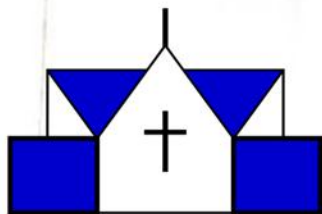


# ubbc

UPPER BEEDING BAPTIST CHURCH



## Month of Prayer

...if my people  
...will humble themselves  
...and pray

**Daily Devotions**  
**1-31 March 2011**

*Spending March alone yet together, seeking the Lord*

## **INTRODUCTION**

I'm told that there are sixty four things to remember in order to hit a golf ball properly. I don't know all sixty four, so have no hope of remembering them all! However, this doesn't stop me playing golf. I might not be as effective as I would be if I were to remember all sixty four things – but I get around the golf course eventually!

So it is with prayer. When we look at the depth of the topic that is prayer; when we see the volume of books that have been written and scriptures urging us to pray – it can overwhelm us, to the extent that the very last thing we want to do is pray! Not many of us find it easy to pray. In fact some of us find it so hard that we end up giving up, feeling guilty and never experiencing the adventure of prayer.

These Bible Notes have been produced to help all of us find some support in prayer. As we go through the month you'll see that all of the notes are dedicated to a different aspect of prayer.

**Week 1** will be concentrating on our **approach to prayer**, being right with God as we pray

**Week 2** will explore some of the issues around praying for others, or **intercession**

**Week 3** will look at **everyday prayer**

**Week 4** will give us some tools in **listening to God**

Then in the last few days of the month we shall see that Jesus Himself is the one who prays on our behalf – Jesus the Intercessor.

I hope you'll find the notes useful and that you'll be encouraged that, as a fellowship, we are journeying through these scriptures together. Our Sunday worship will be based on these same themes so that we get a chance to explore them when we gather for worship too.

Remember, there are opportunities this month to come together to explore and experience prayer. **Please commit yourself to two per week**, and let's see what the Lord can do.

Mondays	7.00 am – 8.00 am
Tuesdays	8.00 pm – 9.00 pm
Wednesdays	9.00 am – 10.00 am
Thursdays	8.00 pm – 9.00 pm
Saturdays	9.00 am – 10.00 am

My heart for these notes is not to inform you about prayer, or even to persuade you that it's a worthwhile and life-changing occupation, but to help us engage with our God - for after all, the goal of prayer is not prayer itself, but meeting with the Lord of the Heavens.

### ***Preparing to pray .....***

We all lead different lives, which means that we'll be able to look at the notes at different times of the day. It might even be that you'll have to rearrange your lifestyle in order to find 15 minutes when you can look at the day's readings. Please try. It's so easy to be swamped by life – but taking 15 minutes out to be still and pray will have dramatic effects on the other parts of your life! Don't worry about what time you do the readings, but please try to keep to the right day, and be encouraged that there are many other brothers and sisters in Christ who are reading and thinking the same things as you are on any given day!

In all the study, readings, thoughts and prayers which I offer to you, don't forget to pray. It's so easy to **read about** prayer, to **think about** prayer, and **talk about** prayer – but don't forget to pray! How? You pray as you can – as it comes to you – just go ahead – pray! I find it helpful to 'settle down' before I pray or read scripture – to try and gather my thoughts and be quiet. You might find it helpful to use the words of the song below to read (or even sing!) quietly to help you to focus your thoughts.

*Be still and know that I am God* ( x3 )

*I am the Lord that healeth thee* ( x3 )

*In Thee, O Lord, do I put my trust* ( x3 )

### ***Why pray? .....***

Jesus, the Son of Man, came to set us free. He has come that we might have life in all its fullness. Yet for many believers the experience of prayer is not a 'freeing' one, but a binding one. We can feel so inadequate, so defeated by the daunting subject of prayer that it leaves us feeling empty and useless. Very often we can feel that we're not praying hard enough and think "If only I could pray more, then God will be satisfied with me and my conscience will be clear."

The great truth of the good news of Jesus is that God loves us completely already. He doesn't want us to pray to Him out of a sense of duty, but because He wants us to know Him. It's all too easy for us to say "I know God loves me unconditionally" with our heads, but knowing the truth in our hearts is much more difficult. How the Lord longs for us to return home to Him and to pray to Him from a heartfelt relationship, rather than because we feel we ought to.

Are we to believe that the Father's heart is blessed when His children come to Him out of duty, fear, or because they think He will love them more because of their efforts?

The Lord has already shown us that in Jesus He loves us completely. Not only are we unable to make the Lord love us any more by praying, it is unnecessary. He already loves us completely. This transforms our prayer from a dutiful discipline in which we grudgingly participate into a loving relationship of communication with the One who is for us and "who is able to do exceeding, abundantly, above all that we ask or think." (Eph 3 v 20)

Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2011



Luke 11 vv 1-5

## The Adventure of Prayer

*"Lord, teach us to pray"* Luke 11 v 1

Almost every book on prayer I have read will begin by recognising that prayer is an unnatural activity. It's very different to the rest of life. In prayer we have to let go of our independence, of our self-supporting nature, because prayer requires us to go to Someone who is outside of our sufficiency.

The first disciples were aware that they needed to be taught to pray, hence the request 'Lord, teach us to pray'. This prompted Jesus to give us the Lord's Prayer which has become as comfy as an old pair of slippers to many of us over the years! And yet, did Jesus really expect us to just pray the Lord's Prayer as it is, or is He wanting us to understand something of what is involved in the adventure of prayer?

It seems to me that Jesus is not wanting to give us a prayer to use as it is, but to give us some of the basics when it comes to prayer. Think about the Lord's Prayer and what it's saying, and use it to pray today as we begin the adventure of prayer.

We need to pray. Never mind the mechanics - pray. Never mind how other people pray - you pray. Never mind that you get your words mixed up - pray. Pray as you can for that which is important to you - and pray that you might learn what's important to the One to whom you are praying.



*Our Father in Heaven,  
May your name be honoured,  
Your Kingdom come,  
Your will be done  
On earth as in Heaven.  
Give us today the food we need.  
Forgive us our debts,  
As we also have forgiven our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil,  
For the Kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,  
For ever and ever. AMEN*



**Digging deeper** – if you have the time and the inclination!

Read Luke 11 vv 1-4 and compare it with Matthew 6 vv 9-13. How are these accounts of Jesus' prayer different? How do you think Jesus intended these words to be used? (eg. learned off by heart as an index to remember for what to pray?)

Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2011

## The Approach of Prayer

*God is ready – are you?*



Matthew 7 vv 7-11

*“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find;  
Knock and the door will be opened to you”*

Today’s scripture gives us a lovely picture of a doting father itching to give his child good things. Notice the *‘how much more’* that God wants to give us. If only we were more ready to listen than to speak; to forgive than harbour a grudge; to pray than ‘do’. And should God answer your prayers, would you be too busy to even notice?

Prayer changes things because God is ready and willing and able to act! So we come to Him in prayer – just like a little child would go to his or her loving father. We come with mixed motives – sometimes our motives are selfish, other times less so, but we come nevertheless.

As we come to pray now, read through the Psalm below and then sit in silence for a couple of minutes. You might find it helpful to mull over *“If you, then, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in Heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him!”* Ask the Lord to put people’s names or situations on your heart and mind, and as situations pop into your mind pray for them, asking your Father for whatever is appropriate, be it healing, forgiveness, strength, or peace.



*Praise the Lord, O my soul;*

*All my inmost being, praise His holy name.*

*Praise the Lord, O my soul,*

*And forget not all His benefits -*

*Who forgives all your sins*

*And heals all your diseases,*

*Who redeems your life from the pit,*

*And crowns you with love and compassion,*

*Who satisfies your desires with good things*

*So that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s. (Psalm 103 vv 1-4)*

*“How much more will your Father in Heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him!”*



**Digging deeper** – *if you have the time and the inclination!*

Jesus used a human father to illustrate how ready God is to meet us in prayer. Why is it that we sometimes struggle to believe that God is ready and willing to hear and to act?

Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2011

## The Approach of Prayer

*Being right with God – Criticism Fast*



1 Corinthians 4 v 5

*So we do not criticise at all; the hour of reckoning has still to come, when the Lord will come to bring dark secrets to light and to reveal life's inner aims and motives. Then each of us will get his portion of praise from God. (Moffatt translation)*

Criticism is a barrier to effective prayer. We justify it so well that it is packaged in a way which looks justified. We call criticism by another name: realism, observation, honesty, even wisdom. But like cheap furniture, our veneer of wisdom thinly masks something more sinister – the chipboard of judgmental criticism.

Who are we to judge? What right do we have to criticise? Time spent with God in prayer will teach us that we ourselves are living in God's grace and have no room to judge one another.

For just today – try a fast of all criticism. Yes, even value statements. Stop completely making any judgements about anyone. No critical statements whatever will be difficult, no doubt, but then we will perhaps understand how much of our time is spent in criticism, and what a barrier it is to our walk with the Lord and our prayer life.

Oswald Chambers warns us “we see where other folks are failing, and we turn our discernment into the gibe of criticism instead of intercession on their behalf. He reveals things in order that we may take the burden of these souls before Him and form the mind of Christ about them.”



**Digging deeper** – if you have the time and the inclination!

Nothing extra today – if you stick to the criticism fast you will have enough to do!



Show us good Lord

The peace we should seek

The peace we must give

The peace we can keep

The peace we must forego

And the peace you have given in Jesus our Lord.

Pray for those people you find it easy to criticise – just think of them and their situation – pray God's blessing on them, and pray for yourself that God would give you the strength to complete the criticism fast.

Friday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2011

The Approach of Prayer

***Forgiveness unlocks forgiveness***



Matthew 5 vv 21-24 and Matthew 6 vv 14-15

*“If you forgive others when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”*

Matthew 6 vv 14-15

Jesus’ teaching is uncompromising. Within the context of prayer, how can we hope to pray, to be one with God, if we are not one with each other? John tells us, in 1 John 1 that our relationships with one another affect our spiritual life with God. This means my relationship with God is dependent on my relationship with you!

At the heart of any relationship is forgiveness. At times we may not feel like forgiving one another, but forgiveness is an act of will, not of feelings. Unless we learn to forgive one another, we will never experience intimacy with God in prayer.



As a fish that is dragged from the water gaspeth,  
So gaspeth my soul;  
As one who hath buried his treasure  
And now cannot find the place.  
So my mind is distraught:  
As a child that hath lost his mother,

So I am troubled, my heart is seared with sore anguish:  
O merciful God,  
Thou knowest my need,  
Come, save me, and show me Thy love.

Tukaram. 1608 – 1649

In the stillness ask the Lord ‘Who do I need to forgive that I might be forgiven?’ You might need to talk and pray with someone about some of the things which come up from today’s thought. There are plenty of people who would gladly help.



**Digging deeper – if you have the time and the inclination!**

Consider: Why does the Lord require us to forgive in order to forgive us? Who does this serve? Why is it that the Lord expects us to forgive one another regardless of whether or not the offender is repentant, and yet the Lord only forgives us when we are repentant towards Him?

Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2011

## The Approach of Prayer

**Today we have the opportunity to explore prayer together in a workshop style format. Coffee will be served from 8.30 am and we will start at 9.00 am. Various different people will be helping us explore and experience prayer together. Do come along!**

**We will finish at 11.00 am**

### Getting ready to pray



Psalm 24 vv 1-6

*“They will receive blessing from the Lord  
And vindication from God their Saviour.”* Psalm 24 v 5.

I think of prayer like a corkscrew. Imagine the shape of a corkscrew, twisting deeper into the cork as it turns around. So it is with prayer. As we recognise God for who He truly is in all His holiness and splendour, we see ourselves for who we truly are, in all our fallenness and need of mercy.

This is the Psalmist’s experience. He recognises God for who He is (vv 1-2) and then sees himself for who he is (v 3) and recognises his need to approach God with ‘clean hands’ (upright deeds) and ‘pure heart’ (right motives).

In this sense our adventure of prayer is one of constant approach and of promised blessing (v 5). Only from our brokenness can we really understand God’s grace towards us. Only then are we free to forgive and be forgiven. Only then, as we approach, can we pray and relate and listen and be with our God.



*Almighty God, Spirit of purity and grace, in asking Thy forgiveness I cannot claim a right to be forgiven, but only cast myself upon Thine unbounded love.  
I can plead no merit or desert;  
I can plead no extenuating circumstances;  
I cannot plead the frailty of my nature;  
I cannot plead the force of the temptations I encounter;  
I cannot plead the persuasions of others who led me astray;  
I can only say, for the sake of Jesus Christ Thy Son, my Lord. **Amen***



**Digging deeper – if you have the time and the inclination!**

If you have more time because it is a Saturday, take a bit longer to reflect on a favourite hymn or a Psalm (like Ps 27, 46, 139). Allow its words to sink in and let your mind wander as you give God the opportunity and time to speak to you.

Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2011

## The Approach of Prayer

The two worship services are dedicated to the topic of prayer today.



Morning: God is willing.

Luke 18 vv 1-8

Evening: Mercy in our time of need.

Psalms 51

Consider one of these passages – read and re-read it

Ask “What is God saying to **me** through this passage today?”



Spend some time praying the Lord’s Prayer, slowly.

Pay particular attention to

‘Your Kingdom come’ and ‘Forgive us our sins as we forgive ...’

**Digging**



**deeper** – if you have the time and the inclination!

Read Psalm 51 in the light of 2 Samuel 11 v 1 - 12 v 20.

What does this teach us about finding mercy in our time of need?

Purify my heart  
Let me be as gold  
And precious silver  
Purify my heart,  
Let me be as gold,  
Pure gold.

*Refiner’s fire  
My heart’s one desire  
Is to be holy  
Set apart for you Lord.  
I choose to be holy  
Set apart for You  
My Master,  
Ready to do Your will.*

Purify my heart  
Cleanse me from within  
And make me holy.  
Purify my heart,  
Cleanse me from my sin  
Deep within.

Monday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2011

Prayer of Intercession

**Ready to stand in the gap**



Isaiah 6 vv 1-8

*I heard the voice of the Lord saying "Whom shall I send? And Who will go for us?" And I said "Here am I. Send me!"* Isaiah 6 v 8

Intercession – asking prayer – simply means that the pray-er is ready to stand in the gap. To stand in the gap between the Lord and a situation or persons; to pray on behalf of others.

What a wonderful way to demonstrate care and compassion for people – to pray for them. What a powerful witness to be able to tell someone *'I'm praying for you'* because you care. What a privilege to be able to bring huge, world-wide issues to the attention of the Sovereign Lord.

Of course, it isn't as if the Lord needs us to draw things to His attention, as if He would otherwise forget. But what honour He has bestowed on us that He is willing to allow us to stand in the gap, to pray on behalf of others, if only we would say to Him *'Here am I. Send me!'* He may not send us *physically*, but He will allow us to ask on behalf of others.

We need no special skills or words or formula. We need not babble on using long words. Simply, we need a heart which is for God and for those for whom we pray. *'Here am I. Send me!'*



*Let the healing of Your love, O Lord,  
So transform me that I may play my part  
In the transfiguration of the world  
From a place of suffering, death and corruption  
To a realm of infinite light, joy and love.*

*Make me so obedient to Your Spirit  
That my life may become a living prayer  
And a witness to Your unfailing presence.* Martin Israel

From the TV news or from a newspaper pick out a couple of stories where you could 'stand in the gap'. Take them to your prayers every day this week.



**Digging deeper** – *if you have the time and the inclination!*

Many people find writing down prayer topics helpful. It reminds them for what they have been praying and is useful to see how God answers our prayers. Give it a go this week – jot down your prayer topics and what specific things you prayed for. Use your journal as a reminder of your prayers.

Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2011

## Prayer of Intercession

*How then shall we pray ... ?*



2 Corinthians 10 vv 13-15

Psychologists speak of spheres of influence and spheres of concern. Our sphere of influence denotes those things (relationships and situations) in which we can exercise a degree of influence (i.e. family life, work life etc.). Our sphere of concern denotes all those things about which we are concerned. Anxiety can come if our sphere of concern is greater than our sphere of influence.

For example, I am concerned about peace in the Middle East (sphere of concern) but I am powerless to bring peace to that region (sphere of influence). What I can do is to focus on those things which I **am** able to influence. Those relationships, that realm of service, those people and situations that God has given me.

As He did for Paul, God has designed for each of us a limited scope of activity, and these things can form the basis of our prayer lives: in the family, at work, in church.

Those things which constitute our area of activity (our sphere of influence) is where our prayer should start. These are the places where God has called us to work and live, and it makes good sense to focus our prayers on those things about which we experience the most. Here I usually know just how to pray, and very often find myself being the answer to my own prayers.

Whilst my prayers might be focused in the realms of my small corner of the world, I am still concerned for the Middle East, and I'm able to pray to One whose sphere of concern and sphere of influence match. In other words, I pray about things which are far beyond my ability and my understanding because "*He is able ...*"



*At our stations or in study  
At home or abroad,  
May God keep us joyous  
And faithful to the task  
That the Holy Spirit guides us to do.*

*Donald C Henry, Caribbean*

Spend some time bringing those situations and relationships in which you are involved in your 'sphere of influence'. Then, in faith, come to the One '*who is able*' with those things in which you are powerless, but about which you are concerned.



**Digging deeper** – *if you have the time and the inclination!*

I mentioned that at times I find myself the answers to my own prayers. How can this be, and does it mean that I am trying to make God do what I want Him to?

Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2011

Prayerful imagination

Prayer of Intercession



Ephesians 3 vv 14-21

*“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be the glory in the Church by Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.”* Ephesians 3 vv 20-21 (NKLV)



*God, of Your goodness, give me Yourself,  
For You are sufficient for me.  
I cannot properly ask anything less, to be worthy of You.  
If I were to ask less, I should always be in want.  
In You alone do I have all.*

Mother Julian of Norwich. 1342-1443

Our imagination, or rather our lack of imagination, lets our prayers down. We pray to One who is able to do not just what we think is right, not even what we dare imagine; but exceedingly .... abundantly .... above all that we ask or think!

Here are some other translations of the same verses. Read through them slowly and marvel at the God to Whom we pray. And then let us pray with more confidence than ever before for those on our hearts and minds, for those we read and hear about in the media: because God’s goodness and ability to work is beyond our wildest dreams!

*Now to Him, who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. AMEN* (New Revised Standard Version)

*Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! AMEN.* (NIV)

*Now glory be to God who by His mighty power at work within us is able to do far more than we would ever dare to ask or even dream of – infinitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts or hopes. May He be given glory for ever and ever through endless ages because of His master plan of salvation for the church through Jesus Christ.* (Living Bible)



**Digging deeper** – if you have the time and the inclination!

Spend some time learning one of these sets of verses. Try picking one with which you are least familiar and commit it to memory so that you call it to mind whenever you pray.

Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2011

Prayer of Intercession

*In the Name of Jesus*



John 14 vv 1-14

*Jesus said "And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father." John 14 v 13*

What a promise! We can ask anything in the name of Jesus and it will be done for us. 'Lord, I need a new car, in the Name of Jesus!' or 'Lord, I need to win the lottery, in the Name of Jesus!'

It's not like that. The 'Name of Jesus' is not meant to be a magic formula added on to ensure that we get what we want. It is not like rubbing the genie's lamp. Asking 'In the Name of Jesus' means asking in line with the will and purposes of God Himself; asking in a way which will 'bring glory to the Father'.

So, as we come to prayer, let's not rush to our heavenly Father telling Him what we would like and how we would like it done. Let us tread carefully, for we are on holy ground. As the Psalmist commands, 'Be still and know that I am God.'



*Lord God, we ask your guidance and wisdom  
in learning to discern Your will.*

*Help us not to lose hope when overwhelmed by the enormity of  
poverty, hunger, and oppression among our people.*

*And give us the courage to work towards your justice wherever we live,  
so that Your Kingdom on earth may become a reality.*

Lesley Anderson, Panama

As we pray, be still and say 'Today Lord, I want to know what's on your heart. To feel your compassion, to weep with your tears, to know where you want me to 'stand in the gap' to pray on behalf of others.'



**Digging deeper** – if you have the time and the inclination!

Add into your journal the situations and the people that come to mind as you pray. Look over the other names and situations that are already written in, and pray for those people once more. Are there any ways in which the Lord has already answered your prayers?

**When we do not know how to pray .....**



Romans 8 vv 26-31

*“The Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.”* Romans 8 v 26

Sometimes even the most articulate among us struggle for words to pray. At times, we don't know what to ask for. An elderly person is very ill again; should we pray for recovery or for the Lord to take him home? A marriage is in trouble; should we pray for an amicable separation or for a seemingly impossible reconciliation? Sometimes we just don't know how we want to see God move.

At other times, the longings in our hearts are too deep or painful to formulate into words. In one Bible translation the above verse reads: *‘God’s Spirit actually prays for us in those agonising longings which never find words’.*

In both cases, when we run out of ideas in prayer and when our prayers are too painful to utter, God's precious Holy Spirit stands in the gap on our behalf. He reads between the lines.

The Psalmist reminds us that *‘Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely O Lord,* (Psalm 139 v 4) God is not impressed by our many words - the Romans 8 passage assures us of that. Sometimes it is best – when words become difficult or too painful – to just sit in the presence of God. There we find One who prays on our behalf, who translates the longings of our hearts and offers them to the Father as part of our living sacrifice of worship’



*Breath of God,*

*fill me with presence divine  
overwhelm me with Your love.*

*Fire of God,*

*cleanse me from all wrong  
purify my heart  
melt away all that is not of You.*

*Power of God,*

*give me Yourself that I might  
find rest in You,  
find peace in You,  
find the One who will understand me  
and my words  
and my thoughts.*

Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2011

Prayer of Intercession

***A heart of Thanksgiving***



*“Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.”* Colossians 4 v 2

We’ve all heard people who have amazing stories of how the Lord has moved in their lives. Very often it leaves the rest of us feeling somewhat inadequate. *“Why doesn’t God do those things in my life?”* we might well ask.

The likelihood is that God does move as powerfully in our lives, but we’re not accustomed to look for it! As a piano tuner listens carefully for any change in pitch necessary to tune a piano, so we must learn to be as watchful of what the Lord does in our lives and in the lives of those around us.

Grandparents often remark on how much their grandchildren have grown since they last saw them. Their parents sometimes don’t notice the changes because they see the children every day, and aren’t accustomed to look at the children differently.

This brings us to Paul’s counsel: *‘Always maintain the habit of prayer; be both alert and thankful as you pray.’* (J B Philips translation)

As we pray, let us be observant to see how God answers our prayers and ushers in His Kingdom, and then let us be thankful for the way He moves in our lives and in the lives and situations around us.



*Lord, we thank You again and praise You for what You have done;  
We proclaim Your greatness and we exalt Your name together;  
For You answer all our prayers and free us from our fears.  
You are near to those who are discouraged,  
You save those who have lost all hope.  
Lord, You are good to us, and we are happy in Your care:  
So we would honour and obey You  
And thank You with all our heart. AMEN.*

Michael Perry (based on Psalm 34)

Think back over the last week of your prayer life. Remember those things for which you prayed. Be watchful as you devote yourself to prayer and give thanks as you begin to see God move in those situations for which you pray.



**Digging deeper** – *if you have the time and the inclination!*

To think about: How can we be thankful if it seems that God hasn’t answered our prayers? What light does 1 Thessalonians 5 vv 16-18 throw on this?

Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2011

**Prayer of Intercession**

The two worship services today are dedicated to the topic of prayer

Morning                      Ask, Seek, Knock                      Luke 11 vv 9-10.  
Evening Reflection at Communion

Consider again the passage from Luke 11 – read and re-read it.

Ask: 'What is God saying to me through this passage today?'



Spend some time praying the Lord's Prayer, slowly. Pay particular attention to 'Give us this day our daily bread' and 'lead us not into temptation.'



**Digging deeper** – *if you have the time and the inclination!*

Read 1 Samuel 1 v 1 – 2 v 11.

If someone were to come to you in a similar situation to that of Hannah, how would you pray for her? What words, if any, would you use? Would it simply be a case of 'asking and receiving'?

What a Friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and grieves to bear!  
What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer!  
O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear,  
All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.

Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere?  
We should never be discouraged; take it to the Lord in prayer.  
Can we find a friend so faithful who will all our sorrows share?  
Jesus knows our every weakness; take it to the Lord in prayer.

Are we weak and heavy laden, cumbered with a load of care?  
Precious Saviour, still our refuge, take it to the Lord in prayer.  
Do your friends despise, forsake you? Take it to the Lord in prayer!  
In His arms He'll take and shield you; you will find a solace there.

Monday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2011

*Praying as we can*

**Everyday Prayer**



Matthew 6 vv 1-8

*"Pray as you can, not as you cannot."* Don Chapman

Early African converts to Christianity were earnest and regular in private devotions. Each one reportedly had a separate spot in the thicket where he would pour out his heart to God. Over time the paths to these places became well-worn. As a result, if one of these believers began to neglect prayer, it was soon apparent to the others. They would kindly remind the negligent one, *'Brother, the grass grows on your path.'*

Sometimes we don't pray because we feel as though the things that we bring to the Lord are trivial. When we know of people who are really suffering how can we bring our minor troubles to Him? We can feel as though we need to get everything 'just right' before we can pray, and so we daren't bring our requests to God. Yet the model that Jesus offers us here is of coming to a Father who already knows what we need. Even little things that are important to a child are important to a loving Father.

This week we are going to be looking at everyday prayer; about how to pray for the ordinary. However, before we can pray for the ordinary, we need to trust that the One to whom we are praying is ready to listen – more than that, ready to answer! The Lord is not impressed with long sentences or highbrow prayers. He delights in His children coming to Him as they are – *praying as we can, not as we cannot!*



*Lord, how desperately I need to pray,  
Yet sometimes I don't know how,  
Or why, or for what.  
My words fail me.  
I have mixed motives.  
I get distracted.  
Even though there is so much about which I need to hear You.  
Help me to come to You:  
First, not last.  
With everything  
Even the little bits  
Which make me, me.*

PJB



**Digging deeper** – *if you have the time and the inclination!*

Make a list of the things about which you have never prayed, and yet are part of your everyday life. Maybe it's about safety in driving (even around town); maybe about energy to last the day; maybe that there will be a Doctor's appointment available when you call for one. Pray through the 'little things' of your life.

Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2011

Everyday Prayer

Seeing God in the ordinary



Matthew 6 vv 25-34

*“See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labour or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendour dressed like one of these.* Matthew 6 v 28

Richard Foster writes *“the discovery of God lies in the daily and the ordinary, not in the spectacular and the heroic.”* The promise of Jesus before He ascended into heaven was *“surely I am with you **always**”* Matt 28 v 20. Always. In the humdrum of ordinary life. At work, at play, at home, on holiday. In routine and ordinary life.

We might not see many lilies growing in our gardens, but our lives are filled with the presence of the Creator God. How beautiful and extravagant is His creation. How it speaks of a careful, precise, loving touch. Just look out the window and see!

Also in routine: that we are fed, and clothed and alive because of His grace towards us. Never again can ‘ordinariness’ be ‘ordinary’. God is present: when we are washing the clothes, vacuuming the lounge, reconciling the bank statement. God’s Spirit dwells with us.

So suddenly, the ordinary becomes the holy. Holy, set apart for Him. The routine about which we readily complain yet in which we live, has become the place where God Himself is ready and able to meet with us. We need no mountain-top experience to experience the presence of God. We need no Sunday worship or ‘Thought for the Day’ to meet with the Risen Lord Jesus.

All around us the Lord has said: *‘Behold! marks of Me are here.’* In the lilies, in the everyday-ness of life – the Lord is with us.



*Almighty, most holy, most high God,  
Thank You for paying attention to small things.  
Thank You for valuing the insignificant.  
Thank You for being interested in the lilies of the field, and the birds  
of the air.  
Thank You for caring about me.  
In Jesus’ name. AMEN.*



**Digging deeper** – if you have the time and the inclination!

Spend some time thinking about the day ahead of you, or reflecting on the day you’ve had. Where will you/did you experience the presence of God? What ordinary things could speak to you of His love for you?

Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2011

*The prayer of action*



Luke 6 v 17-31

*"Do to others as you would have them do to you."* Luke 6 v 31

**Everyday Prayer**

Each activity of our daily lives in which we stretch ourselves on behalf of others is a prayer of action. Jean-Nicholas Grou writes: *"Every action performed in the sight of God because it is the will of God, and in the manner that God wills, is a prayer and indeed a better prayer than could be made in words at such times."*

Sometimes it's difficult to know what is the 'will of God' and how to act in 'the manner God wills', but in everyday life there are many such occasions when it is clear. When we scrimp and save in order to get the children something special, when we give someone a lift and go out of our way to do it, when we answer one last telephone call when we would rather go to bed – these are everyday prayers of action.

Then, not only do we begin to be aware of serving the Lord in our everyday lives, but as we pray the ordinary, we can see God at work through the ordinary experiences of life. Phone conversations, 'chance' meetings, and household chores can all be ways whereby we meet with the Lord – if only we take the time to commit our everyday lives to Him. Ignatius of Loyola said *'everything that one turns in the direction of God is prayer.'* Today, let us turn our activities in the direction of God.

*Lord, there are things I need to do today,  
places I need to be  
people I need to see  
Things I have planned.  
Things which will be unexpected.  
Today, this day, I turn my activity towards you,  
Take my day, with all that it holds,  
the routine,  
the exciting,  
the monotonous,  
the worrying,  
the familiar,  
Let it be my prayer  
of love  
and devotion*



*to You I pray. AMEN*

PJB



**Digging deeper** – *if you have the time and the inclination!*

Think of some of the ways in which your life might be a prayer today. Where could you serve those around you? Where could you 'turn your activities toward God?'

Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2011

Everyday Prayer

No time to pray?



Psalm 139

*"Where can I go from Your Spirit?  
Where can I flee from Your presence?"* Psalm 139 v 7

The answer: **nowhere!** The Psalmist recognises that wherever he goes, the Lord is there to guide, strengthen and bless His children. What a promise! We have an opportunity to meet our Father any time of day or night! We can worship, pray and confess, praise and thank wherever and whenever!

Although we lead busy lives, there is plenty of 'dead time' if we only look for it. According to some figures, the average adult spends two years of their lives making phone calls to people who aren't home! Not only that, we spend six months waiting for the traffic lights to turn green, and another eight months reading junk mail! Then there's the checkout queues, the advertisement breaks – the list goes on!

These moments (they are seldom more than brief moments) can be opportunities for stillness amid action; a chance to listen rather than speak, a chance to 'be' rather than 'do'. In these times, maybe our thoughts go to a newspaper headline as we whisper a prayer for peace or guidance. We are chatting to friends and we are prompted in a moment's pause to pray silently for them. We walk into town and pray for the blank, anonymous faces we encounter en route. This is ordinary prayer – it is very ordinary, and incredibly special!



*By the prayers of Jesus,  
Lord, teach us how to pray.  
By the grace of Jesus,  
Lord, teach us how to give.  
By the labours of Jesus,  
Lord, teach us how to work.  
By the love of Jesus,  
Lord, teach us how to love.  
By the cross of Jesus,  
Lord, teach us how to live. AMEN. (Contemporary Parish Prayers)*



**Digging deeper** – if you have the time and the inclination!

Think about some of the 'dead time' in your life. Maybe learn a short chorus or a scripture that you could use in that dead time in fleeting prayer. Isaiah 65 v 24 is a good one: *Before you call, I will answer; while you are still speaking, I will hear.*

Friday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2011

## Everyday Prayer

### **Non-stop praying!**



Romans 12 vv 3-13

*“Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation,  
be constant in prayer.”* Romans 12 v 12 (RSV)

Constant in prayer. The Authorised version says *‘continuing steadfastly in prayer’*, the Living Bible says *‘be always prayerful’*. Is it really possible to be praying all the time? If prayer is to be seen as a way of life and as necessary for the believer as breath itself, then how can we achieve that state of *‘constant prayer’*?

In essence, prayer is simply relating to God. In the same way that good friends are able to be in the same room together enjoying one another’s company without saying anything, so it is possible to be aware of God’s presence without even formulating a prayer. Living aware of God’s presence is a powerful way to live.



Allow the experiences of today to prompt you to pray. Whisper prayers for people you see on the bus, or crossing the road, or in the queue at the shops. Notice the created order as you travel through the day – the weather and seasons, the trees and birds – let them prompt you to pray to the God and Father *‘of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all.’* Ephesians 4 v 6.

*Christ as a light  
Illumine and guide me*

*Christ as a shield  
O’ershadow me.*

*Christ under me,*

*Christ over me,*

*Christ beside me*

*On my left and my right.*

*This day be within  
and without me.*

*Lowly and meek  
Yet all-powerful.*

*Be in the heart*

*of each to whom I speak,*

*In the mouth of each*

*who speaks to me.*

*This day be within  
and without me.*

*Lowly and meek  
Yet all-powerful.*

*Christ as a light*

*Christ as a shield*

*Christ beside me*

*On my left and my right.*

From St Patrick



### **Digging deeper** – *if you have the time and the inclination!*

Pick up a stone, or a stick, or something which is ‘ordinary’ and yet with which you wouldn’t normally bother. Place it in your purse or pocket or on the sideboard. Every time you become aware of it (by putting your hand in your pocket or looking over at the sideboard for example) let it prompt you to pray for an aspect of your life for which you are grateful. Whisper a brief prayer recognising the presence of God ‘within and without’ you this day.

Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2011

## Everyday Prayer

### Practising the Presence of God



Psalm 16

*I said to the Lord "You are my Lord;  
Apart from You I have no good thing." Psalm 16 v 2*

Brother Lawrence wrote a beautiful book entitled 'The Practice of the Presence of God'. It is a deeply moving book and yet incredibly simple and practical. He prays to the 'Lord of all pots and pans' and had a tremendous sense of the presence of God in everything he did and everywhere he went. He writes *"The time of business does not with me differ from the time of prayer; and in the noise and clatter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great a tranquillity as if I were upon my knees at the blessed sacrament*

I have a friend who regularly retreats to be with the Lord. Rather than go to a secluded place to experience Him in the quietness, he journeys to Heathrow Airport, the world's busiest airport, to commune with God. Stillness is within, not without. If we are 'noisy' inside then we can be in the most secluded place and yet never find peace. Accordingly, we can be in the busyness of our clattering, clamouring lives, and yet find the peace we so desperately need; peace within.



*We stand up and praise You, Lord our God,  
For you are eternal.  
Blest be Your glorious name,  
Exalted above all blessing and praise.  
You alone are the Lord;  
You made the sky and the stars  
The earth and all that is on it,  
The seas and all that is within them;  
You give life to everything,  
And the hosts of heaven worship You.  
We stand up and praise You, Lord our God,  
For You are eternal. AMEN.*

Michael Perry, based on Nehemiah 9

In your prayers, think about the ordinary things with which you come into contact: the people, the sights and sounds of which, perhaps, you are rarely aware. Pray that through the ordinary things of your life, the 'Lord of all pots and pans' will meet you.



**Digging deeper** – *if you have the time and the inclination!*

Brother Lawrence calls us to 'make a private chapel in our heart where we can retire from time to time to commune with Him, peacefully, humbly, lovingly.' Spend some time thinking about these words in the light of the Heathrow illustration above. In what ways do our lives reflect peace within even when there is no peace without?

Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2011

## Everyday Prayer

### Unity in Prayer



John 17 vv 20-26

*May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that You sent me and have loved them even as You have loved me. John 17 v 23*

Both services today are dedicated to the topic of prayer.

Morning	Pray without ceasing	1 Thessalonians 5 vv 16-18
Evening	Praying the impossible	1 Samuel 1 v 1 – 2 v 11



In your prayers today, pray that the Lord will show you what it means for you to be one with fellow worshippers in UBBC, and also with other believers in Beeding, Bramber and Steyning.

We thank You, our God, for our unity in diversity:  
Different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit;  
Different kinds of service, but the same Lord;  
Different kinds of working, but the same God,  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. AMEN.

Michael Perry, based on 1 Corinthians 12

*O Breath of Life, come sweeping through us,  
Revive Thy church with life and power;  
O Breath of Life, come, cleanse, renew us,  
And fit Thy church to meet this hour.*

*O Wind of God, come bend us, break us,  
Till humbly we confess our need;  
Then in Thy tenderness remake us,  
Revive, restore, for this we plead.*

*O Breath of Love, come breathe within us,  
Renewing thought and will and heart;  
Come, Love of Christ, afresh to win us,  
Revive Thy church in every part.*

*Revive us, Lord! Is zeal abating  
While harvest fields are vast and white?  
Revive us, Lord, the world is waiting,  
Equip Thy church to spread the light.*

Monday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2011

## Listening to God

### Look who's talking!



Psalm 46

*"Be still and know that I am God."* Psalm 46 v 10

Busyness is the cancer of our age. It eats away at our family life, relationships, leisure time and our relationship with God. It's so easy to be overwhelmed with all the demands of home life, work life, and even church life.

The Psalmist experienced some overwhelming circumstances. Although it is not clear just what was happening around him, he used descriptions like *"the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea."*

Many of us have difficulty in finding God in busyness and being overwhelmed. The Psalmist found he needed to steady himself, draw breath and be still to know God.

It's true he knew all about God in his busyness. He had enough 'spiritual tools' to help him through the difficult times. He reminds himself that *'God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble'* and *'therefore we will not fear'* and that *'the Lord Almighty is with us'*. But it was not until he was **still** that he experienced God for himself. We have noisy lives, and very often noisy hearts.

So: *'Be still and know that I am God.'*



*Be still and know that I am God,  
And there is none beside me.*

*Be still and know that I am God,  
And there is none beside me.*

*I am the One who calls you my friends  
And there is none beside me  
I am the one ...*

*I am the One whose love never fails,  
And there is none beside me. ...*

*I am the One who says 'Follow Me'  
And there is none beside me. ...*

*Be still and know that I am God  
And there is none beside me ...*



**Digging deeper** – if you have the time and the inclination!

Where do you find it easiest to *'know that He is God'*? In the busyness, in the quiet, at a favourite place? Why is it like that? And how does your diary reflect what you need to be with the Lord?

Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2011

## Listening to God

*Too busy to notice?*



Psalm 19 vv 1-6

*The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies  
proclaim the work of His hands. Psalm 19 v 1*

Our senses can be doorways to hearing God speak if we are listening attentively. Scripture opens with the words “*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*” and then “*God saw all that He had made, and it was very good.*” Genesis 1 vv 1 & 31.

Creation is shot through with the goodness of God for us to enjoy if we have ears to hear and eyes to see. Sadly, many of us are too busy to notice. Even in the chaos of the day we can be aware that the things we handle, taste, touch, hear and smell are part of God’s creative design working in partnership with human energy. If we were to pay more attention to these things right under our noses and increase the awareness of our senses we might even experience God in a whole new way.

Choose something familiar to you which is easily accessible. Take time to notice its weight and texture and design. Pray for those who fashioned it, designed it, or enabled you to possess it.

Ask God to speak to you about His creation as you make yourself more aware of those things which are around you. You don’t have to be in the countryside to experience God’s wonderful creation.



*Lead us, O God,  
From the sight of the lovely things of the world to the thought of You, their  
Creator; and grant that delighting in the beautiful things of Your Creation we  
may delight in You, the first author of beauty and the Sovereign Lord of all Your  
works,  
Blessed for ever more. AMEN.*

George Appleton

The Psalmist tells us that “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands”. As you make yourself aware of the sights, sounds, smells, tastes and textures that surround you, what else ‘declares the glory of God’ and ‘proclaims the works of His hands’?



**Digging deeper – if you have the time and the inclination!**

If you are making a familiar journey today, why not go a different way to experience less familiar surroundings? If you can walk, so much the better. Make yourself aware of all that is happening around you. Notice not just the loudest sounds and the biggest sights, but the detail you might otherwise have missed.

Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2011

Listening to God

## God's Spirit in action!



John 14 vv 15-18

*“And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counsellor to be with you for ever – the Spirit of Truth.”* John 14 vv 16-17

The Lord has a marvellous track record of speaking to people. The Old Testament Scriptures are filled with God speaking directly and personally to ordinary men and women. He spoke to Adam and Eve in the garden; He led Abraham from place to place; He spoke to Moses through a burning bush; He spoke to Joshua, giving military advice; not to mention to the Kings and the Prophets.

In the New Testament, the Lord continues this pattern of communicating with men and women: Saul on the Damascus road; Peter through a vision; John through lonely exile on the Island of Patmos. The list is endless.

The promise of Jesus for God's promised Holy Spirit was not only for those Saints of old, but for you and me too! It makes no sense to believe that the Lord lost His voice at the end of the first century – He still speaks today! Remember, He is more ready to speak than we are to listen. Are you ready and listening?



O Lord,  
we wait for You in hope;  
You are our help and our shield;  
in You our hearts rejoice,  
for we trust in Your holy name.  
Let Your unfailing love  
rest upon us Lord,  
for we put our hope in You. AMEN.

Michael Perry based on Psalm 33



**Digging deeper – if you have the time and the inclination!**

What is the significance of the word '**another**' in these verses? The Greek word means '**another of the same type**'. Of what value is the Holy Spirit 'another of the same type'?

Thursday 24th March 2011

## Listening to God

### Hearing the voice of God



1 Samuel 3 vv 1-10

*Samuel said "Speak, for your servant is listening."* 1 Samuel 3 v 10

Hearing the voice of God is not always as clear as Samuel found it. In fact, you may feel as though you have **never** experienced God speaking to you. We need to learn, as Samuel learned, to tune in to God and His voice. In the same way a mother has ears to hear a crying baby (usually when the father is oblivious!), we need to tune in to the voice of God.

How then, does God speak? Through:

- **OTHERS:** listening to the voice of wise believers is very often a place where the Lord speaks to us.
- **CIRCUMSTANCES:** believing that 'God works all things for the good' we need to learn to ask, "*What could the Lord be saying through my circumstances right now?*"
- **SCRIPTURE:** if you follow daily reading notes or a pattern of Bible reading, you may find that the themes of your readings give you some insight into your life.
- **SPIRIT RESPONSE:** we are spiritual beings. More than that, we are filled with the Spirit of Jesus. If that is the case, then there will be those times when our hearts are 'stirred', or there is a growing awareness of what God wants for us. It is more than a 'gut reaction', but a similar feeling.

All these things take time to develop. When there are so many voices shouting at us (including the voice of our own desires and of the evil one) it will take time to develop these listening skills.

For most of us that will mean quality time when we can give our full attention to the Lord. It is true that you can pray '*on the go*' – but in the same way that a good relationship is developed by quality time spent in conversation and in one another's presence, so is our relationship with the Lord.

C S Lewis once wrote: *The moment you wake up each morning, all your wishes and hopes for the day rush at you like wild animals. And the first job each morning consists in shoving it all back; in listening to that other voice, taking that other point of view, letting that other, larger, stronger, quieter life come flowing in'. Wise words indeed.*



**Prayer** Use these traditional hymn lines as prayer, repeating them over and over. Leave time for silence and ask the Lord to guide your thoughts – and expect Him to do so:

*Master speak! Thy servant heareth, longing for Thy gracious word,  
I am listening, Lord, for Thee; what hast Thou to say to me?*

Friday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2011

**Testing, testing!**

**Listening to God**



Romans 12 vv 1-2

*Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is.*

Romans 12 v 2

When we are still enough for God to speak to us, He may say a number of different things. Some of those things are easily understood and obeyed. For example, we might feel as though someone needs our prayers today, even though we may not know why. Obeying this kind of prompting is easily done.

However, there are times when the Lord may want to say something to us that we find hard to understand. It might be a word of knowledge about someone's situation that you feel the Lord wants you to share with them; it might be about a career move or knowing the Lord's will for you for the future. It might be about giving someone a gift of some sort.

In any situation which will have an impact on another's life or indeed on your own, Scripture counsels us to '*test and approve*' what is the will of the Lord. It's all part of learning to distinguish between God's voice and others. We must be careful. Satan is a great deceiver, and pride can play tricks on us too. Here are three useful '*tests*':

- **SCRIPTURE:** check the guidance received against the Scriptures. God will not speak contrary to His Word.
- **CONFIRMATION:** speak to mature believers who you respect. Go to those who you know would be prepared to tell you if they think you might be wrong!
- **HUMILITY:** Be prepared to be wrong! Be open to checks and corrections from your church and Pastor. In an effective body of believers, it can be very helpful.



*Loving Father, we thank you that you are a God*

*Who daily teaches us more about yourself,*

*Who has always more to reveal of your love.*

*Speak to us now, and give us ears to hear!*

*Save us from closing our ears to that which we do not want to hear;*

*From becoming so fixed in our ways that we become spiritually deaf;*

*From limiting your word or denying your call through our unwillingness to listen.*

*Speak to us now, and give us ears to hear, through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN*

Adapted from Nick Fawcett



**Digging deeper** – *if you have the time and the inclination!*

If you feel the Lord is speaking to you, write down those things and share them with a mature believer who you respect.

Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2011

## Listening to God

**Hush! Be still!**



Isaiah 50 vv 4-5

*“Each morning the Lord awakens me eager to learn His teaching;  
He made me willing to listen and not rebel or run away”*

Isaiah 50 vv 1-2 Contemporary English Version

Listen:

- ✓ Listen to the sounds of the birds, especially as you get up, and when you are walking down the street
- ✓ Listen to the sounds around you at this moment
- ✓ Let go of mental chatter every time you become aware of it
- ✓ Try to listen to music without thoughts rattling through your head at the same time!
- ✓ Notice – are you a noisy person?

Adapted from Angela Ashwin

What has the Lord been saying to you about listening over this past week?

How are you going to ensure that this ‘awareness’ and preparedness to listen will continue into next week and the week after?



*Lord, I have a noisy heart.*

*It’s part of my noisy life.*

*Help me to understand that I must listen to you,*

*And be prepared to stop,*

*Being still long enough for you to speak to me.*

*Help me to learn to hear your voice;*

*To sift out distractions:*

*From within*

*From without.*

*Speak to me and I will be blessed indeed! AMEN*



**Digging deeper** – if you have the time and the inclination!

Review the exercise on listening above. What other things could you do in and with your life to make you more attentive to what the Lord might be saying to you?

Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2011

## Listening to God

The two worship services today are dedicated to the topic of prayer.

Morning:            **When God is silent**            Psalm 39

Evening            **You said what?**    Genesis 6 vv 9-22



Psalm 39

Consider Psalm 39 and reread it.

'What is God saying to **me** through this passage today?



Spend some time praying the Lord's Prayer, slowly.

Pay particular attention to 'Hallowed be Your Name' and 'Your will be done'.



**Digging deeper** – if you have the time and the inclination!

Read Psalm 39 again. There is a Christian poster which reads 'Feel far from God? Guess who moved?' - Is this always true when God is silent? Why / Why not?

*I am trusting Thee, Lord Jesus,  
Trusting only Thee;  
Trusting Thee for full salvation,  
Great and free.*

*I am trusting Thee to guide me;  
Thou alone shalt lead,  
Ev'ry day and hour supplying  
All my need.*

*I am trusting Thee for pardon;  
At Thy feet I bow,  
For Thy grace and tender mercy  
Trusting now.*

*I am trusting Thee for power;  
Thine can never fail.  
Words which Thou Thyself shalt give me  
Must prevail.*

*I am trusting Thee for cleansing  
In the crimson flood;  
Trusting Thee to make me holy  
By Thy blood.*

*I am trusting Thee, Lord Jesus;  
Never let me fall.  
I am trusting Thee forever  
And for all.    Frances Ridley Havergal*

Monday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2011

Listening to God

Ready, Steady ...



Re-read Genesis 6 vv 9-22

Our reading yesterday evening was the story of Noah. He was asked by the Lord not only to step out in faith but take a huge leap in the face of what must have been fierce opposition. Had the flood not come, Noah would have looked very foolish – and his faith useless.

What has the Lord been saying to you this past month?  
Will you keep it to yourself for fear of looking foolish?  
Or will you share it with another?



*Teach me Father  
To do your will  
Show me Father  
How you feel*

*Help me understand  
The things I read  
Give me knowledge  
Of the things I need*

*Open my mind  
And let me see  
The way I should live  
The way I should be*

*Give me boldness  
Like Apostle Paul  
Open my ears  
When you call.*

*Teach me to love  
The way you do  
Cleanse my heart  
And make it new*

*Give me strength  
Like your loving Son  
Thank you Father  
I know it's done.*

Chandra Harrington. (Used with permission)



**Digging deeper** – if you have the time and the inclination!

Write yourself a letter – as if from the Lord – trying to encapsulate what he has been saying to you this month.

Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2011

The One who stands in the gap

Jesus the Intercessor



John 15 vv 1-8

*"If you remain in me, and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you."* John 15 v 7

Jesus is confident that as He returns to the Father the disciples can pray with a new authority.' Ask whatever you wish ...' We have already dealt with asking in the

name of Jesus (see 10<sup>th</sup> March). Jesus returning to the Father radically changes prayer for the believers because prayer is changed for ever. The new dimension of prayer is that Jesus has entered '.. His eternal work as Intercessor before the throne of God, and, as a result, we are enabled to pray for others with a new authority.' (Richard Foster) You might need to read that piece again!

Simply put: Jesus stands in the gap **for us** . Scripture tells us that He is in constant prayer for us and with us. He is the mediator between us and the Father. When we pray we are not alone! Most certainly not! Our prayers are accompanied by the prayers of the Son of God, Jesus Christ. Let us pray with renewed confidence that the One to whom we pray is with us in prayer, praying **for us** and **with us** – as we pray we are not alone!



*O Asking One  
O Praying One  
The One who prays  
    For my needs  
    For my world:  
Strengthen my prayers  
Sustain my desire  
As I pray  
    For my needs  
    For my world.  
In the name of the Father who hears  
The Son who prays  
And the Spirit who enables me. AMEN*



**Digging deeper** – *if you have the time and the inclination!*

Richard Foster writes '*The sight of Jesus in His heavenly intercession gives us strength to pray in His name.*' Give this sentence some careful thought. How often, when we pray, are we aware that our prayers are strengthened and sustained by Jesus, the Interceding One?

Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2011

**Making sense of the chaos**

**Jesus the Intercessor**



Romans 8 vv 28-39

*Christ Jesus ... is at the right hand of God  
And is also interceding for us. Romans 8 v 34*

God is for us. God is for us. He is for us! He has not left us as orphans, but sent His blessed Holy Spirit to sustain and convince us that we are His and we are not forgotten. Similarly, Jesus prays with us and for us, demonstrating that our cause is on the heart of God. Imagine that! The things which are important to us are important to the Lord, because **we** are important to Him! This is why Jesus, who is now seated at the right hand of the Father (back Home where He belongs) is busy acting as our go-between, our interpreter, our intermediary.

Jesus has blazed a trail back to the Father and has opened the heavenly realms to us. As we pray, He prays. When we fail to pray, He continues to pray. When we sleep, He prays. When we awaken, He prays. And when we pray He is ready, able and willing to straighten out our prayers, to clean them from impure motives, to interpret them to make them acceptable before a holy God. What more reason do we need to pray? As we saw yesterday, *'the sight of Jesus in His heavenly intercession gives us strength to pray in His name'*, as Richard Foster puts it.

**Prayer**



Lord, I come to you,  
Let my heart be changed, renewed,  
Flowing from the grace  
That I found in You.  
And Lord, I've come to know  
The weaknesses I see in me  
Will be stripped away  
By the power of Your love

*Hold me close  
Let your love surround me  
Bring me near  
Draw me to your side  
and as I wait I'll rise up like the eagle  
and I will soar with you  
Your spirit leads me on  
In the power of your love*

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**Digging deeper – if you have the time and the inclination!**

“For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all men.”(1 Tim 2 v 5). Reflect on this verse. We sometimes refer to the fact that as believers we **are** saved, we **are being** saved, and we **will be** saved. This verse is primarily about Jesus' death on Calvary. But what light does it throw on Jesus the Intercessor? Jesus is praying for us – but for what? (Could Colossians 1 vv 9-14 help?)

Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011

*Prayer for Life*

**Listening to God**



Colossians 1 vv 9-13

*For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

We have come to the end of our studies on Prayer. And yet we have only just begun. Let us be convinced that we will always be beginners in this epic adventure. Let us also be certain that prayer is not an end in itself, but the vehicle of a wonderful love affair where the lover is the God of the Heavens, and the beloved is you and me.

May the truth that the Lord wants to speak to you, relate to you, be with you, know you and be known by you always motivate and excite you to continue life's greatest adventure of Prayer.



*Almighty Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
Eternal, ever-blessed, gracious God,  
To me, the least of saints, to me, allow  
That I may keep a door in Paradise,  
That I may keep even the smallest door  
The furthest door, the darkest, coldest door,  
The door that is least used, the stiffest door,  
If so it be but in Thine house, O God!  
If so be it that I can see Thy glory  
Even afar and hear Thy voice, O God!  
And know that I am with Thee, Thee, O God.*

*Andy Raine and John Skinner. Northumbria Community*

# Calendar for March 2011

## A Month of Prayer

1 <sup>st</sup>	Tuesday	Prayer Evening	8.00 pm – 9.00 pm
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Wednesday	Prayer Morning	9.00 am – 10.00 am
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Thursday	Prayer Evening	8.00 pm – 9.00 pm
5 <sup>th</sup>	Saturday	Prayer Morning	9.00 am – 10.00 am
6 <sup>th</sup>	Sunday Worship services at 10.30 am and 6.30 pm		
7 <sup>th</sup>	Monday	Prayer at the Break of Day	7.00 am – 8.00 am.
8 <sup>th</sup>	Tuesday	Prayer Evening	8.00 pm – 9.00 pm.
9 <sup>th</sup>	Wednesday	Prayer Morning	9.00 am – 10.00 am.
10 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	Prayer Evening	8.00 pm – 9.00 pm
12 <sup>th</sup>	Saturday	Prayer Morning	9.00 am – 10.00 am.
13 <sup>th</sup>	Sunday Morning Worship at 10.30 am. Evening Worship, with Communion, at 6.30 pm.		
12 <sup>th</sup>	Monday	Prayer at the Break of Day	7.00 am – 8.00 am.
15 <sup>th</sup>	Tuesday	Prayer Evening	8.00 pm – 9.00 pm.
16 <sup>th</sup>	Wednesday	Prayer Morning	9.00 am – 10.00 am.
17 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	Prayer Evening	8.00 pm – 9.00 pm
19 <sup>th</sup>	Saturday	Prayer Morning	9.00 am – 10.00 am.
20 <sup>th</sup>	Sunday Worship services at 10.30 am and 6.30 pm.		
21 <sup>st</sup>	Monday	Prayer at the Break of Day	7.00 am – 8.00 am.
22 <sup>nd</sup>	Tuesday	Prayer Evening	8.00 pm – 9.00 pm.
23 <sup>rd</sup>	Wednesday	Prayer Morning	9.00 am – 10.00 am.
24 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	Prayer Evening	8.00 pm – 9.00 pm
26 <sup>th</sup>	Saturday	Prayer Morning	9.00 am – 10.00 am.
27 <sup>th</sup>	Sunday Worship services at 10.30 am and 6.30 pm.		
28 <sup>th</sup>	Monday	Prayer at the Break of Day	7.00 am – 8.00 am.
29 <sup>th</sup>	Tuesday	Prayer Evening	8.00 pm – 9.00 pm.
30 <sup>th</sup>	Wednesday	Prayer Morning	9.00 am – 10.00 am.
31 <sup>st</sup>	Thursday	Prayer Evening	7.30 pm – 8.30 pm