

## TUESDAY COMMUNION

**Hymn:**

**Reading:** James 4.11-17

**Prayers:**

My mother in law comes from good Plymouth Brethren stock. Her offspring tend to be rather amused by her very traditional use of the letters “DV” when she’s talking about the future.

“I hope to go and visit the McMurrans, DV,” she’ll say. “DV” if I remember rightly, stands for Deus Vultente, “God willing” and was used by some Christians as a reminder that none of us know precisely what the future holds.

Of course, people of many traditions and faiths have said something similar through the centuries. We don’t know what tomorrow will bring and none of us can be sure whether our plans will work out. Yet, what James is saying is not just a commonplace spoken by many people in many places.

He’s making a specifically Christian challenge to a way of thinking about the future which excludes the will of God.

The first question which any Christian needs to ask is, “What does God want of me or the community of which I’m a part?”

It can be very easy for us just to go with the flow of life and never to question the patterns of life in which we are involved. That can be true of the church and of her ministers.

We can be caught up in ways of life which have been carried on year after year and we can not conceive of any other pattern to our days. So we continue and perhaps fail to hear what God is saying about what he really wants of us.

The second question James is asking is about the attitude of the wealthy members of the church to the business that they undertake. The system of Roman roads enables the church members to travel with ease and to conduct business in distant places.

We get the feeling that they are boasting about how they’ve made their large profits and perhaps and how they’re going to build bigger and better villas....

James isn’t opposed to Christians being involved in business but his whole letter suggests that there are wealthy members of the Church who put making money and using the power it gives them before anything else.

Their business plans and the use they make of their money are all undertaken without asking the question we find in the Hebrew Scriptures:

**“What does the Lord desire of you?”**

- “Is going about your business as usual what God wants?”
- “How does he want you to use the money you make?”

We all know that making long term plans is important for individuals and communities. It would be very short sighted if we just hoped that somehow this world would muddle through its environmental crisis and not to make and implement plans for a low carbon future.

Indeed, for many of us this is what the Lord requires of us because we believe that he has given a responsibility to care for the earth.

In our own lives we make plans for the future, even if it is only about how we will use our time over the coming week.

The questions James raises are ones which affect us too:

“How does God want us to use our time?”

“How shall we use the resources God has given us?”

Our response may be very domestic:

- the caring phone call or visit to someone who needs our friendship
- the gift to a charity or someone in need
- time spent in reading and prayer
- the letter written to our MP or on behalf of Amnesty.

What does the Lord require of us this week, this month, this year? A question for the powerful and for ordinary people like you and me?

Amen.