

**Weekly Devotions  
South Holburn Church  
1<sup>st</sup> September 2020**

**READINGS**

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

*Jeremiah 29:11-13 (NIV Translation)*

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

*Philippians 4:6-7 (NIV Translation)*

For prayer is nothing else than being on terms of friendship with God.

*Saith Teresa of Avila*



## REFLECTION

As Christians we are all aware of prayer. We have all experienced prayer. We share prayers in worship in church. Perhaps we have said our own prayers. But what is the point of prayer? What is its purpose?

Some people assume that we pray to get something we want. And prayers often sound more like spiritual shopping lists, or the Christian equivalent of a child's letter to Santa! But that is not the purpose and point of prayer. Even in our most desperate straits, when we cry out in deepest need, even then prayer is not about getting what we want.

At the heart of our faith is the declaration that God is love. There is nothing that we can do to make God love us more. We cannot change God's mind by praying because God is already working in our lives in the most loving way.

Prayer does not change God, but it changes us. Our quote from St Teresa today reminds us that prayer is friendship with God. It is talking with the God who loves us. Prayer creates intimacy between us and God. That conversation brings peace. It inspires. It gives hope. It leads us forward in life knowing that we are not alone, God is with us. God **always** hears our prayers. God **always** responds to our prayers. And sometimes it is only in looking back after the fact, that we realise how faithfully God has responded to our prayers.

Paul, in his letter to the Philippians sums up the consequences of prayer when he tells his readers to pray about all things. When they do, what they receive is not necessarily all the things they ask for, but instead they will always have the peace of God which is greater than any fear, anxiety or want.

Why not give prayer a try for yourself? Take a moment to think on the things you want to offer to God in prayer. You can use the prayer below, or just open up your heart and talk to God saying whatever you feel – prayer is after all a conversation between friends.

## PRAYER

Almighty God,  
Creator, maker of all things,  
Saviour, redeemer, God defined by love,  
You bless us daily  
You fill our lives with holy love  
Your deepest desire is our greatest good.

Loving God,  
You long to hear our voices,  
You relish the prayers we share with you,  
You wait expectantly for us to turn to you.

May we learn that prayer is our conversation with you.  
May we open our deepest selves to you,  
And share our hurts and longings and our celebrations.

May we offer to you whatever it is that fills our hearts  
And dominates our thinking.

May we always have space in our lives for our time with you.

May we never let our time for prayer get pushed to the side-lines when we become busy  
or pre-occupied.

May we know what Paul promised, that peace which you alone can share,

That peace which transcends all need and hurt

That peace which makes no sense,

yet gives hope in the midst of hopelessness,

joy in the midst of sadness

and meaning when meaning seems impossible.

In Jesus name,

Amen.

