

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.

Wednesdays and lockdown

- Tier 3 measures have now been introduced for the next 4 weeks and face-to-face services are no longer possible over this period.
- We are therefore continuing to suspend both Bible Study and Wednesday Community days, but the production of takeaway food will continue where circumstances allow

Church Services

- We will continue to with the creation of online services which will be available via YouTube and our website.
- Audio CD's of the services are available upon request.

Sharing God's Comfort

- If you know of anyone you feel would benefit from our online offerings please feel free to share our website at www.bishopbaptists.co.uk with others so they too can enjoy our weekly online service (also available on our YouTube Channel), newsletters, blog and other items of prayer and interest.

Spreading God's Love

- 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.

Please feel free to contact the following NBA members for additional help and support:

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

Prayers

Please keep in your prayers all local churches in Bishop Auckland area and especially our Northern Baptist Association, and the work they are continuing to do to help the local people cope with the problems caused by Coronavirus and Covid -19, and continue to do the Lord's work in our towns and communities.

As the Anti Covid restrictions and various support schemes, all of which are in a state of flux and constantly changing, we must remember those who will be affected by the onset of major job losses soon across our economy. Many people are only just hanging on financially now, commonly being reliant on food banks to feed their families and who are going to be faced with more hard times. Remember them and "look out" for them

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***

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 for all those living, working and playing in these schools & academies:

- **Bishop Barrington**
- **King James**
- **St John's**
- **Newgate Learning**
- **Evergreen Primary**
- **Cockton Hill**
- **St Andrew's**
- **St Anne's C of E**

Thoughts

Martin Sweet is the former director of Spinnaker Trust, an organisation with more than 25 years' experience, based in SE London, regularly supporting more than 100 primary schools in London and the Southeast with RE, assemblies and much more. Martin formerly led the Baptist Education Group.

The following item is based on part of an article of his from The Baptist Times:

Have you ever prayed for a parking space?

Should we pray for parking spaces?

The servant in Genesis 24 would have been unabashed at praying for a space – right outside his house!

Of course, we all know it's only the spiritual elite who get such prayers answered...

No, I don't pray for parking spaces, but are we right to assume that God ignores this kind of prayer?

When Abraham's servant (probably named Eliezer) prays *he keeps it simple*

(see Genesis 24:12-14 NIV):

"Then he prayed, 'Lord, God of my master Abraham, make me successful today, and show kindness to my master Abraham. See, I am standing beside this spring, and the daughters of the townspeople are coming out to draw water. May it be that when I say to a young woman, 'Please let down your jar that I may have a drink,' and she says, 'Drink, and I'll water your camels too'—let her be the one you have chosen for your servant Isaac. By this I will know that you have shown kindness to my master."

The next verse is simply wonderful:

“Before he had finished praying, Rebekah came out with her jar on her shoulder. She was the daughter of Bethuel son of Milkah, who was the wife of Abraham’s brother Nahor.”

This man knew something. Had he heard anyone pray like this before? Probably never.

But he was in no way confined to a box that deferred the role of prayer to Abraham, the friend of God.

See how he responds when he discovers how God has answered his prayers (verse 26):

“Then the man bowed down and worshipped the Lord, saying, ‘Praise be to the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who has not abandoned his kindness and faithfulness to my master. As for me, the Lord has led me on the journey to the house of my master’s relatives.’”

One day while driving through South London I heard the radio presenter (I think it was Chris Evans) say something like this: *“Some people think inside the box, some people think outside the box, but the best people I know are the people who think there is no box.”*

But if Genesis 24 teaches us anything, it is that servants can only think outside the box when they remain faithful to their master. We live in a time when the church has been forced to operate ‘outside the box’, beyond the ‘old normal’ with often unnoticed assumptions.

Do we dare to envisage a no-box scenario where each member of the church can play the part of a servant like Eliezer, moving freely and boldly within our relationship with God, playing our part in the next chapter of the church in our country?

(Whether the servant was Eliezer or not, that name sums it up, for it means ‘God is my help’.)

People ask what God is saying during this pandemic. Maybe it’s this: there is no box!

I can’t say that for sure, but one thing does seem likely: the ‘box’ of church will never be the same again. And maybe that is the plan – to bring ordinary servants to help deliver the promise.

(Martin Sweet - Baptist Times, 16/11/2020)

NBA

Just a gentle reminder from NBA that Rev Dr John Claydon is taking his long booked and well-earned Sabbatical break to study and to recharge his batteries.

We are asked to respect his time away and for a short while, please do not to try contact him He will be back!

Keep him in prayers and ask that he returns even more invigorated and fortified and refreshed and blessed.

Thank you.

NBA Praying Together – 22nd November 2020

This week, as part of our fellowship of prayer, we ask you to pray for:

New Life Baptist Church in Northallerton

Give thanks because Jesus is still building His church.

- Pray for New Life that we will get in step with what the Spirit is doing and not be afraid to try new things.
- Community & Neighbourhood are two key areas where God has been sending us to work with the other churches in the town to be Good News:

Pray for:

- Our work in The Living Rooms, 'A quiet shared space where it's ok not to be ok'
- Our work with Syrian Refugees, helping them to settle and find work, and our work in the new housing estates, welcoming people to our town.
- Pray also that we will work out how to disciple people who are connecting with us through online church.
- Give thanks because Jesus is still watching over His church.

- Pray for New Life, that we will find new ways to stay connected by supporting and encouraging each other.
- Give thanks because Jesus is still calling His church closer.
- Pray for New life that we will have a fresh vision of Jesus. Pray that the church throughout the NBA and in our nation will return to her first love and draw closer to Jesus Christ our Lord.

Ephesians 1: 15-16 *For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.*

Proverbs 12:24 - *Diligent hands will rule, but laziness ends in forced labour.*

Have you ever noticed that the harder you work then the harder the tests become?

If it was a race, then you feel that you'd probably finish last!

So, another question is, "What's so great about finishing last?"

The answer is "Finishing is great - doing something difficult and accomplishing it!"

Scripture honours hard work and diligence, and are concepts often learned through anything that requires perseverance and effort!

Proverbs 12 v 24 says, "Diligent hands will rule, but laziness brings forced labour."

Proverbs 14 v 23: "All hard work brings a profit (benefit), but mere talk leads only to poverty (lack)".

These principles – not promises – can help us to serve God well.

God's plan for us always includes work.

Even before the fall, Adam was set to work in the garden and take care of it (Genesis 2 v 15).

And any effort we make should be done with all our heart (Colossians 3 v 23).

Work in the strength that God gives - and leave the results to Him.

***Father, whatever it is that You have asked me to do today, big or small
help me to do it. Amen***

Loving God,

Your desire is for our wholeness and well-being.

We hold in compassion and prayer the collective suffering of our world at this time.

We grieve precious lives lost and vulnerable lives threatened.

We ache for ourselves and our neighbours, standing before an uncertain future.

We pray:

May love, not fear, spread around the earth.

Inspire our leaders to discern and choose wisely, aligned with the common good.

Help us to practice social distancing and reveal to us new and creative ways to come together in spirit and in solidarity.

Call us to profound trust in your faithful presence,

You, are the God who does not abandon,

You are the Holding One, breathing within us, breathing among us, breathing around us in our beautiful yet wounded world.

Chris Koellhoffer, IHM

Online Prayer

- Bishop Auckland Baptist Church Service
<https://www.bishopbaptists.co.uk/babc-sunday-service/>
- Northern Baptist Association Service
<https://www.bishopbaptists.co.uk/nba-sunday-service/>
- Influence Church Service (Services streamed Sundays at 11.00am and 5.00pm)
<http://www.influencechurch.co.uk>

Helpful Links

BABC Sunday Service	https://www.bishopbaptists.co.uk/babc-sunday-service/
BABC Newsletter	https://www.bishopbaptists.co.uk/newsletter/
BABC Garden Blog	https://www.bishopbaptists.co.uk/church-garden-blog/
NBA Sunday Service	https://www.bishopbaptists.co.uk/nba-sunday-service/
BABC Main Website	www.bishopbaptists.co.uk

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