



We would like to set up **Prayer Partners**, pairs of people who can come together once a week or even once a day to pray. If you would like to be involved please contact us on curate@stpaulinus.co.uk / 01322 310 657. Please feel free use which ever prayer is best for you but if you require a starting point please click on this link and take whatever you would find useful.

With the churches closed personal prayer may have more importance than ever, not that it isn't always really important. Prayer is a time when we are brought into a conscious relationship with God. God is always with us but through worship or personal prayer that relationship is brought to That relationship is with a sending God, enabling the Christian community to serve the world as an act of serving God. Throughout the Bible God produces people who are sent, to serve their community and make God's love known to others through that service. This requires access and commitment to prayer.

Prayer can involve dealing with difficult situations as with the current global one, as well as asking to be uplifted by God. God equips, giving us what we need to get through life and engaging with the difficulties of others. 'Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it.' Matthew 7.13. Christians do not ask for the easy path, but for God to be there when the road gets tough. Indeed, it can be, when we are in our deepest need, when we are closest to God as our help. 'because of his persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs.' Luke 11:8.

It is at our most desperate, weakest and lost when we can be most fully dependent on God. But can also experience freedom as we are carried 'leaning on the beloved' Song of Songs 8.5. The new found experience can bring new understanding of God's purposes, encounter with a profounder relationship with God and a deepening of faith, as we are brought through troubles.

As we pray to the Father, we are assured that Christ intercedes for us and the Holy Spirit moves through our prayers, though us ourselves and out towards the world. We can recognise God as being the power underlying all we are trying to do in His name. Dependence, although it can be seen as limiting and even feeble, when manifested as the complete trust in God, is strength and freedom. This can be seen as humility in knowing that we are not at the centre, the ones in control. With the disruption to church community, we can become purely reliant on self in opposition to the unity that that is required to do God's work, 'For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ' 1 Cor 12:12, as reflected in the Trinity.

Prayer is the foundation of having a beneficial engagement with the Spirit of God in our lives. We can also intercede for others and the world. Turning to God, we also turn to the world bringing more than our needs but the needs of others and possibly a focus for action.

As we speak to the Father depending on Him to listen and guide, also being called upon is our Helper. 'And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever'. John 14:16. Prayer requires faith, expectation not of what we want but rather what God knows is really needed. The Father will send the Spirit to equip us but that will not always be in a way or to the end expected. Faith, in believing that prayer will be answered, is not only dependence but the opening of the door to God, to know what really needs doing and where, enabling us as we are sent. So, we can say with confidence, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?'. Hebrews 13:6. Really hope many of you sign up to what could be a fruitful, fellowship with our Father.

