Sermon:

TV programme: Escape to the Country could be an attempt by couples to retreat from the ‘noise’ of life.

Life can be noisy: background noise, machines, TV, music in shops, chatter. Mostly we cope OK.

Sometimes noise is silent – inside our heads clamouring for attention: others’ demands, moral compass.

Take Elijah - confident before the prophets of Baal, but feared Jezebel. Her ‘noise’ and the ‘noise’ of responsibility was too great and he fled. But he could not get rid of the noise.

So how did God eventually get through?

[1] Elijah shared his noise

Read the story of 1 Kings 19.1-15. God cannot get through to Elijah; his internal noise dominates his prayer.

[2] Elijah goes to a special place

From Beersheba to Sinai in 40 days (cf 40 wilderness years for Israelites in the Exodus, 40 wilderness days for Jesus after his baptism).

Note that Sinai was the place where God revealed Torah to Moses.

[3] God shows Elijah that God talks through silence.

Was God in the wind, earthquake or fire? No, but in the silence that followed.

If God is everywhere, why could not Elijah hear him in his busyness?

We say we want to hear God, but continue to shun the silence. Is silence golden? Painful? Fearful? Or what?

We too can [1-3 above]. There is no shame in sharing our noise with God, but it must not stop there. We also need a special place (At Lindisfarne we could use the small office room as a quiet place before Sunday services). If this is a place with no noise, maybe we will hear God as Elijah did.