

Dear Congregation,

I want to thank all of you who have prayed and supported the work of the Gospel through the church in 2023 and this first month of 2024. It is a great joy to minister at Westminster Baptist and I love the church here greatly. Through this past year, there have been heart-wrenching tragedies alongside blessings too. This is often the case in Christian life and yet we are called to keep trusting and believing. We often bear the battle scars of past experience and circumstance, as we live in this sinful world and anticipate heaven. We see Mordecai, mocked and scorned for years in Esther and on the brink of execution, yet he latterly knew blessing from God. The most important thing was he was faithful in serving the Lord.

*Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful - 1 Corinthians 4:2.* This verse especially applies to ministers, church workers, but to all Christians. We are stewards of the oracles of God and to us has the light of the gospel been revealed. We should therefore be striving to be faithful, not popular, faithful. May that be our aim by the grace of God.

In the beginning month in recent years we have spent a week praying together on each day for certain things. As a reminder that with continuing faith that prayer is essential. Key to our hope and joy and endurance and love, and with new resolve to make time to pray regularly alone and with your family and with some group of fellow believers.

Alongside reading the Scriptures these should be our daily routine. There are various encouragements in the Scriptures to pray:

- Pray without ceasing (1Th. 5:17).
- Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; (Ep. 6:18).
- Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; (Col. 4:2).

These are a few verses of the many that encourage us to pray and undoubtedly set before us a biblical mandate that we should be concerned to pray. Maybe you have fallen out of the 'habit' or relegated prayer to a part time practice; or you only pray when trouble or danger comes. May these verses challenge us all at the start of this new year to be a people of prayer. To that end I would ask the church to pray, if led, the suggested topics below so we might pray for the same things (roughly speaking) on the same day to encourage us.

Let us be prayerful people and realise we too need prayer. To say we are praying for someone should be an expression of concern but an indication of our own action to bring the matter before God, before the throne of Grace through the believers mediator and High Priest, Jesus Christ. Paul even requests prayer for himself and those labouring for the Gospel with him twice in 1 and 2 Thessalonians saying 'brethren pray for us'. May we be a prayerful church and prayerful individuals, knowing that we have a prayer hearing and answering God.

Pastor Jonathan Arnold

### Monday

- Give thanks to God for salvation and the redemption that is found alone through Jesus Christ.
- Give thanks to God for granting us particular skills and abilities that we might fulfil our vocations (jobs, studies, family responsibilities and time we spend alone). (Ecclesiastes 9.10, Ephesians 6.6)
- Pray for the Lord's blessing on the working week for us and all in the congregation.
- Pray the Lord would grant us grace to be good ambassadors for Christ (2 Corinthians 5.20)

### Tuesday

- Give thanks to God for those who have recently recovered from sickness.
- Pray for those who are sick or receiving treatment in our congregation.
- Pray that we each would walk close to God, putting off sins that easily beset us and that we would daily give thanks for our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. (1. John 1.3; Hebrews 12.1; 1 Thes 5.16.)

### Wednesday

- Give thanks to God for the Bible, its inspiration and preservation for us to read it today. (2 Timothy 3.16, Proverbs 30.5.)
- Give thanks to God that we have easy access to the Scripture in English, in our mother tongue.
- Pray the Lord would bless us as we study the Bible through the ministry this coming year. That as we work through a book of the Bible the Lord would continue to help us to grasp God's truth.
- Pray for the Lunchtime outreach service and those who attend; pray that more from the offices nearby and Christians who commute are able to join us.

### Thursday

- Give thanks to God that we are part of a global church made up of true Christians across the world.
- Give thanks to God for the freedoms we have to share the Gospel in England and pray that it may continue.
- Pray for missionaries across the world who are seeking to preach the Gospel and establish a faithful church.
- Pray for those in persecuted countries who have to meet in secret. Even those who are now in prison for their faith. Give thanks to God that we are part of a global church made up of true Christians across the world.

### Friday

- Give thanks to God for many good things we enjoy and daily blessings.
- Pray the Lord would supply the needs of those in the congregation at Westminster and guide us as we help those destitute and suffering. Especially those we have met in the pandemic. (Numbers 6.24-26.)

- Pray for the ministry among the children and that they would know Christ from a young age. A rich blessing in this troubled world
- Pray for the evangelistic work, that people would know the greatest blessing of all: salvation by the grace of God through Christ.

#### Saturday

- Give thanks to God that we have good news of salvation to tell that the repentant sinner might have everlasting life through Jesus Christ. (John 3.16.)
- Pray the Lord would bless the Gospel outreach by the church in Westminster. Both on Saturday mornings and at services.
- Pray the Lord would work in the contacts we have made both on Saturday mornings and at services; through personal conversations and online contacts.

#### Sunday

- Give thanks to God for His character, perfect, unchangeable, the same yesterday today and forever.
- Give thanks to God that we can meet in the church and have fellowship with one another.
- Pray the Lord would grant the preaching of his word power and clarity, and there are ready ears to hear and believe it. (2 Thes. 3.1.)
- Pray we would be granted faithful ministry and good spiritual food from God's Word. (1 Peter 2.2.)