Remembrance

When I clocked that the Saturday before Remembrance Sunday was the first round of the FA cup I prayed that we would be drawn at home. Why? Because it is a special time for us as a club, and for me personally, when we get to remember those who have given their lives to secure and protect our freedom.

These are important moments, when we press pause on whatever we are doing in order to reflect, remember and observe.

The first two minute silence in Britain was held on 11 November 1919, when King George V asked the public to observe a silence at 11am, one year after the end of World War I.

He made the request so "the thoughts of everyone may be concentrated on reverent remembrance of the glorious dead".

Nowadays I believe that there is added impact because normal life is so noisy, so busy, and our hearts and minds are constantly bombarded with shouts for our immediate attention. When this is stopped, even for just two minutes - which seems like ages at the time – the space created is quite powerful. And when it is a shared experience amongst thousands of others all in one place that impact is exaggerated.

In that space created today in honour of those fallen, what will you be thinking? Where will your heart wander? If you have lost loved ones in conflicts past I expect you will be remembering them in particular.

Maybe you haven’t lost loved ones in wars, but as we stop and fall silent memories and losses unrelated to conflicts will surface. Let them - it is good to process these emotions rather than try to contain them and keep them down.

If you are uncomfortable during the time of silence before today’s game this might be an indication that you are missing the opportunity in your life to stop and reflect. The peace you feel is the peace of God and it to be embraced and welcomed: allow the thoughts and feelings to emerge and if a tear is shed then so be it.

And of course let us keep in mind the reason for our moment of peace. There are people who have gone before us and paid the ultimate price in order to secure and protect our freedom. As a Christian I believe that they are following in the footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ who embodied the verse, ‘Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.’ Let us give thanks.