So here we are, back again! In our church July is a busy time as we prepare for September, then it all goes quiet and things go into a bit of a hibernating state over August. Here at Home Park hibernation is over and we crawl out from under the pile of leaves blinking in the sunlight and wondering who all these new faces are. Never has a teamsheet been so universally referred to than on the first home game of the season.

It’s a strange time with the first few home games of the season: a bit like coming back to school and reuniting with lots of familiar faces again. I wonder what it must feel like for the new faces coming into this peculiar establishment? The general feeling amongst players is that this is a really nice club to be a part of, and I would agree. There are people here operating out of a love of Argyle and a love of people, and it shows. Calling it one big family is a bit of a cliché, but for some of these guys coming down and finding their feet it really is just that.

Did you enjoy the World Cup? With England out early it did mean that we could all concentrate on the football, and it didn’t disappoint. Until the last quarter of an hour that is. In honour of the Andres Gurrieri (and nothing to do with the team I drew in the Argyle office sweepstake) I was cheering on Argentina and they came close, but the best team probably won.

Being involved at the club and getting to know the players means that with each season passing the number of teams you look out grows and grows, as more of your past acquaintances move to clubs elsewhere in the country (sometimes the world). We get this in church as well – my church is the Vineyard and we regularly have people moving on: either for work or because they train with us and get sent out to lead churches elsewhere (big shout out to Mike and Lizzie Scott who left in July to help lead a Vineyard church in Vancouver, and the much-loved Jay Lawrence working out in London Ontario).

The difference is that we can say goodbye – in football you often don’t get the chance to say goodbye as players move on in the close season. They’re used to it: it’s part of the deal. I’m getting used to it and it’s nice to know that the family of football, much like the family of God, extends far and wide. I’m reminded of a quote from the philosopher Dame Edna Everage: ‘My mother used to say that there are no strangers, only friends you haven't met yet. She's now in a maximum security twilight home in Australia.’