

The Slowest Neighbourhood

By Preston Pouteaux

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Why is it that many of the best things in life take time? One of my neighbours has been teaching me this. He has three excellent hobbies and each of them celebrate the art, and pay-off, of patience. Last year my neighbour introduced me to the mouth-watering joy of smoked meat. I can tell when he's got his smoker going, and I'm sure everyone in our community can smell the sensational aroma of hickory, apple wood, and baby back ribs. I learned that smoking meat takes days of preparation, and hours of tending. This is the true antithesis of fast food and it tastes as good as you might imagine. Or better.

This same neighbour also introduced me to the world good scotch whisky. He lived in Scotland years ago and came to learn the subtleties and painstaking craftsmanship that went into good scotch. The best bottles can take years or decades to mature, and after a small dram of the good stuff, it's a let down to try anything else.

Lastly, my neighbour is preparing for a marathon. Each day he's putting on miles as he zips along the various paths in our city. He even challenged me to join him and regularly calls me up to go running with him, and I do, and I'm not very good at it. I know full well why I'm not very good at it; I don't practice. I don't put in the hours of patient and consistent plodding, rain or shine, that's required to prepare for a marathon. But my neighbour has put in the time and very soon he will cross that finish line enjoying the well deserved pay-off.

'Slow' is not lazy, 'slow' is not unproductive. 'Slow' is a value that celebrates those things in life that take time. 'Slow' recognizes that some things simply cannot be rushed. Relationships take care, time, and attentiveness. Raising children requires parents to slow down and be present. As a pastor I know that church communities take time and growing in the right ways over the long haul is always best. I also believe that growing in faith and learning to trust God can be like a beautiful, long, winding journey. When we realize that the good stuff in life takes time, then the pressure is off. We don't have to dazzle or amaze, we just have to enter in. The Bible often celebrates

'slow,' it says that "love is patient and kind." Like good, slow cooked food, or the best relationships, the best things in life often take time, patience, and kindness.

Think about a time when you had to slow down and wait for something good. Was it hard to be patient? Think about a time when you decided to rush something that required slow patience to turn out right. How did that go? When we pay special attention to those friendships, family relationships, children, co-workers, or neighbours that require slow, gentle, attentiveness, we may discover that 'slow' could just be the best way way to go.

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