

Time is short

By [Cynthia D. Weems](#)

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*For more commentary on this week's readings, see the [Reflections on the Lectionary](#) page, which includes Weems's current Living by the Word column as well as past magazine and blog content. For full-text access to all articles, [subscribe](#) to the Century.*

In a [recent interview](#), Diane Keaton told the story of when she first decided to adopt a child. She was driving her father home from the hospital to die. Having been diagnosed with a terminal illness and having completed the last possible treatments available to him, he was heading home to spend his last days--and she was the one behind the steering wheel.

Keaton said she was at a loss for words on that car ride home. Yet her father chose to speak. He wished he had spent less of his life working and spent more time with her. He wished he had traveled more. He wished he had taken more risks.

Keaton remembers hearing his words and reflecting, there in the car, on her own life's regrets. She, too, been averse to risk-taking, especially in the area of intimacy with other human beings. It was then, she remembers, that she chose to pursue adopting a child.

Paul writes to first-century Christians living in Corinth that "the appointed time has grown short." We live some many years after Paul's writing and are fairly certain that the time is not so short. Or is it? We are still waiting for the time he so deeply believed was at hand.

While we wait, we find wisdom in Paul's words, advice like that of a dying father to his daughter. Indeed, time is short, and we cannot be sidetracked by those things that try to claim importance in our lives.

What defines us, rather, is the call of God in our lives. Paul's concern was how our identity as followers of the risen Lord impacts our behavior, our outlook, our

perspective. Isn't this still a grave concern? How is it, we ask, that this call manifests itself in how we live and love and make decisions?

It's an important question to ask, in the midst of a worshipping community, at the beginning of a new year. "For the present form of this world is passing away."