

## Stay connected!

### [John 15: 1-8](#)

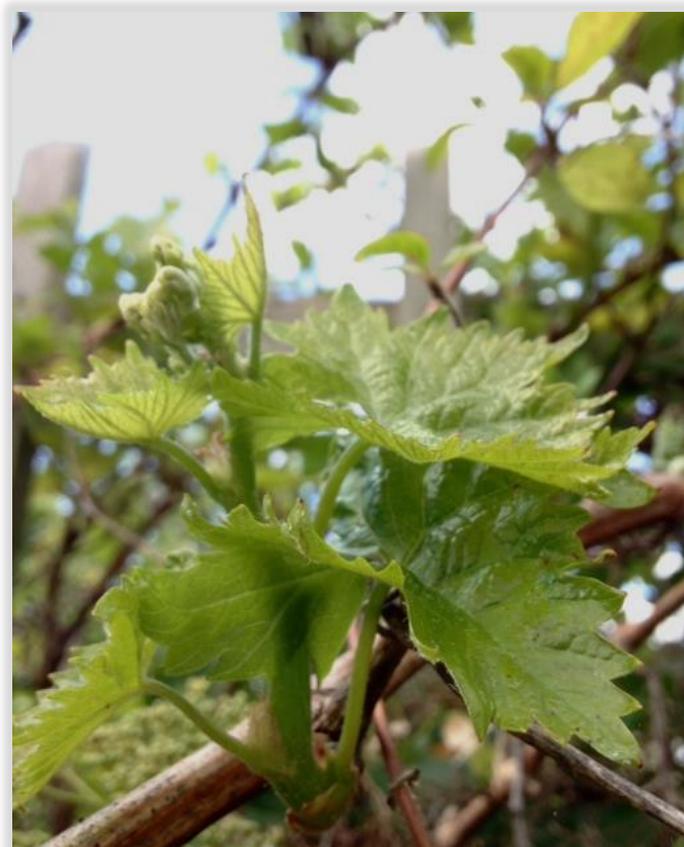
Jesus was familiar with the business of cultivating vines. It would have been a huge family affair, keeping the vines trimmed and ensuring that they were cared for in order to ensure a good yield of grapes later in the summer.

At this point in our springtime, the grape vine in the vicarage garden is just bursting into life. It's really exciting to watch, as apparently dead branches begin to put out green leaves. But those branches can only bring forth that new growth if they are well rooted. A dead branch is no use for anything.

Jesus says in John 15: 5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

You may feel disconnected from Jesus at the moment when we can't meet together. It may seem as if the prospect of fruitfulness is a distant one.

Don't be discouraged! Picture yourself more as a vine which is in a pot rather than in a field. Whilst we may be apart, you can still keep rooted with Jesus, and you can still bear much fruit.



How are you going to do it?

Ensure you have a good water supply: pray regularly! You may find using online apps such as the Church of England Daily Prayer or Pray as You Go useful. You don't have to follow a set order of words at all! Just keep up the habit of deliberately spending time with God. You may find that your daily exercise, or household chores provide you with a clear space to pray, sharing your concerns. Just as water needs time to soak in to be really effective, remember to give time to listen as well as to speak.

**Apply good nutrition:** Read the Bible and reflect on it. There are many helpful study aids which you can use. The Bible Reading Fellowship ([www.brf.org.uk](http://www.brf.org.uk)), Scripture Union ([www.scriptureunion.org.uk](http://www.scriptureunion.org.uk)), and CWR ([www.cwr.org.uk](http://www.cwr.org.uk)) all have a range of booklets available. If you've never tried it, how about settling down to read one of the Gospels in one sitting? Mark's Gospel is good for this.

Use our All Saints' resources and those from other churches to help sustain you. **Have you tried using the Church of England's new free phone resource yet? Daily Hope on 0800 804 8044 offers 24-hour a day access to prayers, recordings of hymns and services. Do encourage those who don't go online to give Daily Hope a call.**

**Do some pruning:** Is it time to ask God to help you change some of your old habits? Could you use this Christian Aid week to enable you to focus on the needs of others in the developing world?

**Look forward to the next stage:** If we stay connected to the true vine now we can look forward to further growth to come. Do please encourage one another during this time so that we can all keep well-rooted.

May God make each of us fruitful and show ourselves to be Jesus' disciples.

*Rev'd Vicky Barrett*