

I've recently been reading a small classic on prayer, called *The Meaning of Prayer*, by Florence Fosdick. It was published in 1915, and the language is now a bit archaic, but the insights on prayer are still sharp, relevant and transformative.

In a chapter on 'Hindrances and Difficulties' (which haven't changed much in the past century by the way!), Fosdick points out how important it is to remember that *God is seeking us*.

It's not that in prayer we are blundering around trying to find him, but in prayer we discover the *God who is seeking us*. "According to our attitude in prayer", she writes, "the shepherd is lost and the sheep have gone out onto the tempest-driven mountainside to hunt for him"!

When we come to pray the first and "deepest necessity of a fruitful life of prayer is the recognition that God's search for us is prior to any of our search for him".

"Prayer is not groping after him", she writes. "Prayer is opening up our life to him. Finding God is really letting God 'find' us: for our search for him is really a surrender to his search for us. When the truth of this is clearly seen, prayer becomes real."

Make time this month to sink into the presence of the arms of the loving God who is seeking you out.

World Events

Use the news as a source of prayer pointers. Pray for:

- women in India where nearly 63 million women are "missing" due to foeticide, disease, neglect, or inadequate nutrition, a government survey says. More than two million women disappear every year and the phenomenon of "son preference" among Indians has created an estimated 21 million "unwanted" girls.
- the city of Cape Town, where if no rain comes the taps will run dry in April.
- the situation in Haiti, eight years on from the earthquake, where poor residents still cannot access clean drinking water.

Personal Renewal

Bitterness and unforgiveness are major obstacles to personal renewal. Here's a prayer from St Anselm that asks for renewal and the ability to bless our enemies:

O Merciful God, fill my heart, I pray, with the grace of your Holy Spirit: with love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. Teach me to love those who hate me; to pray for those who despitefully use me, that I may truly be the child of my Father who makes the sun to shine on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust.

February 2018



Frontline Mission - Media, Design & Creative

As a church we recognise that God is interested in our whole lives. Each month we feature and pray for a different 'frontline' - the places where TBC members spend their Monday - Saturday lives. This month we feature those who work in Media, Design & Creative occupations.

My name is Katie Jarvis and I was asked to contribute to Connect as a 'creative person'. God has given us all an appreciation of beauty and music and for me I love being creative, whether sewing, knitting, baking, quilting, gardening, singing or playing with paper crafts.

I have my own business called 'Tweedie Bags' making Harris tweed bags and accessories. I lived in the Highlands of Scotland for the last 16 years and it was there that I picked up the inspiration to get sewing with tweed. Having moved to Thornbury last year due to my husband Tony's work, I am investigating retail opportunities south of the border, at Craft Fairs and Gift Shops as well as online.

Please pray for

- Those who use God's gifts for building His kingdom.
- Building friendships, as it can be difficult being a lone worker at home, especially in a new town.
- Finding retail outlets that build my business.



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following the way of



loving God, one another
and the world

Community Mission

Thornbury Baptist Church Football Club was reformed in 1996 to provide a fellowship opportunity for men in the church who wanted to play football. Over time the objective of the Club has changed with the changing profile of TBC – being a link between the Church and members of the local community.



Please pray:

- for wisdom for Dave Finney (Chairman) and Chris Beddoes (Coach) as they look to take the Club forward whilst retaining the Christian ethos.
- that the close relationships that have been built up within the Club continue to grow and strengthen.
- that more players 'come through the ranks' at TBC – more home-grown players are required!
- for more Christians to join the Club, and for Christian leaders to arise to help take the Club forward.

Local/UK Mission Partners

My name is Paul Green and I have now been an Army Chaplain for eight years. During that time I have served in four different regiments, been on exercise in eight different countries and completed a seven month operational tour in Afghanistan. I am currently stationed in Bicester (Oxfordshire) with 1 Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps who I joined in January 2017. I have another 12 months to serve with them before I am due to move on to my next assignment. Over the past year, Michelle has remained in our house in the Forest of Dean as she has become the carer for my elderly parents.

Please pray:

- The stresses placed on family life by the requirement to serve unaccompanied.
- For continued wisdom as I seek to journey with many soldiers through the 'dark' places of their lives.
- For opportunities to share the life saving message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- For Michelle as she endeavours to keep home and family matters together (all too often single-handedly).

Use the weekly notice sheet and e-news to pray for **healing needs** in the church.

Mission Partners

Open Doors publish an annual World Watch List of countries where Christians are persecuted. Here are the headlines from the latest list:

- More than 200 million believers in the 50 countries where it is most difficult to be a Christian experience high levels of persecution because of their faith.
- Over 3,000 Christians have been killed for their faith in the 2018 reporting period, more than twice as many as in the previous reporting period.
- Each of the top 11 World Watch List countries are now classed as places of extreme persecution – this is more countries than ever before in 26 years of the World Watch List.
- Libya has returned to the top ten
- Eritrea has moved up from ten to six.
- India has risen from 15 to 11.
- Egypt has moved from 21 to 17.

Please pray for:

- our Christian brothers and sisters in the countries named above.
- those organisations, such as Open Doors, Barnabas Fund, Christian Solidarity and Release International. Visit their websites for more prayer points for persecuted Christians worldwide.

Children & Youth

- Give thanks for the fact that many parents and children find the Children and Youth work of TBC a safe and positive place to be.
- Pray for those children who are part of families facing pressures of any kind.
- Pray for those who are bullied at school.

All of our mission partners are listed under the 'mission' tab on our church website, so do search there for more information. Many also have their own websites, and you will find those links in their listing on the church website.

Salvation

We believe that Jesus is Good News for everyone, and that everyone has the right to hear the Good News!

Pray for:

- those who are attending our current Alpha Course.
- the small but growing number of people visiting us on a Sunday morning from Coffee Shop.
- visitors who attended the Baptismal Service on February 4th.
- specific friends and contact on your frontline this month.