

Worship at Home service Sunday 2nd June 2024 with Revd Ian Forsyth

A call to worship:

The psalmist wrote, saying to God: it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well. Let us come to God today with our hearts and minds full of the same confidence and praise. We too are made and called by God. **Amen.**

A gathering prayer

Open our minds, O God; open our hearts, O Christ; open our souls, O Spirit; that we might hear your call afresh, respond with enthusiasm and commitment, working together to build your kingdom, to your praise and glory. **Amen.**

Open our eyes Lord

Open our eyes Lord We want to see Jesus,
To reach out and touch Him And say that we love Him.

Open our ears Lord And help us to listen,
Open our eyes Lord We want to see Jesus.
Open our eyes Lord We want to see Jesus,
To reach out and touch Him And say that we love Him.

Open our ears Lord And help us to listen,
Open our eyes Lord We want to see Jesus.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fwNIEMJ8r3Y>

Bible readings

Psalm 139; 2 Corinthians 4.5-12

Reflection:

God knows us. In Psalm 139 v 1 – 6, David goes to God in prayer, and rather than holding back his feelings says in verse one 'you know me'. The main theme running through this Psalm is that God knows us through and through. This may be quite worrying for some, but for me, I find it a comfort, that everywhere I go God is there. In the opening prayer at the communion table we pray, 'to whom all hearts are open, and all desires known and from whom no secrets are hidden'. Sometimes our anxiety may increase, but this is a reminder that God loves us with an everlasting love.

How can we unknow God? Just this week I have discovered that my mobile telephone has been hacked and the phone cannot go back to its original state.

I have had to speak to someone who has very kindly set up a new way of using the mobile by re installing a memory card. The phone has been fixed but I will have the memory of now knowing it has been fixed. So, I cannot unknow what I know now!

James Packer, a highly respected theologian, once said. "How can we turn our knowledge about God into knowledge of God? The rule for doing this is simple but demanding. It is that we turn each truth that we learn about God into matter for meditation, before God, leading to prayer and praise to God." His book 'knowing God', was like no other book I have ever read besides the Bible, and it has become a Christian classic. It has been read by millions and translated into a variety of different languages.

Some years ago, Richard Dawkins wrote a book entitled 'The God delusion'. Some of you may have it on your bookshelf and either read it or only read the opening few chapters. In the introduction he declares that his hope was and is that he will enquire about Christianity, in order to dismiss Christian Faith. Having met Richard Dawkins, he is a man who has a genuine interest in all things science, and he has helped many rethink their beliefs and as well as upsetting a number of people.

I am reminded of the very first question in the Westminster catechism is 'What is the chief end of man?'

the answer is 'Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever'. In Corinthians chapter 10, verse 31 it says, 'So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God'. For many the idea of an all-knowing God can be quite daunting, but on the other hand we have come to think of God as someone who loves us, and whose design for us is to be like his Son. This concept is one of the immense comfort and assurance.

Psalm 139 v 13-16 says, '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. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be'. David found that his life, and his troubles, are small from God's perspective.

This attitude helps David place his trust in God and not in other people. Thanks be to God.

Prayers of intercession

Being open to God

As we come to God, let us sit in stillness and silence, listening for his still, small voice...
(pause for silence)

The response in these prayers requires some action on our part this week. Not just to pray the words but to listen for what God might be saying to us, or asking of us, in each situation that we are praying for. Let us, like Samuel, be ready to act when God speaks.

Leader: O Lord, when you call, let us answer:

All: Speak, Lord, we are listening.

As so many countries of the world will have elections this year, we pray for the leaders of the nations, that you will raise up women and men of integrity and peace. We pray for those who serve their country in whatever capacity; may they be people who seek to put the needs of others before themselves. We pray for Christian politicians, that they will not be torn between their faith and their job. Give them courage to speak and act for you and to be an influence for good. We also pray for ourselves, that you will show us how and where we can be influencers for you, Lord. We think of where you have placed us: in our families, our homes and streets, our work or school, our leisure. Help us to bring your wholeness into every situation this week and always.

Leader: O Lord, when you call, let us answer:

All: Speak, Lord, we are listening.

We pray for our church community. We bring before you any pressing needs or concerns....

We pray for the work of this church during the week ahead. Show us where we can be your hands, eyes, ears and voice in our local area. Lord, is there someone or somewhere you particularly want us to go to this week? We pause in silence to listen again for your still, small voice....

Help us to take our love for you out into our streets, shops, schools and businesses this week. We pray that our community will be flooded with your love and glory. Leader: O Lord, when you call, let us answer:

All: Speak, Lord, we are listening.

We pray for the young people of our community, particularly those taking exams at the moment. Lord, may there be an air of calm and peace in their hearts and in the exam rooms. Help the revision to go well and the students to do their best. Give wisdom, also, to those who are marking the exam papers. Help parents, teachers and friends to speak words of encouragement and support and may all our young people be safe in the knowledge that they are loved and valued by you no matter what the outcome of their exams.

Leader: O Lord, when you call, let us answer:

All: Speak, Lord, we are listening.

Finally, Lord, we offer the coming week to you. In the stillness, we picture the places where we are expecting to be and the people we are expecting to be with. Go before us to prepare our way. Smooth the path where there might be friction and ease the path where there might be pain.

Help us to be ready for any eventualities that may take up more time or effort than we might have hoped. Help us to see your presence in every situation and to follow where you lead.

Leader: O Lord, when you call, let us answer:

All: Speak, Lord, we are listening.

Go before us and guide us and help us to follow. Amen.

StF 18 - Be still and know I am God

Be still and know that I am God. Be still and know that I am God. Be still and know that I am God. I am the Lord who saves and heals. I am the Lord who saves and heals. I am the Lord who saves and heals.

In you, O Lord, I put my trust. In you, O Lord, I put my trust. In you, O Lord, I put my trust.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AyDr9-Mpc_s

A sending out prayer:

Go in the name of the Lord to your homes, your neighbours, your communities. Go and make a difference. Raise up those who are disheartened. Tell others about the risen Christ. Visit those who are lonely, and may your heart and mind be open to receive all that God gives to you and asks of you. May God give us eyes of faith to see God's way in the face of the many choices we face. May God be in our choices and our plans. May God bless us and all those we seek to serve. **Amen.**