

We pray for the people of Afghanistan. As they face the crisis of a new government, may they know that there is always hope. We pray that those who misunderstand what faith means may work for the benefit of all.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

And we pray for ourselves. Help us to be able to turn to you in our times of need, and put ourselves into your hands, trusting you to guide us in our need.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

And we draw all our prayers together in the words Our Lord taught us:

**Our Father..... Amen**

*You may wish to set aside your money offering for the work of God*

Hymn StF 455 / H&P 63 **All my hope on God is founded**

May the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be upon us and remain with us always. **Amen**

Our worship sheet this week was prepared by John Kidd, Local Preacher.

**Darlington District  
Worship at Home  
26 September 2021**



Praise the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord

Hymn StF 53 / H&P 8 **How shall I sing that majesty**

Opening Prayer

Lord God, we come to worship you. We come in reverence and humility, to worship One whose glory, grandeur, majesty and might are far above us. Yet we come in the name of the One whom came from your glory to become as one of us. And we come in faith, putting ourselves in your hands.

We come knowing that we aren't always the people you would have us be. We sometimes become so preoccupied with our own situations that we leave you out. Forgive us, Lord, and help us to strengthen our faith in you.

We come with thanks that throughout the generations you have raised up people of faith to carry out your work. We thank you that people still respond to you, and through their faith bring others to you. Above all we thank you that you gave to the world your Son whose whole being enables us to be led to you. **Amen**

Reading [James 5:13-20](#)

Martin Luther described the Letter of James as "a right strawy epistle." As far as Luther was concerned the letter didn't go into the depths of theology, unlike Paul's letters. Paul gives us a lot of things to think about in terms of our relationship to God, who Jesus

really was, what we need to believe and so on. James, on the other hand, seems to be mainly concerned with the ways we should live our lives and behave towards one another. Probably, we need both attitudes as two sides of the same coin – our lives as Christians.

In this part of his letter James is focussing on prayer, particularly for those in trouble. He deals with sickness and sinfulness, and in both cases sees the outcome of prayer as recovery. But is that what happens? I'm sure that you, like me, have prayed for people who have been ill. And you, like me, will have known people who despite having been prayed over have not recovered. The prayer offered in faith will not necessarily lead to physical recovery. For many years I have approached prayer for the sick as asking God to deal with the situation as he sees, and praying that the person may not suffer.

Prayer for those who have sinned is very different. If we know someone is "lost" in sin, we pray for them. And that sort of prayer is very different from praying for someone who is ill. Those who confess their sins will be forgiven. says James, and that's different from physical healing. Forgiveness involves acceptance of wrongdoing, admitting guilt, and being willing to tell other people.

James goes even further when using Elijah as an example for prayer. When Elijah prayed for no rain there was a drought for 3½ years, and when he prayed again there was rain and crop growth. I find this difficult, because different people will pray for different things at the same time – who does God listen to? But the final thought is that we have a responsibility to help those in spiritual need, for their benefit.

Putting the words of James into a modern framework, we can still see the value of what he says. Prayer is important, not just for ourselves. Prayer is important for the well-being of everyone. We

believe God hears and answers prayer. But we need to remember that he won't necessarily give us the answers we want. God works in his way, and sometimes that's different from the way we want. However, we still need to pray – to talk to God, and to listen to Him.

Hymn StF 529 / H&P 557 **Prayer is the soul's sincere desire**

#### Prayers of Intercession

Father, we pray for your church. May we be people of faith, putting our trust in you, and offering our prayers to you. May your Spirit work in the life of the church, that we may be better able to let the world know about you.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the vulnerable in our communities, those whose lives are made difficult by their environment, those in danger of abuse by those they know and love, those whose lives are harmed by other people.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for those whose lives have been damaged, physically, mentally or spiritually, by coronavirus and covid 19. We pray that they may be able to cope with all the problems they have to face.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all those given the responsibility of caring for others. May they be strengthened in what they do so that they may feel the value of helping others.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for those feeling a sense of guilt for their behaviour and attitudes. In turning to you may they know the sense of forgiveness which you alone can give.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**