

# Pastoral Letter

## October 2023

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The following are the words I shared at worship on the 24th September, from a book I am reading by Jim Cymbala, pastor of Brooklyn Tabernacle, NYC...

*'You can tell how popular a church is by who comes on a Sunday morning. You can tell how popular the pastor or evangelist is by who comes on a Sunday night. But you can tell how popular Jesus is by who comes to the prayer meeting'.*

These words have struck me deeply and challenged me as to quite why I had curtailed the regular Thursday evening prayer meeting that had been running since I came to GMC in 2017. It even ran over Zoom during our pandemic lockdown, but at the end of 2022 I felt a call to bring our Thursday Prayer to a season of rest. It was at the same time I felt the LORD was asking us as a community of Christ to wait upon him. I wrote in the 'January 2023 Pastoral Letter', that *'waiting upon the Lord' is not passive but active. Our waiting is to be expectant, in trust and faith, and in the power of Holy Spirit. Whether on your knees or sat in prayer, whether on a lunch break or out for a walk, our 'waiting upon the Lord' is active, [and] part of that activity being listening.'*

And so, as I have been listening over many months the strong beat of prayer has been drumming upon my heart. This was compounded and affirmed when I was at a morning conference called 'Fanning the Flame' and during the first talk, Pastor Jim Cymbala highlighted the words of Jesus in Matthew 21 where we find him driving out the buyers and sellers in the Temple courts, *"It is written," he said to them, "My house will be called a house of prayer,"* these words themselves a quote from Isaiah 56.7

Pastor Jim noted there is nothing in Scripture about God's place being a house of preaching, a house of praising or a house of teaching, though all of these are important. But God only says his

temple/house will be a house of prayer, so it begs the question if the prayer meeting is not vibrant, are we God's house?

Charles Spurgeon, the powerful 19th century Baptist preacher and author said in a sermon:

*'The condition of the church may be very accurately gauged by its prayer meetings. So is the prayer meeting a grace-ometer, and from it we may judge of the amount of divine working among a people. If God be near a church, it must pray. And if he be not there, one of the first tokens of his absence will be a slothfulness in prayer.'*

These words are a rebuke to myself and I hope to us all. As I've said in the past I know we have a praying people at GMC, but my concern is that our prayers are in our 'alone time' with God. As you pastor, I hear little feedback from you about prayer. What you need? What prayer has been answered? Monday morning prayer sees the same three to five people each week, and before you say it, I know that time doesn't work for many. But I wonder if the Monday a.m. slot doesn't work, will the Thursday evening fair any better? Or will folk have something else on?

The reason we have not slotted in a Life Group on a Thursday was we wanted to leave it open to restart midweek prayer. So, that is exactly what we're doing. But you may wonder what will it look like and "will I feel welcome or uncomfortable, because I don't really pray out loud". I know this is the experience of many folks, and I've even heard the phrase "I don't really have the right words / vocabulary to pray out loud". Know this, there are no right or wrong words. Even if you don't have the words the Holy Spirit will step in... *'In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.'* (Romans 8.26-27)

The church in the west, and our denomination in the Church of Scotland is diminishing in so many ways. In membership, in finance, in people coming to faith, and the churches impact on society. One could argue the western church is under the judgement of the Lord. Yet even

when Israel came under God's judgement, God always left a way back and a remnant faithful to Him. The faithful are those who not only know God, know His Son and are empowered by the Holy Spirit, but that they would also come to him in prayer. Praying together brings the church very close to God, so if as a church we don't come together before the LORD in prayer, why would we want to be close to the LORD in heaven? Come and pray. Enjoy the Lord's presence in His house with your sisters and brothers, and let's see what the Lord will do today, tomorrow and the next...

Your servant in Christ, *Pastor Mike* (Minister, GMC)

## ***PRAYER MINISTRY***

**... after  
worship, bring  
your concerns  
before the  
Lord**



"I have come that they might have life" John 10:10

Welcome | Worship | Word | Witness

LIFE GROUPS ARE COMMUNITIES OF FELLOWSHIP WITHIN OUR CHRISTIAN FAMILY.

THEY ARE BASED ON TRUTH, TRUST & CONFIDENTIALITY, INCLUSION AND NON-JUDGEMENT.

FOR THESE THINGS THERE MUST BE PRAYER.

PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER AND FOR YOUR CHURCH



# MONDAY PRAYER

in the Gillespie Centre

7.30 - 8.30A.M.

Begin your week with the Lord in prayer,  
as we read from the Word of God

*Come to the LORD*  
**MIDWEEK  
PRAYER**

**THURSDAY  
at 7.30pm.**

**Upper Room (OR maybe  
the Sanctuary)**

Are you in need of pastoral support?

Do you need prayer?

Do you want to support our kingdom work, or financially support the work of GMC?

For all matters contact Rev. Mike Weaver **OR** the Office

Office: 01383 621 253 | Manse: 01383 724 347 | Mob: 07980 492 299

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