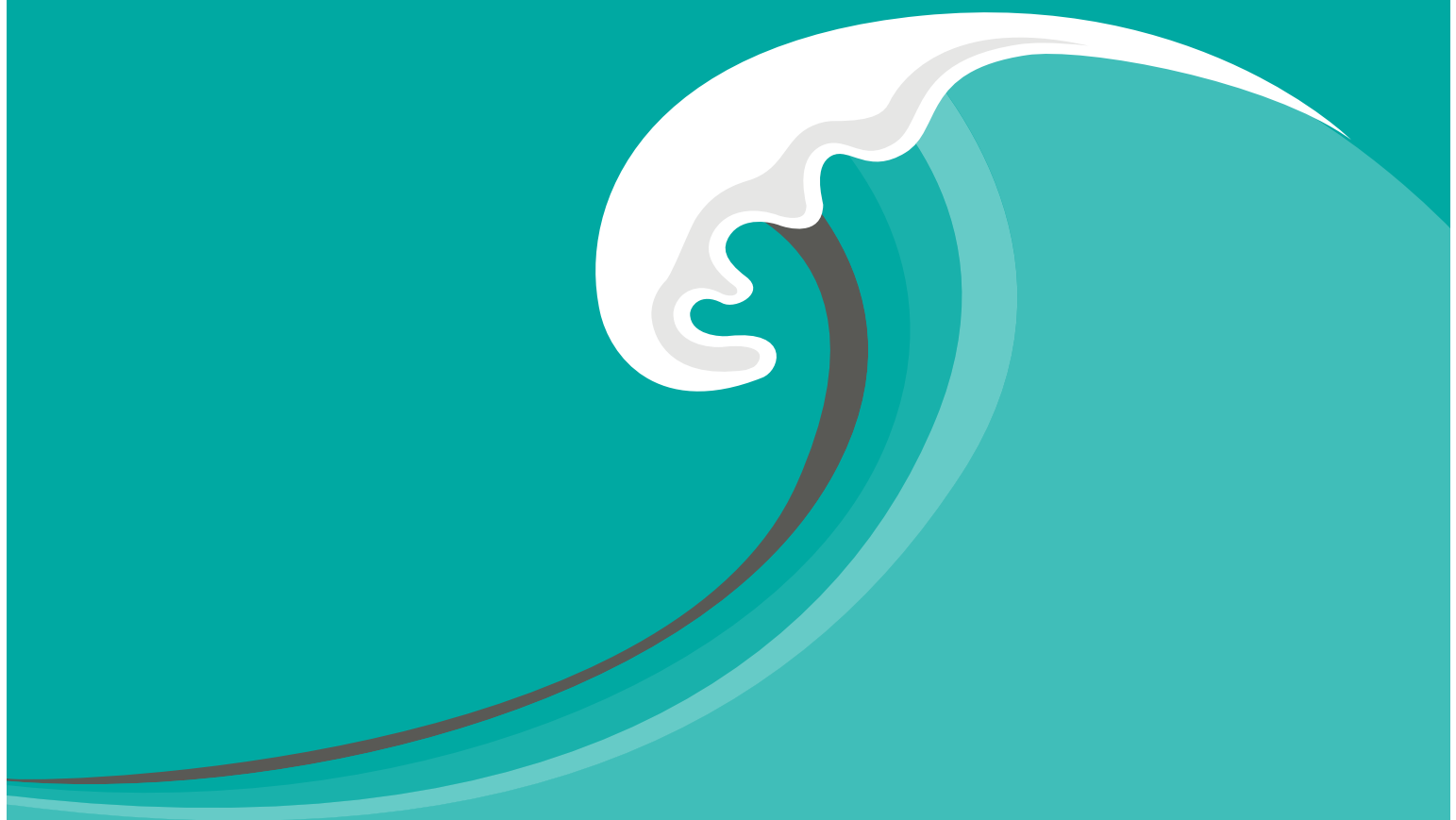


catching the wave.



40 DAY PRAYER GUIDE

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Imagine

Imagine what would happen if thousands of people were praying every day and hundreds of churches united in asking God for his will to be done.

Imagine whole communities becoming saturated with the presence of God and people forsaking what is wrong, experiencing his love and finding Christ every day.

Imagine people becoming interested in the message of Christ and widespread social change as people live in hope instead of despair.

Imagine discovering God to be near; answers to prayer becoming common place and church becoming truly glorious.

Imagine... revival



catching the wave

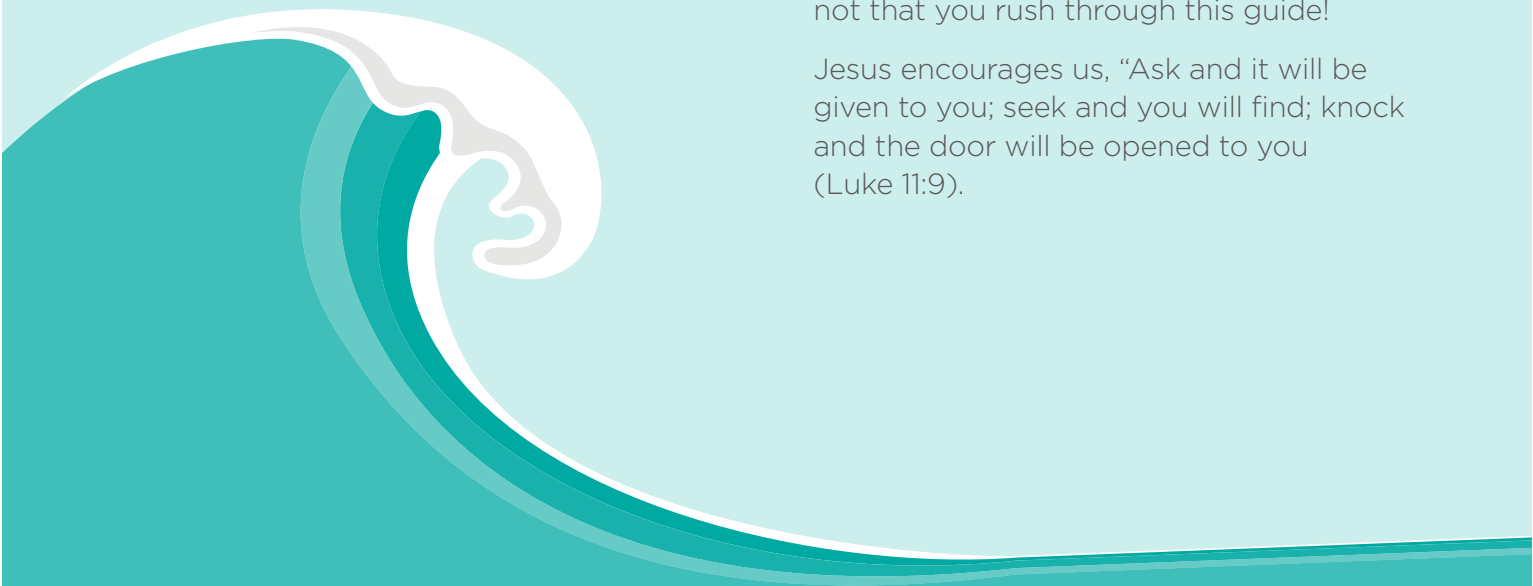
40 Days is a united concert of prayer asking God for a new wave of revival.

Besides having different topics though each week it has a daily emphasis of praying for your 'Big Issue', your '3 Friends' and revival. It also incorporates a study guide with material relating to each of the weekly topics (page 76).

The Guide is designed to be used over 40 days. The first 'week' contains only 4 'days' to fit into the church calendar for Lent. Obviously it can be used at other times but bear this in mind. The rest of the weeks have 6 articles and a rest day on Sundays which gives an opportunity to reflect and catch up.

This can be seen as a prayer journey. What is important is that you meet with God, not that you rush through this guide!

Jesus encourages us, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you (Luke 11:9).



Extending your prayer life

“Pray in the Spirit on all occasions, with all kinds of prayers and requests” (Ephesians 6:18).

Pray more

Pray a bit longer than usual. Rather than just praying for your own needs, pray for the needs of the area.

Pray with others

Take part in your church’s programme of prayer. Commit to praying with your partner or friend. The prayer guide can be used in group prayer as well as personal prayer.

Come into his presence

Start your prayer time by making a conscious effort to come into God’s presence. Open your heart to allow him to speak to you. In Rev 3:20 Jesus knocks at the door asking to come in. You can have that promised fellowship with him.

Praise and worship

Praise God at the beginning of your prayer times. Offer Him prayers of worship for who he is and thanks for what he has done. Intersperse your conversation with him with prayers of adoration and gratitude. You could even sing!

Listen

Remember that conversations are two-way! Whilst you pray and fast God may well challenge your own life. By spending more time than usual, you are giving the Holy Spirit a wonderful opportunity to show where you need to change or perhaps to inspire or empower you for some ministry.

Pray from the scriptures

The scriptures reveal God’s will for mankind. Many believers find it helpful to use passages of scripture in their prayers.

You can take the promises or themes and pray them into situations today.

Keep going

Keep on praying even when you don’t see immediate answers. Praying for a topic once does not necessarily mean that this issue is dealt with! God may give you a determination to pray about something in particular. If so, you should keep on until you see the answer come.

Consider fasting

Fasting is a demonstration to God that you mean what you pray. It is an outward expression of the commitment that lies behind the prayer. It has been practised by the Christian church throughout its history. It was also an important part of the prayer life of many Biblical characters. People fasted: to be in God’s presence ready to hear him (Acts 13:2); to seek God’s special help or blessing (2 Chronicles 20:1-4, Ezra 8:21-23); to express repentance (Nehemiah 9:1-2); to petition God to fulfil his word (Daniel 9:1-3). For guidelines about fasting please see page 74

My 3 friends

During these 40 Days you are encouraged to pray for people to become Christians. When someone comes to Christ usually someone has been praying for them.

Choose three 'friends'. These should be people you know who do not know the Lord, or who are not walking with him at present. They could be members of your family, neighbours, colleagues, friends or contacts

1

2

3

- Pray for each person specifically. Pray for their personal needs. Try to look at life from their standpoint. What are the worries and joys, pressures and decisions, dreams and fears that they face? Pray for those things.
- Pray about their spiritual life. What are the things that keep them from God? Pray that God would soften their hearts and bring them to faith in Christ.
- If you are doing this as a group or with a friend pray for their three friends also. Pray that the Lord would give opportunities to share something of His love with them.
- Believe that these three people will change during the 40 days of prayer.

MY BIG ISSUE

If there is one thing that you want God to do during these 40 Days, what is it? What situation, person or trial is there in which you want to ask God to intervene? This period is a special opportunity for you to bring this need to God every day.

If it helps, write it here >

catching the wave

Every day we want to be praying for revival in this area.

‘Lord we ask that you would act not according to the poverty of what we are, or believe, but according to the greatness of who you are and what you can do.’

So each day one of the three things to keep praying for is ‘revival’. That’s where you can pray this kind of prayer.

But what is revival?

Revival extends and enlarges God’s work. It’s like a new wave rolling forward, breaking and reaching more ground.

It is an activity of the Holy Spirit deepening people’s commitment and bringing an awareness of eternity. Christ’s message is heard and believed. Historically it has affected large numbers of people and transformed communities. People have described it as ‘communities saturated with the presence of God.’



WEEK 1

Father



Something happened

Virginia had started a prayer meeting on a Monday morning at her church. She is a church warden and felt it was the right thing to do even though most Mondays she was on her own, sometimes joined by the vicar. She also felt it was right to leave the door open so people could come in if they wanted, even though this made it fairly cold!

One morning a young woman came in. When she saw Virginia she hugged her and cried explaining that she had saved her life. It turns out that Virginia had nursed her as a premature baby many years ago.

This young woman was in a difficult place, lost and upset. They prayed and talked with her. Virginia gave her the trypraying booklet (see page 79). A week later she came back and she prayed to commit her life to Christ. Virginia had been present for this girl's physical birth and then for her second birth too!!

Something new

If we want something we have never had then we need to do something that we've never done.

Remarkable church growth is taking place in many places with churches full and thousands coming to prayer meetings. We'd love God to drop revival down from heaven: the complete thing in one easy-to-open package! But perhaps he wants us to be part of the process. Are we prepared to do something new to bring about revival? Perhaps our expectation of, and preparation for, revival should start with ourselves.

We may need to go deeper in prayer, to come to a place of honesty and brokenness before him. A breakthrough in areas of our lives in which we struggle may be necessary. Praying all night, fasting for a week, or meeting with other churches might be what is needed to bring about a new level of fruitfulness.

Historians have identified certain activities that precede revivals. J. Edwin Orr points to extraordinary united prayer. Other accounts tell of how revivals have come as God has responded to the cries of a handful of people. In the Hebridean revival men and women called upon God, often in desperation on their knees before him. Sometimes the persistent and faithful prayer of a small group of believers is what God answers; God powerfully touches the lives of individuals and works through them to reach others even whole communities.

So when it comes to praying, do we need to do something we have never done?

Prayer focus

FAMILIES

The family as a basic unit of God-ordained stability is in disarray in UK society. People living together without being married is common. Adultery destroys many relationships. Married couples often experience separation and divorce. There are many second families and single parent families. Children as well as parents are often hurting and confused. Single parents do a fantastic job in trying to bring up their children and need our prayers. Nevertheless many children from families where there has only been one parent end up in crime. (70% of criminals in the UK come from single parent families.)

- Let's pray this week for families to be strengthened.
- Pray for love to prevail in your own family and those known to you.
- Pray for families under pressure.
- Pray for a single parent known to you that God will help them in their demanding task.

DAY 1

Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, 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!

Matthew 7:9-11

Prayer points

- Thank God that he is a loving, living and caring father to you.
- Many people do not have a good experience of their fathers and are suffering from the effects. Pray for someone you know (yourself?), who needs to be freed from the effects of bad fathering. Pray that they (you) will be able to forgive and discover freedom from the bondage they live with.
- Pray for the many fathers, especially young ones, who do not have a good role model of fatherhood and yet are now fathers themselves, that they will do good to their children.

Protecting

I remember the laughter. We were on holiday playing with an airbed on a lake: pulling, splashing and pushing each other in the water. Then came a howl of pain and blood. My sister's and my brother's heads had collided and she was bleeding profusely. My father immediately took charge and we swam back to the shore. Strong arms of both my father and elder brother carried her back to the tent where we were camping and quickly help was summoned and the injury managed.

Fatherhood. As I remember that childhood incident it was a good picture of the protection and the care of a father (and an elder brother). Strength and security gave confidence that it was going to be all right. Not all of us have experienced that from our earthly fathers, nevertheless this is the role God intends them to have. This image is what God wants us to have of him: not only present in crises, but watching over our lives in protection and love. We have a Father in heaven, as the Lord's prayer says. He longs for us to experience confidence, love and power in our relationship with him as we work our way through this life.

In the Old Testament God reveals how he feels about people. In Jeremiah, for example, he speaks to the Jews who were 'idol-ing' around. He says how gladly he would treat them as sons and give them a desirable land. He says "I thought you would call me 'father' and not turn away from following me." In the New Testament Jesus speaks of our Father in heaven observing, rewarding, caring and loving.

Here we have 40 days to get to know God better. 'Father' is waiting, watching, listening, longing for you

Pray for your 'big issue'

Pray for your 'three friends'

Pray for a new wave of revival

DAY 2

**This is what the LORD says:
“Stand at the crossroads and look;
ask for the ancient paths, ask
where the good way is, and walk
in it, and you will find rest
for your souls.”**

Jeremiah 6:16

Returning

Come near to God and he will come near to you.

(James 4:8) There's movement here! As Christians we can think that if we have placed our faith in Jesus then we are home and dry in relation to God. All sorted. We have all we need in Christ. We are forgiven. We are going to heaven and in fact are already experiencing eternal life now. All this is true. It's as true as my relationship with my father: I will always be his son; he will always be my father. Nothing can ever change either of those statements.

However if God says we should come near then it implies we have moved away! At the very least there is an invitation to come closer. Distance can come in our relation with God, just as there can be distance with friends or family. A coldness can come, an awkwardness in his presence or when we pray we're not really on speaking terms. Lack of communication allows 'ice' to form. There can be specific issues of offence, failure or disappointment that cause distance and need to be cleared. In fact even standing still brings distance from God. Our 'walk' with God is always a journey towards God.

In the story of the prodigal son (Luke 15) God is portrayed as a father waiting for his son to return. No failure or sin is too great. His love compels him to watch for his son's return and to give him a lavish welcome. It is the same with us. So we are invited to make a move, to return. If we fail in this then we live uncomfortably with the distance – and like the prodigal – we're deprived of the good that God would do. Drawing close to God is what we do as Christians.

Go for a walk today – a soul walk. Start from where you are and move towards God.

Prayer points

- Pray for a greater intimacy with God.
- Pray for those who need to return to God – the 'prodigals' in your family or the family of a friend. Pray that they will long for what they have lost and begin their 'return.'
- Pray for a greater understanding of what God is like among people in your church so that there will be many who return to the full experience of him in their lives. Pray for a greater depth to the life of the church.

Pray for your 'big issue'

Pray for your 'three friends'

Pray for a new wave of revival

DAY 3

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!

1 John 3:1

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

Psalms 139:13-14

Prayer points

- Take some time to consider what it means for you to be a child of God. Thank God for what is true of you as a Christian. Put away everything that undermines your confidence in your relationship with your heavenly Father.
- Pray for those in your church who are 'at the edge'; not quite sure that they are yet children of God (yourself?) Pray that they will have an experience of the 'Spirit of sonship' when God's Spirit tells them they are God's children (Romans 8:15,16).

Adopting

I cried. I knew it was going to happen. For months it had been expected. But when the twins were born I cried. There's something about seeing new life brought into the world that does this. Our children were brought into our family with all its love, characteristics and quirks! Interestingly, there is something about becoming parents that we have inherited from God (Ephesians 3:15).

Jesus describes the process of becoming a Christian as becoming a child of God. God has children – those who receive (or believe in) his Son Jesus (John 1:12). Think about this for a minute: when we become Christians we are adopted into God's family. We take on the family characteristics and have its privileges:

- We have a new family – a good one (John 8:35, Hebrews 2:11)
- We have a new Father – the best there could be (Matthew 7:11)
- We have a new status – children of royalty (1 Peter 2:9, 10)
- We have a new access – so we can receive the mercy and help he gives (Hebrews 4:16)

So how do we feel about ourselves today? Low self esteem? Feeling we don't really count? Not worth being taken seriously? Perhaps instead we should remember we are children of God: having the most amazing Father caring for us. He is ensuring that we will become like him; sharing in the family characteristics of love, holiness, power and kindness. We matter to God. We are his children.

Pray for your 'big issue'

Pray for your 'three friends'

Pray for a new wave of revival

DAY 4

I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms.

Ephesians 1:17-20

Prayer points

- Pray for yourself to know God better. Pray some of the things stated in Ephesians 1:17. As one commentator says: 'that your "pre-school" experience of God will develop into maturity'.
- Pray for your church leader to know more of God.
- Many people struggle because of false views of God. Pray for someone who is a prisoner to a false view of God.
- Pray for a young person you know that they would know their father's love. When girls know they are loved by their father they are far less prone to search for intimacy in wrong relationships.

Knowing

In the 1992 Olympics Derek Redmond was tipped for a medal in the 400m. Immediately after the start of the race he experienced a ham-string injury. In that moment all the years of preparation and training came to an end. But he was determined to finish the course and began to hobble along in immense pain.

It was at this point that a figure pushed through the crowd onto the track. It was his father. He had realised that Derek was going to finish the race, come what may. So he put his arms round Derek and the two of them hobbled along together with Derek burying his head on his father's shoulder. There was a great cheer when they crossed the finishing line.

Derek says of his father: 'I'm very, very close to my father. He has a massive influence on my life. He was never my coach but he came to every race. He was everything else. My motivator, my hero, my pal, my bodyguard, my physio and my masseur some days. You name it, he was it.'

Jesus knew his Father in heaven. He said some striking things about that relationship, but most astonishing is that he invited us to join in the relationship they had together. In a single phrase Jesus says something that turns most religion on its head: 'Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent' (John 17:3).

Jesus was saying that people can know God personally. Being a Christian is not a matter of being religious but having a relationship. We can know God, not just things about him, because he is our Father.

Pray for your 'big issue'

Pray for your 'three friends'

Pray for a new wave of revival

Sunday

Mmmmm have a break. Time to catch up.

You **can** do this 40 Day journey but you need a short break – so here it is. We've put one day a week just so you can have a break from your 'fast'. It's the Lord's day.

Stop and have a think. How are you getting on? Is there anything that has worked well for you? Is there something that has not worked for you? If so do you want to change what you do next week?

Ideas!

This week has been about God as father:

- What about writing to your father or mother to tell them you are grateful for them or thankful for something they have done for you. It need only be a short note. They will appreciate it. Or if you are a parent, why not write to your children and tell them you think they are great.
- Talk with a friend sometime this week about what's good about fatherhood.

HEBRIDES 1949-53

In revival, God moves in the district. Suddenly, the community becomes God conscious. The Spirit of God grips men and women in such a way that even work is given up as people give themselves to waiting upon God. In the midst of the Lewis Awakening, the parish minister at Barvas wrote, "The Spirit of the Lord was resting wonderfully on the different townships of the region. His Presence was in the homes of the people, on meadow and moorland, and even on the public roads."

This presence of God is the supreme characteristic of a God-sent revival. Of the hundreds who found Jesus Christ during this time fully seventy-five per cent were saved before they came near a meeting or heard a sermon by myself or any other ministers in the parish.

The power of God, the Spirit of God, was moving in operation, and the fear of God gripped the souls of men - this is God-sent revival as distinct from special efforts in the field of evangelism. (Duncan Campbell of the Hebridean revival).

WEEK 2

Priorities



Something happened

I came across your trypraying booklet (see page 79) at a hard time in my life. I'd recently suffered an ectopic pregnancy and was absolutely devastated. I felt lost, like I had nowhere to turn, no hope. I saw a trypraying banner on a church and thought, "Well why not."

Something changed for me in that moment.

I asked God to help me, to make me stronger, and prayed for my lost little one. I felt different after, like a weight had been lifted. Suddenly I knew it was going to be ok. It was almost like a light was being switched on. Since then I feel like my eyes have been opened, and I feel like there are signs all around me that God exists, and that He hears us.

Breath

We can see from the gospels that prayer was a priority for Jesus. He rose early to pray. He ensured he had time alone with God. He devoted considerable time to praying before making decisions (Mark 1:35). The disciples must have often watched Jesus pray. As the hours slipped by, they became intrigued by his concentration and intimate communion with the Father. Prayer was the breath that Jesus breathed and the driving force of his life.

Later on, it became so with the disciples. 'They all joined together constantly in prayer' (Acts 1:14). 'Night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers' (2 Timothy 1:3). Prayer has always been a primary mark of the saints of God in every generation. John Wesley spent two hours daily in prayer, and commonly said that 'God does nothing but in answer to prayer.' What's important however is not how long we pray, but that when we pray we meet with God.

Prayer is something we can learn to do during the day's activities as well as separate from them. However in our busy lives, we somehow find it difficult to make time for what we know to be the most important activity of all: taking time out with God.

Brother Lawrence, a 17th century monk who lived in France, wanted to 'pray without ceasing' and yet he had his daily duties to perform. His answer was to make all of his life a prayer and to be continually aware of God's presence; everything he did was to the glory of God. He felt the presence of God whether he was working in his kitchen or worshipping in his church.

So, for your prayer life, can it become more like your breath – continually happening?

Prayer focus

BUSINESS

Businesses are the wealth creators and employers in our society. Perhaps more than ever we need to pray for them as recession bites deeper and unemployment and bankruptcy figures rise. The pressure is on.

- Pray for honesty and creativity for businesses.
- Pray that people will find new areas in which to trade and new resources for their business.
- Pray for harmony in industrial relations and the prospering of businesses under the hand of God. This is a good time for the nation to learn that man does not live on bread alone.
- Pray that our love affair with money, excess and indulgence will end.
- Pray for those known to you who have responsibility in business that they will discover the favour of God as they act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with God.
- Pray especially for God's provision for those who are unemployed.

DAY 5

Seeking

“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.”

Matthew 13:44-46

Prayer points

- Pray for people in your church or friendship group to experience a breakthrough in their relationship with Christ, finding a deeper appreciation of God in prayer or some greater experience of the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Pray this for yourself too!
- Check your value system! Jesus said, ‘Where your treasure is, there your heart will be’ (Matthew 6:21) Where is your heart? Worldly goods will never satisfy and they all need to be placed after the pursuit of God.
- Pray for your church that the immense value of the kingdom of God will be seen in the services this Sunday. Pray that people will be drawn to make astute life choices to pursue Christ.
- Pray for our society that the emptiness of materialism will be exposed rather than exalted in the media this week.

Imagine finding a treasure chest overflowing with gold coins and precious gems. It is the stuff of fairytales! It’s the day – the moment – your life changes forever. From now on you can buy whatever your heart desires, go to anywhere in the world, first class, and lavish wonderful gifts on all your friends.

Fantastic! This is how Jesus describes the kingdom of God: a treasure in a field or a pearl of great price. Nothing is ever the same once we have found this treasure.

The man in Jesus’ parable was lucky. He almost stumbled upon the treasure. He knew he had found something more valuable than everything he owned, so he was willing to sell everything to gain this treasure. It was not a financial risk, it was astute. It was the same with the merchant. All he had was less than the value of that one pearl. Selling everything to get the pearl was a bargain.

Why do we seek God? Why do we spend time like this? Why are we willing to pray or to fast? Is it because we think it is just something we should do, a worthwhile process to fine-tune our spiritual lives? If so then we have missed the point. When Jesus speaks about prayer he talks about persistence in asking, knocking and seeking (Luke 11:9-13). That is because there is something to be given, a door to be opened and something to be received. It’s not just a process, it achieves something – treasure!

The best thing that we can ever achieve in life is to know God. All that we have pales into insignificance compared to the abundant life he provides for us. He is the greatest treasure this life has to offer. He is worth seeking.

Pray for your ‘big issue’

Pray for your ‘three friends’

Pray for a new wave of revival

DAY 6

Who may ascend the hill of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false.

Psalm 24:3,4

Cleansing

Are there things we do which stop God listening to us? Yes! In the Psalms it says “If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.” (Psalm 66:18). Our sin stops God from answering. So if we want God to hear and answer we must pray with a clean heart.

Perhaps we need to have a ‘clean-out’. Imagine the dirt-busting, clutter-removing team from the BBC visiting a house today? What do they do? They ruthlessly remove unnecessary junk. They organise the muddle and disorder and apply lashings of all kinds of cleaning materials to purge all the dirt and grime. Within hours they can transform a dirty hovel into an attractive, spacious and desirable dwelling.

Now we might not have ‘hovel-like’ proportions of spiritual grime in our lives, but as God is holy, so should we be. How do we get rid of the dust and dirt in our lives? We need to confess where we went wrong – attitudes and actions. How does this work?

God has provided a way of being clean. It is through Christ’s sacrifice on the cross. We become clean on the inside not by promising to be good, trying harder or praying more, but by faith in Christ’s death for us. To get a clean heart we need to confess our sins. Confession to God is simply naming our faults, our sins, holding back nothing. What will God do when we do this? “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

This is how we can be sure that God will listen to our prayer: confess our sin. When we do this, all God’s mighty power is accessible in bringing about the answers we ask of him.

Prayer points

- Ask God if anything is spoiling your relationship with him. If so, confess it to him.
- Having confessed, thank God for his forgiveness. Christ carried those sins on the cross and God now has no condemnation for you because you are in Christ (Romans 8:1).
- Without being judgmental, pray for the removal of sin barriers in the church.
- Revivals of the past have always included conviction of sin. Pray for God’s Spirit to bring a wave of conviction so that people know they have to get right with God.

Pray for your ‘big issue’

Pray for your ‘three friends’

Pray for a new wave of revival

DAY 7

Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you.

Psalm 63:3

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God— this is your spiritual act of worship.

Romans 12:1

Prayer points

- Still yourself: spend time bringing to God your day, your worries, your concerns. Now spend time worshipping God for who he is: our awesome creator, our Holy Lord, our heavenly father whose love endures forever!
- Pray that in your day's activities and your relationships you would become less and less concerned with yourself and more and more concerned with what God wants you to be.

Worshipping

What am I going to get out of it? What's in it for me? How often we find ourselves subconsciously asking these questions about activities and situations we get involved in!

We all have different ways in which we express our worship, but however we do it we face the same challenge. Too often we are the centre of our attention. But worship is not about us, it's about bringing something of ourselves to God. We are made in the image of God and our greatest calling in life is to worship our loving creator.

In a conversation recorded in John 4:23,24. Jesus says that God is looking for true worshippers who will worship him in spirit and in truth. Anna worshipped with devotion 'serving night and day' in the temple with 'fasting and prayers' (Luke 2:37); David danced exuberantly 'with all his might' (2 Samuel 6:14); Mary demonstrated extravagant worship as she anointed Jesus with oil (John 12:3).

Worship isn't just about what we do in church – it is an attitude of serving God at all times and in all we do. In Mark 12:30 we are called to love the Lord with all our heart, mind, soul and strength. This is radical! It means everything surrendered to him. The apostle Paul picks this up in Romans 12:1 "Offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to his service and pleasing to him". We are to worship him through our lives: our relationships, attitudes and words and actions. Nothing we do should be devoid of worship.

Worship pleases God and allows us to come close to him. The irony is that as we worship without regard for ourselves, we do get something out of it: intimacy with the living God.

Pray for your 'big issue'

Pray for your 'three friends'

Pray for a new wave of revival

DAY 8

He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Acts 1:7,8

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Matthew 28:18-20

Prayer points

- Pray for more of the Holy Spirit's power for yourself and others in your church in ministry and mission, holiness and service.
- Pray that the church will properly engage in the task of making the good news of Jesus known. Pray for church leadership to prioritise this, people who will do it and response to the message.
- Pray for the 'demonstration of the Spirit's power' as God's word is preached in churches this Sunday, so that people's faith will rest not on human wisdom but on God's power.

Empowering

The New Testament shows Christianity to be an engaging, transforming experience of God's presence and power through the Holy Spirit. It speaks about Jesus the Son of God teaching, doing miracles, healing the sick and raising the dead; about a conflict between spiritual forces of good and evil and about the Holy Spirit equipping us to reach the ends of the earth with an amazing message.

So who is the Holy Spirit? He is the person and the power behind the message of Jesus. As the third person of the God-head, he comes to make God real to us convicting us of sin, glorifying Jesus, and empowering us to live as we should. He enables us to be witnesses (Acts 1:8).

The Holy Spirit empowered those first disciples to extend the work of Jesus. In Luke 9:1 and Luke 10: 1 Jesus sent the disciples off on a couple of mission trips to do what he had been doing himself: preaching and healing. It turned out to be something they were hugely excited about when they returned. But then after Pentecost the Holy Spirit came to dwell among them they really got going in carrying his life-changing message wherever they went. Jesus had trained them over three years but now through the presence of the indwelling Spirit they continued his work.

The challenge for us today is to make Christ known to those around us. We participate in this by the power of the Holy Spirit. He is as present today as he was in the first century. We can trust him to give us the words to say and even for signs and wonders to accompany what we do in his name.

Pray for your 'big issue'

Pray for your 'three friends'

Pray for a new wave of revival

DAY 9

Uniting

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. 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. Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

John 17:20-24

Prayer points

- Pray for divisions and cliques in and between churches to be removed and for grace and truth to be expressed.
- Pray about any initiative you can take to be in harmony with those you know.
- Pray that the watching world will have its visible demonstration of God's love shown through, and in, the churches here. Pray that many will see this and believe.

Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit! Sadly news got around in first century Corinth that some people thought their particular group in the church was more important than others. The purity of the church was being invaded by human nature. So in 1 Corinthians 1:10 Paul gets really steamed up, saying in effect: “I appeal to you by the authority of Jesus Christ stop arguing!” He appeals for harmony and an end to silly cliques in the church – or between churches.

What would Jesus say if he heard of Christians taking pot-shots at each other like this? What would he say to people refusing to talk to others – or even crossing the road to prevent a conversation? This is sin!

Jesus prayed for his followers to be one, just as he and the Father are one. And that is the most wonderful example of unity. He prays to the Father in John 17:22: “I gave them the same glory you gave me, so that they may be one, just as you and I are one” and again in verse 24: “I want them to be with me, where I am, so that they may see my glory, the glory you gave me.”

Jesus says that Christian unity will make a definite impact on the world. Just as Jesus revealed an unseen God to the world, so the Church can reveal the unseen Father and his love. The unity Jesus prayed for is not organisationally produced, nor is it historically invisible. It is something God produces – full of grace and truth. The world needs to see our unity.

Pray for your ‘big issue’

Pray for your ‘three friends’

Pray for a new wave of revival

DAY 10

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day He visits us.

1 Peter 2:9-12

Prayer points

- Let's aggressively pray out of our lives the self doubt and false humility that keeps us from taking our place in God's plan. Pray that you will know more fully the reality of who you are in Christ.
- Pray for your church and the whole Church that a new confidence will arise and that we will together take our place in declaring God's praise to the world.
- Pray for the Church to do exploits that are audacious, extraordinary, faith-filled and glorifying to God.
- Pray for yourself to have an opportunity to share your faith this week.

Enlisting

It would have been a momentous day. The elderly king David had made great plans for the future and he had enlisted his son to complete them. The plan was to build a temple fit for God. David's leadership of the nation was being passed to Solomon. So on this special day, when the baton was being handed on, David said to Solomon, "The Lord has chosen you ... Be strong and do the work." 1 Chronicles 28:9,10.

How did Solomon feel? Did he feel kingly? Did he feel up to the task? Would he have preferred to play football with the lads? We do not know. But he was the anointed child of the king and so he took his place.

On another occasion an elderly leader was writing to those who had become Christians. He wanted them to discover their true identity and fulfil their calling. Peter writes to say they are special, chosen by God in order to fulfil a great plan of telling the night and day difference that God makes (1 Peter 2:9-12.) This was written about us and for us, too.

Do we feel special, chosen by God? Would we rather take a back seat? The truth is, if we have received Christ, we too are children of the king. We also can take our place and live out what we are as Christians. What Peter writes is also for the Church as a whole. It is both our corporate task and our individual opportunity. We are invited to enlist in God's great cause in the world – with its excitement, challenge and fulfilment.

"The Lord has chosen you ... Be strong and do the work."

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