

Prayers of Intercession, Petition and Dedication

Lord, we bring to you our prayers of intercession. We bring before you the Church throughout the world, in this country and in our own parts of the country. We give thanks for those who have found new ways of keeping us in as much contact as possible during the pandemic and pray that what has been learned by doing this may stay with us. We bring before you, too, the aftermath of Conference's acceptance of the report God In Love Unites Us. We give thanks that some have seen this as a source of great encouragement, but pray anxiously for those who have felt deeply wounded by the prospect of this change.

We pray for our country in these difficult times. We bring before you the numerous business challenges being experienced now and pray for those who must address these issues. We pray that, wherever possible, our political and business leaders will work together for the common good and put aside any thoughts of rivalry. We pray also for ordinary people who may feel powerless as these problems continue.

We ask your blessing on all those who work in healthcare of any kind and those who suffer from any form of physical or mental illness or disability. In particular, on this Sight Loss Sunday, we pray for all who have been blind since birth or have gradually become so over time, plus those who suffer from macular degeneration. We pray, too, for those who work in treatment or research to alleviate these problems.

And we pray for ourselves, as we commit to your service and look to do your will as the days move on. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

Hymn: **Behold the servant of the Lord** (StF 546 / H&P 788)

May the grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.

This worship sheet was created by Ian Warburton, Local Preacher

Darlington District Worship at Home Sunday 17th October 2021



Call to Worship

O Lord, our Lord, your greatness is seen in all the world!
Your praise reaches up to the heavens.

(Psalm 8, verse 1, Good News Bible © 1994 Used with permission.)

Hymn: **Ye servants of God** (StF 340 / H&P 278)

Prayers of Adoration, Thanksgiving and Confession

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we praise and worship you. You are the God of all who have lived and still live with us each day. You gave us the beautiful earth to enjoy and steward. You sent your Son, Jesus Christ, to live among us, to show us how we should live, to suffer and die for our sins, to rise and return to you and yet live in the hearts of all who truly believe. You sent us your Holy Spirit, to be with us to inspire and guide. We give you our most grateful thanks for all the blessings that you so freely give to us, both those which are obvious and those which remain hidden.

But, as we offer you our praise and thanks, we are sad, too, as we reflect on how often we have fallen short. We have not loved other people as ourselves and have not used your gifts wisely. We have paid lip service to what we need to do but so often have not then done it. We have learned that we need to go out into the world and make disciples but have found it easier to leave that task to other people. Forgive us, Lord, help us to make whatever amendment may be needed for us to become more perfect, do your will and care for other people and for our fragile planet. This we ask in your holy name. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Bible Reading: [Mark 10: 35-45](#)

Reflection

Way back as a young clerk in the NHS I was once in a spot of trouble at work, owing to an error on my part which had led to a member of staff being overpaid. It was all sorted, of course, but I remember my boss saying to me that it was no good aspiring to jobs if you can't hold them down.

Might this fit in a little bit with today's reading from Mark, where James and John ask whether, once Jesus has come to sit on his throne, they can sit one on his right and the other on his left? Jesus pretty soon reminds them that they don't know what they're requesting and asks if they can do everything that he will have to do.

It's essentially a selfish and self-seeking request, born out of a desire to be somehow more important than the other disciples. It's thoughtless, too, for they're both diving in without any real consideration of what the request means and implies. The Lord's Prayer emphasises that it is the Lord's will which is to be done. But this pair seem to be saying exactly the opposite, namely that they want God to do for them what they consider to be best. Donald English, in his commentary on Mark, calls the story embarrassing. Does it act as a cautionary tale for us, by reminding us to be careful what we ask for?

Then there's the issue of thinking we can walk in another person's shoes. A friend of many years ago was unfortunate enough to be diagnosed with depression, rendering him unable to function normally for a time. A family member told anyone who cared to listen that the man needed to pull himself together. But you can't say that if you've not experienced first-hand whatever stresses and pressures had brought the bout of depression on. One of the most discredited phrases in the language must be 'I know how you feel'. It's thoroughly well meant, of course, but, even if someone is going

through a superficially identical situation to one in which we've found ourselves, they may well be dealing with it differently simply because they aren't us.

At the end of the section, Jesus then calls everyone together and tells them that the only way for any of them to achieve greatness is to act as the servant of the other. Even the Son of Man did not come to be served; he came to serve and to give his life to redeem many people. By implication this is the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy of a suffering servant but, even if we're not required to suffer as our Lord did, we're told that, if one of us wants to be great, that one must be the servant of the others.

You see the sense of service in teachers who go the extra mile or lawyers who genuinely care about their clients. Even those in what I would term the less popular, less glamorous professions, such as, say, those who work for HM Revenue and Customs, can act as servants when they're doing their work conscientiously, fairly and without bullying. And, although the reputation of our MPs has become somewhat tarnished in recent times, I feel sure that many of them haven't lost the sense of wanting to serve that led them to want to go into Parliament at all.

How do we do when it comes to being the servant of those amongst whom we work or worship? In many cases, very well, I'd say. Look at all the effort that so many put into looking after our churches, doing pastoral visiting, helping new people to feel welcome and all the other small but very necessary things that need to be done to build a church that has a genuine godliness at its heart. But doing something for the greater good, even if it doesn't appeal much to us personally, is perhaps a good way of acting as a servant. And what joy can be ours if we take this on board—the joy of knowing that the right attitude can reward us as well as the people whom we're helping. Amen.

Hymn: **The Church of Christ in every age** (StF 415 / H&P 804)