

Prayer diary topics 9th to 31st August 2020

Sunday 9th – Remember Peter as he prepares and plans online worship services each week. Ask that his teaching will be received into our hearts and that we are encouraged and challenged by his message. Help us to use our daily lives as a witness to those we meet to bring glory to God.

Monday 10th – There have been some tragic accidents this summer- on farms, beaches and the roads. Pray for those families who have tragically lost loved ones and ask for safety as people drive, walk, cycle and swim. Ask for God's protection and pray that we all show responsibility, care and respect to others when travelling.

Tuesday 11th – Give thanks for joyous times such as weddings or new babies arriving. These events will take place in very different circumstances but we pray that they will nevertheless be a safe, memorable and happy time for all families. Pray that young couples will be able to adjust to their 'new normal' and that love of each other and God will sustain them through changing times.

Wednesday 12th – Pray for older folk connected to our congregation, some of whom may have been shielding for many months. Some may not have had many face to face visits and will obviously feel lonely and isolated. They will be missing friends at coffee mornings or Friendship club, so pray that friends and neighbours will show compassion and love by keeping in contact.

Thursday 13th – The A level and AS level results come out today (predicted grades). Think of all pupils who will be receiving results and pray that they will be able to move on to their desired course of study or next step in employment or training. Pray for GCSE pupils receiving grades next week (20th). It may be an anxious time for some, waiting to hear if they have been accepted into university/college or back to school and what choice of subjects they may be taking so ask that God will be close during this time of change.

Friday 14th – Pray for PCI as a denomination having to operate within many constraints this year – practical, financial and strategically. The Moderator Rev David Bruce has taken his theme this year as "Home" basing this on the book of Ruth. He says "let us be those who readily welcome others because God has first shown us hospitality in Christ. He has welcomed us, and adopted us into his family. Ours must therefore be a home with doors that are open to be places of welcome and adoption of others." Help us to apply this message starting at home, then reaching out locally and beyond (the Great Commission Matthew 28 v19).

Saturday 15th August – Think of the PW both within our own congregation and as an organisation. Pray that the women of our PW group will continue to keep in touch and pray regularly for each other. Unfortunately due to the Coronavirus their work throughout Northern Ireland has had to be suspended so please pray for these projects - Deaconess training, the outreach of South Belfast Friendship House and the funding of global mission workers.

Sunday 16th – Scripture for Reflection – Isaiah 30 v 21 – Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you saying "This is the way; walk in it."

Monday 17th – During this time think of those who may be living with cancer or have a family member who has been diagnosed. Help them to deal with the treatment, side effects and how it may effect work, home life, emotional well- being and relationships. Give thanks for all those support services eg. Marie Curie, Macmillan Cancer Care and Hospices who provide nursing care and advice to patients and their families facing challenging circumstances.

Tuesday 18th – Remember Tearfund ,Christian Aid and other organisations working in the most threatened countries in the world. People already suffering because of conflict, persecution and poverty now face the threat of a disease against which they have little protection. Countries such as Yemen, DR Congo and Syria and many others simply do not have the infrastructure to cope with the pandemic.

Wednesday 19th – Pray for Chaplains and Deaconesses serving in a variety of roles – in hospitals, prisons, universities and the forces. Pray that in these areas there will be many opportunities for ministry and witness and for the special demands of pastoral care in these communities. Pray that chaplains will be seen as someone who is visible and available for listening, encouraging, explaining, signposting and can provide spiritual guidance during a crisis as well as in daily life.

Thursday 20th – Our secular society can sometimes be selfish and materialistic. Scams are rife and the most vulnerable are targeted by cunning fraudsters who focus on people's weaknesses eg. computer viruses, pensions and investments. There are so many hurt through the actions of others ranging from heartlessness to real abuse. Pray that God will bring healing from such hurts (2 Corinthians 1:4).

Friday 21st – Give thanks for Scripture Union and Christian Union who have a passion for to reach out to children and young people across Northern Ireland with God's unfailing love. Even in the midst of these days of uncertainty and waiting, staff will be preparing

assemblies, RE lessons and praying for the return of camps and missions. Give thanks for pupils and students in our congregation who are involved in organising committees and attend SU/CU so that they may be effective witnesses, leaders and encouragers to those around them.

Saturday 22nd – Today remember those struggling with mental illnesses, their families and all the statutory and charitable organisations that seek to reach out and provide help and support. Recently an international survey revealed that one in two people in the UK felt down, depressed or hopeless about the future due to the COVID-19 crisis – putting 41% of the nation's mental health at risk. Pray that people see the hope only our Saviour can bring -Hebrews Ch 6 v19.

Sunday 23rd – Remember our friends in our fellowship. Although we have been apart for such a long time help us to remember that God is in control of this situation. Pray for specific situations and people you are aware of who are facing difficult times. Help us to use this time to reflect how we might grow closer in fellowship , to build each other up and be inclusive.

Monday 24th – P7 pupils are due to return to school today. Pray for them as they come back after 5 months away from their school ; although they may have been working hard at home schooling and over the summer on papers it will still be difficult to adjust and maybe catch up with schoolwork and a very different structure and arrangements. Pray for all the pupils, teachers and parents facing new challenges.

Tuesday 25th – Give thanks for our NHS. Although we are no longer clapping for our NHS staff and key workers their professionalism, efforts and expertise through the crisis was and continues to be unparalleled. Many of these workers gave great personal sacrifices to ensure our safety. We are fortunate to have no health care deaths attributed to Covid, as in England, and pray for the ongoing health and safety of all those on the frontline. Pray that should a second wave of the virus take place that the public and NHS will be prepared and learn from these experiences.

Wednesday 26th – Pray for Peter, the Elders and Property Committee as they complete arrangements for opening up church in September. Pray especially for our members who, due to underlying health problems are vulnerable and unable to come back to church for quite some time. Although worship will be different and many aspects of our congregational life will have changed let us rejoice in a spirit of unity and togetherness.

Thursday 27th – Think of those applying for jobs at this very difficult time. The economy has been very badly affected by Covid and many people have had to face redundancies. It will be especially difficult for young people entering the job market for the first time. Pray that relevant opportunities will emerge in God's timing and in the meantime people remain positive. May they enhance their employability by researching jobs or any gaps in training / experience and perhaps through developing new skills or undertaking courses.

Friday 28th – Our local Special schools eg. Hillcroft, Riverside and Jordanstown will be preparing to bring pupils back to school soon. Obviously with very vulnerable children with very complex health needs the practical difficulties in organising this will be huge. Children will have already been upset, stressed and fearful at their change in routine when school closed and again will be unable to understand some of the new rules they are expected to follow. Please pray for all the Principals, teachers and parents as they try to accomplish this whilst putting the needs of the children first.

Saturday 29th August – Pray for all our organisation leaders in church who will be hoping that organisations will be able to return sooner rather than later. Ask that they will seek God's guidance as to when and how best to begin their organisations taking into account the numbers involved and distancing measures. Give them patience, wisdom and understanding to work out the best arrangements for the leadership team and everyone attending.

Sunday 30th – Scripture for Reflection- Job 22 v21,22 – Submit to God and be at peace with him; in this way prosperity will come to you. Accept instruction from his mouth and lay up his words in your heart.

Monday 31st– Today is a Bank Holiday; perhaps some families will enjoy a day out before the return to school . Some may be returning to offices so or other workplaces soon after a period of working from home. Pray that each person may enjoy quality time with friends and family and quiet time with the Lord reflecting on his goodness and mercy through these unprecedented times.