



**We seek to invite, encourage  
and enable all ages to be  
disciples of Jesus Christ.**

**For 21st February to 6th March 2021**

prepared by Eric Smith

Each Sunday, Christians in every part of the UK join 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.

Preparing these notes and thinking about the times in which we are currently living, a line from a Bob Dylan song came to mind: "The times they are a-changing." Also, the words from an old well-known chorus based on Hebrews jumped into my head. "Yesterday, today, forever; Jesus is the same."

When we turn to the book of Lamentations, we find these words: *"Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. I say to myself, 'The Lord is my portion; therefore, I will wait for him.'"*

#### **Lamentations 3:22-24**

We come to a holy, unchanging God who loves us and cares for us and so we come in thankfulness.

**Give thanks** that lockdown seems to be working with the numbers of those testing positive for coronavirus, being admitted to hospital and to ICU gradually falling. Give thanks, too, for the roll out of the vaccination programme, for the fact that so many have had their first vaccination, for the well organised programme locally, for the hope that this gives us as we look ahead.

**Pray** that as we gradually see the improvement in the numbers, we will be able to have patience and consideration for one another. Help us not to jump in and take liberties with the small amount of reassurance and freedom that we're seeing; help us to continue to be considerate of others as we are out and about, in the supermarket, wherever we have to be.

**Give thanks** for those key workers who have continued to do their job serving others throughout this pandemic. Give thanks for those who are taking on extra shifts in vaccination centres, for those who are changing their hours of work and the duties they have to do so that things move along as fast as possible. Give thanks

for the skills of many in planning and organising the hugely complicated vaccination programme.

**Pray** for those who are charged with organising and with deciding on policy and guidelines for the days and weeks ahead. They are coping with conflicting demands and pressures, as they try to keep us safe while also allowing us to return to some sort of normal life. Pray for wisdom for them that, as they hear the different viewpoints and opinions, they might be able to weigh them up and come to a sensible and appropriate decision.

**Pray** for our government as they make decisions about what to do with vaccines that are on order or in stock. Many countries across the world have no vaccines. May our leaders show compassion in deciding how the stocks of vaccines will be used.

**Give thanks** for those who are carers. Some will be caring at home for older or sick family members. Others will be working in care homes. Wherever they are, give thanks for their compassion, their care and their dedication.

**Pray**, as it was announced today that visitors will once again be able to go into care homes, that those who have suffered from loneliness for so long will find comfort, that those who have been unable to visit will once again be able to show care and love in person. Pray for those operating the care homes as they seek to find a safe way of ensuring this happens.

**Give thanks** for the news this week that, for some children, school will be resuming and for the fact that, for many parents, there will be relief from the stresses and strains of balancing home schooling with work and other demands.

**Pray** for parents, teachers, and children as they return to school. Pray for safety, pray for positive effects on mental health and, for those older pupils, the chance to take part once again in essential practical activities for their courses.

**Give thanks** for our church family. For Scott, Ian, and the office bearers, Elders and Deacons, as they continue to work in providing practical and spiritual support for the church and community here in Brightons and the Braes. Give thanks for the technology that we are able to use to reach out with God's message to others in these times and for those who have the skill and expertise to use that technology in the best way.

**Pray** for those who feel isolated despite the technology and long for personal, face to face contact, that, as we all seek to build and strengthen relationships with each other and with God, we would continue to shine like lights in our community and show the grace and love of God to all.