

## Time for God – Take 2

**Purpose:** To assist the congregation with further reflection on the theme of the Sunday service/passage.

### Week beginning Sunday 24 February 2019 Time not yet come

**Pray** that we would all be open to hear God's call and ready to respond to it - while being open and understanding of those round about us who may not (yet) share our perspective. Pray too that we would be understanding of others when we have a different view about their plans.

**Read** Read the passage (preferably in an easy to understand version). John 7:1-31.

**Background** We don't hear a lot about Jesus' siblings but here we have an account that they weren't just seeing eye to eye with him. The context is the Feast of Shelters – which was a religious festival remembering the wilderness wanderings of old (Moses' time) but which had come to be very significant in family terms too. Jesus was sensing that he was under the spotlight and might be under threat from the religious authorities. There were undoubtedly tensions with his brothers (who at this point don't seem to share the disciples' beliefs about him. Perhaps they felt that Jesus was letting the family down by not wanting to be with them but for their part they were unaware of the pressures he was under.

### Possible questions/points to consider

1. Jesus would be the first to acknowledge that family ties are important. What does this passage teach us about the tensions between a) different understanding about priorities among different members of a family/extended family? b) our obligations towards God and those to our family? How do we know how/when to move forward with things God wants us to take on? What part do our friends and family have in this? How important is timing?
2. How do we continue to support friends and family when our ideas differ? What can we do to help one another understand God's purposes? Do we give sufficient attention to the ways in which relationships change within families (or the church) as children grow up, as people get older, develop new skills and interests?
3. In one sense you might say that Jesus changed his mind – he didn't feel he could attend the festival openly but he ended up going. How open are we to God moving us along – but in unexpected ways? How might we be less “solo” about important decisions and take more account of input from other trusted friends or family? How can we get beyond “but God is telling me this” to having a more open and honest discussion with others, without being untrue to God?
4. How do we give children and young people space to make their own decisions, appropriate to their age and experience without dictating to them? And similarly for older people? And be supportive of all as best we can, whatever they decide?
5. We kept the sermon/talk short this week – feel free to explore any topics from the passage or theme even if they weren't raised on Sunday.

**Prayer** Lord thank you for all the support, love and encouragement that we can get from friends and family – for the wisdom and support we can offer and glean from our circle and from the fellowship of the Church. Help us to make use of it and to be mindful that there will be differences of opinion. Help us to cope with the tensions and to be honest and open and accepting of them. May we be clearer than ever as to what it is you want us to but never to use that as an excuse for side-lining our obligations to one another, for it is you who gives us the gift of friends and family. Amen.