

For 6th to 19th September 2020

prepared by Eric Smith

Each Sunday, Christians in every part of the UK are joining together in prayer. We would like to encourage you to keep setting aside 7pm on a Sunday for prayer, no matter how long you give. As you start, place a lit candle in the window of your home as a visible symbol of the light of life, Jesus Christ. Here are some suggested points for prayer.

Ever felt like Noah? Why do I ask this? Because he was faced with a situation beyond his understanding and had to learn to trust in God in the middle of it. After so long, isolated on the ark, when he sent out the raven and it just flew back and forth with nowhere to land, maybe he was disheartened. When he sent out the dove and it came back with an olive branch, he must have been hopeful. Eventually, we read in Genesis 8:18 that God said, "come out of the ark". How Noah must have rejoiced!

Does it feel that we are watching that raven? Might we see a glimmer of hope that we are the stage of the dove finding evidence of progress? As we look ahead and long for the "come out of the ark" day, to the time when we are able to enjoy a greater level of freedom to meet to worship, let us trust in God. We are reminded in Psalm 103:17 *"But from everlasting to everlasting the Lord's love is with those who fear him."* Let's take hope and reassurance from this.

Pray for:

- Our politicians. At times it may feel that whatever they do, they are wrong. As they come under pressure from business and from the public who feel "hard done by", please pray that the MPs and MSPs would be able to look beyond opinion polls or the thought of the next election and take wise decisions.
- In particular, please pray for the Scottish Parliament and for the discussions and debates that will be happening around the "Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill". Pray that MSPs will understand and

take note of the concerns of many Christians and others that this new law could potentially make it a crime to express views that are Christian and biblical. Please pray, especially, for those Christian MSPs who may find themselves at odds with their parties' policies. Pray that they would know strengthening and guidance from God as they seek to serve Him where He has placed them in government.

- Our police service, for wisdom as they try to encourage people to behave responsibly while society attempts to ease lockdown restrictions. This can be increasingly difficult when there are different guidelines and rules in different parts of the country. Pray that relationships between the police and the public would not suffer as they do the job they have been asked to do for the good of us all.
- Those who find their immediate future uncertain – perhaps coming to the end of furlough and not sure if there is a job for them to return to, perhaps working in the travel and tourism industries with the situation changing almost weekly on flights and quarantine guidelines. Pray too for those who are employers and managers as they try to support their staff while they themselves face the same uncertainties.
- Our Church leaders and office bearers, nationally and locally as they work hard to balance the need for people to gather and worship God with the practical restrictions that are needed to keep things as safe as possible. We all miss meeting, singing and having fellowship with one another. Pray that those who have to make decisions would be wise and prayerful.
- Leaders and helpers in so many of our church organisations who are going out of their way to engage and support their members at what should be the start of the new session. Thank God that GB, BB, Sunday School and others are able to meet using Zoom but pray that it will not be too long until face to face meetings are possible.
- Our own church family here at Brightons. We know of some in our congregation who have suffered with Covid or who have found themselves no longer employed. Pray that we might be the eyes and ears, hands and feet of God as we look out for, and support, these people.