to slow down.

If you're searching for meaning or simply a moment of stillness, I encourage you to explore the Christian faith. Visit your local parish church, which you'll find via [www.achurchnearyou.com](http://www.achurchnearyou.com); or find your nearest Alpha Course via [www.alpha.org.uk](http://www.alpha.org.uk) and ask any questions you have about God.

Meanwhile, if you get the chance to kick back and go somewhere off the grid then take it. You might just rediscover something you thought you'd lost.

**Ronnie Semley, Diocesan Communications Manager**

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