

They also serve...

‘They also serve who only stand and wait.’

Milton’s sonnet 26, 1673

We were in the Apple shop getting computer help. One of us was asking questions, listening intently, entering codes and information and reacting to answers with more questions. The other was quietly standing and waiting – but much more – waiting attentively in moral support, a comforting and patient demeanor, a kindly shoulder to bear the shopping bag, an occasional helpful prompt and a willingness to wait as long as was necessary in the hope of a rewarding cup of coffee to follow.



It was a simple, easily overlooked, illustration of the gift of ‘patient waiting’ – the service of simply ‘being there’. Like waiting at the school gates, waiting for a bus, waiting for a baby to be born, waiting for a hospital appointment, waiting for an answer, loitering with intent, or just waiting expectantly, hopefully, without any idea of what may happen next. Waiting can be a useful prayer time!

Moses waited on the mountain. John the Baptist waited for Jesus. Jesus waited 30 years before he engaged in his ministry. He waited at the well. He waited for people to come to him. Mary and the women waited at the cross. The disciples waited in the upper room. We too are called to wait in faith during many times in life – to wait prayerfully, mindfully and hopefully.

My soul waits for the Lord, more than those who watch for the morning. I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word do I put my hope.

Psalm 130.5-6

Oct 2025