

The Bishop of Coventry's 2016 Christmas Message

Some of the Christmas adverts really make you pause and think. Have you seen the one about a dad who's rushed off his feet getting ready for Christmas? There's so much going on that he just can't do what he wants to do – spend time with the people he loves.

Who doesn't want to make things special for the people they love at Christmas, and find them "the greatest gift"? Yet most of the time we're so busy, making plans, searching shops or sites, worrying we're not going to get everything done, that we forget the gift that really counts.

But the dad in the advert gets it. Rushing around trying to find his family the best presents, he suddenly realises – "the greatest gift that I can give is *me*".

In the midst of all the hustle and bustle, the frantic round of getting ready that actually takes us away from the people we love, the best present we can give to someone else is ourselves.

Christmas tells us that this is what God thinks too. Into our busy, complicated lives, God gives us "the greatest gift". We easily forget it. We don't stop to look. But at Christmas, God says again to each of us: *'I give you the greatest gift: me'*.

In Jesus, the baby in the manger, God gives us himself. Now that's a story to really make us pause and think.

The Rt Revd Dr Christopher Cocksworth