

Weekly Prayers, News and Thoughts

Welcome to our condensed Newsletter. We are publishing this in digital format to help keep us up to date with each other during the Corona Virus chaos.

As you know many of our events, services, facilities, and meetings are still postponed to reduce our contact with each other. The clear and strong advice is that we do not meet for worship or other meetings to ensure appropriate social distancing and protection for those who need it most.

Church is all about relationship: with God, with one another and with the wider community as we demonstrate that our relationship to God and seek to draw others into it, those relationships can still be nurtured, but in other ways. A kindness of heart and spirit can bring light into everyone's life, be it a kind word or a simple gesture, a telephone call, an email, an instant message, social media... there are so many ways... seek to share your light with those in need - but do so safely.

Clearly, we should pray. Pray for those who mourn and have lost loved ones to Corona Virus, for those who have the illness, for those caring and supporting those who are ill, for those exploring the possibilities of vaccines and for the effectiveness of national strategies and personal practices in overcoming the pandemic.

For help and support. please feel free to contact:

- John Claydon johnclaydon@thenba.org.uk
- Paul Revill paulrevill@thenba.org.uk or
- Elaine Webster elainewebster@thenba.org.uk

Prayers

Please continue to pray, either by yourself, or collectively, using one of the many online and social media channels for:

- ***Members & friends of our Fellowship***
- ***People, families & neighbours within your own circle experiencing difficulties***
- ***Those who work for our benefit and welfare in frontline jobs, putting themselves and their families in vulnerable and frequently life-threatening situations***
- ***Supermarket staff and other supply industries***
- ***Carers in Care Homes and Nursing Homes and Sheltered Housing and Hostels***
- ***Carers who look after members of their own families***
- ***Postal Workers and other delivery people who bring us our mail, food, and medicines***
- ***All those in positions of leadership, research, development, industrial organisations, and new productions, at this traumatic time***

This week We are asked by NBA to pray for our Baptist Hospital Chaplains at this time of great challenge and for our NHS as they support staff and patients who also carry anxieties of their own:

- ***Rev Robert Muir - Wansbeck Hospital, Ashington***
- ***Rev Jim Wright - Lead chaplain at North Tees Hospital, Stockton***
- ***Rev Rodney Breckon - James Cook Hospital***
- ***Rev Graeme Harrison - Lead chaplain, Northumbria Healthcare Trust***
- ***Rev Liz Edwards - North Tyneside hospital***
- ***Rev Dave Etherington - North Durham University Hospital + BAGH***

Please pray especially for all those living and working in:

- ***Alnwick Close***
- ***Dudley Grove***
- ***Cockton Hill Road***
- ***Lambton Drive***
- ***Lady Eden Avenue***

Pray for those who mourn and have lost loved ones to Covid-19, for those who have the illness, for those caring and supporting those who are ill, for those exploring the possibilities of vaccines and for the effectiveness of national strategies and personal practices in overcoming the pandemic. We must not forget those people who have recently lost loved ones too, from other causes and who are going through the grief and stresses which are made even harder to bear by the present circumstances.

Northern Baptist Association - Prayer for Westoe Road Baptist Church, South Shields

Our world is deeply troubled. Countless people are seeking peace and fulfilment. In a world that appears to be spinning out of control, where they seem to be little more than a statistic people need to know that their lives matter.

Many who would not usually attend, are turning to the online services put on by a number of churches during this lockdown.

We as Christians are faced with an immense opportunity to present the Gospel. We have a passionate God who longs to be intimately involved in each and every life. It is our task to convey this message, not in order to build our membership, but to let people know that their lives count to God.

We thank God:

- for the faithful witness of Westoe Road Baptist Church over the last 202 years.
- for the strong and supportive leadership team of Westoe Road Baptist Church.
- for our several youth organisations and the witness, they provide in the wider community.

Please pray:

- that the leaders of Westoe Road Baptist Church will continue to show by their words and actions, that all lives are precious to you.
- that you will meet the physical, spiritual, and emotional needs of Westoe Road Baptist Church in this present climate.
- that you will instil in the heart of each member a conviction that they are loved by you.

(Prayers and text supplied by Roger M Daniel: NBA Co-ordinator)

Equality

Galatians 3:28: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

There may be no better Bible verse in all the Bible on equality than this one because it includes gender, social position, and nationality. It is never about race but simply about grace and we are all one and seen as equal in God's sight - God doesn't favour one person over another.

Thankfully, God doesn't treat us according to our sins, or we'd all be hopelessly condemned as it says "He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities" (Psalm 103:10) and it is "Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail" (Lam 3:22).

Apostle James summed up the concept of equality when he wrote "My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favouritism. Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet," have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts" (James 2:1-4).

Since God does not show favouritism (Rom 2:11) and does not respect one man or woman over another (Acts 10:34), then neither should we for "If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbour as yourself" you are doing right. But if you show favouritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers" (James 2:8-9).

Jesus was asked which are the two greatest commandments and we know that the first one is "you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength" (Mark 12 v 30). This is the greatest commandment and is vertical and relates to our relationship with God.

The second greatest commandment is horizontal and deals with our relationship with each other. 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' (Mark 12 v31). The common worldly stance is that those in positions of power generally regard themselves more highly than those who might be less fortunate than them or even employed by them.

But consider what Paul writes in Romans 12:3 "For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned."

In John 13:16, after Jesus, being God Himself, washed the dirty, smelly feet of the disciples and was trying to teach them (and us by extension) the idea that we are to serve one another, regardless of social rank. Just think; here He was, the God of the Universe washing His created creature's feet...even Judas' feet, who would betray Him just a few short minutes later.

When God sees us doing such a thing in a humble attitude, He will most certainly bless us. God's care and love is for everyone. It includes people of every nation. In God's sight we are made equal and in His image. There is no superiority or favouritism.

John 3:16 (KJV) - ¹⁶ For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Jack Wellman (Senior Writer at "What Christians Want To Know" whose mission is to equip, encourage, and energise Christians and to address questions about the believer's daily walk with God and the Bible.

Online Prayer

- Northern Baptist Association
Service 28th June <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5qI0HJUiuAo>
- Bishop Auckland Baptist Church
Service 28th June <https://youtu.be/W1LGJ-CUUI4>
- Influence Church <http://www.influencechurch.co.uk>
Services streamed each Sunday at 11.00am and 5.00pm

FareShare Food Scheme

John and Vanessa at Bishop Auckland Methodist Church continue their sterling efforts in collecting the vast amount of FareShare food kindly donated by local suppliers. They are currently taking the food to Woodhouse Close Food Bank to ensure the most efficient route of distribution. The food bank is open every weekday from 10.00am until 12.00pm.

The food is being received and distributed to those who need it most and includes a wide variety of products across numerous categories from basics to occasional treats.

Church Garden

We owe a great big word of “THANK YOU” to several of the good friends of Bishop Auckland Baptist Church. Between them they have maintained the upkeep and development of our church garden, safely created contacts with passers-by and even loaned the church a new garden bench! Full details of the latest encounters and pictures can be found on the [Garden Blog](#) on the front page of our website.

Thoughts

Study: Take a moment to think about your car, if you have one.

Consider all of the different parts and pieces that fit together to form your car. Some cars have small boots, while others have large boots. Some cars sit close to the ground, while others can nearly triple that height. Some cars go fast, others seem built to glide along at a leisurely pace.

Cars are different in many ways - but they're also alike in many ways: Does your car have a steering wheel? Tyres? How about a seat for you to sit in?

I've seen a lot of cars over the course of my life and they come in all shapes and sizes, but these features remain consistent in all of them: they all have steering wheels, tyres, and seats.

The pathways we travel along to reach God's destiny for our lives won't be identical. Some of us will get there faster than others, some may have to carry a lot of baggage with them. Some may arrive there comfortably, while some may have a bumpy ride.

Yet despite the many differences we'll encounter on the various pathways of our spiritual journeys, we'll all share certain similarities.

For example, followers of Jesus Christ all share the reality that God works all things together for good to those who love Him and are called for His purpose (see Rom. 8:28).

No matter how difficult the journey, no matter how challenging the trip, and no matter how precarious the pathway, providence means God caused it for a greater purpose.

This truth applies to each of us, even though our journeys to our destinies may come in all shapes and sizes. Read Romans 8:28-29. Why does God cause all things to work together for good? Now read Ephesians 1:12-14. What's another reason God causes all things to work together for good?

All things work together according to God's agency - His determined providential involvement. Not only does God cause all things to work together for good so that we'll be "conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom. 8:29), but He also does it with the intended outcome being "to the praise of His glory" (Eph. 1:12,14). His work works all things for good to conform us to the likeness of Jesus and to exalt His name.

His providence guarantees that all He has created fulfils and satisfies its created purpose, which is to bring glory to Himself. God exists for God.

So does everything He made. He made it all for Himself.

That's the reason it's here. That's the reason we're here. We're made for God.

Our lives aren't about us; they're about Him and His glory. If you don't care for that idea, go and make your own universe. God made this one, so He gets to set the rules. When anything competes with, negates, or minimizes God's glory, it exists in a perpetual state of misalignment (see Romans 1:18-32). It's out of order.

God made all things to display His attributes, character, and power (see Col. 1:15-17; and Revelation 4:11).

Read Colossians 1 v17. What does it mean for God to hold "all things" together? In what ways does God receive glory through the events and circumstances in our lives? How might we get in the way of God's work in our lives?

Everything you and I possess has been given to us as a direct result of God's choice to do so. Everything you've received was created either by God or from the materials that He created. God produces every single thing. Because He does, He claims sovereignty over it all as well. He controls it. He's intricately, intimately involved in every single detail of life. If He stepped back for a moment and didn't hold the universe in place, everything would descend into chaos. We'd all be obliterated in an instant.

From God's vantage point, it all makes perfect sense. Yet from our interpretation, time can seem to be marked by an endless array or series of contingencies we may call bad luck, chance, or random events. That may be the way it seems, but that's not how it is. Nothing is random with God. Consider God's foresight and knowledge in contrast to your own: "I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, "My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure"; The man of My purpose is from a far country. Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned it, surely I will do it." (Isaiah 46:9-11)

One problem in remaining on the right path as we head toward our purpose is that we don't see the end as God does. When we can't see where we're heading for, we get frustrated and feel lost. Have you ever felt frustrated when you were driving and got lost? Yet when you

found a map or a GPS, SatNav, or got directions from a stranger, your frustration dissipated. Why? Because achieving your destination came into sight. While we may be directionally challenged, God isn't. He has perfect knowledge of our destination. Unlike us, God can see the end from the beginning.

However, along the pathways of His providential leading, He doesn't always give us the directions to the very end. He doesn't provide us with the full map view and we see every turn we'll eventually take. He gives us a glimpse here, a direction there, or the next step but rarely the entire picture. Thus, people often live in a perpetual state of frustration, not knowing how each step, each day, each set of circumstances, or each conversation is leading to the right place.

Without a full view of providence and a surrender to sovereignty, these frustrations can overflow in an overwhelming cascade of emotions. Think on how you feel when you're lost. How do your emotions change after you locate the right directions or get on the right road to where you're going? What might God be teaching us by not taking us on a direct route but instead leading us on one with twists, turns, and detours? What reasons has God given you to trust Him even when the path isn't clear?

Spend a few moments meditating on God's faithfulness to you.

Nothing comes to you that doesn't first pass through God's providential fingers. You have to believe that. You have to trust that. You have to rest in that. That mind-set will position you to respond to life's challenges, setbacks, and seemingly random occurrences with a spirit of intentionality and persevering faith. Believing that God is working all things for our good and His glory means that we continually choose to place our trust in Him, recognizing that all the twists and turns along the path are producing His image in us (see Rom. 8:29). Not only that, but every hardship is preparing for you "an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison" (2 Cor. 4:17).

Prayer - *As you pray throughout the day, engage God in a conversation about His direction for your life. Ask for a deep, abiding trust in Jesus. Ask for greater grace to trust God along the pathway of your life so that you can be set free from worry and so that your faith in God can be built up.*

Thanks to John for submitting this item