

# ONLINE SERVICE

Sunday 5 April 2020

Welcome

Prayer of Invocation

Bible Reading: Matthew 5:2-12  
Read together

Young at Heart

Bible Reading: Matthew 6:5-15  
Christine Bradbeer

Sermon

Learning to pray like Jesus  
Matthew 6:5-8

Prayers of Intercession  
and  
The Lord's Prayer

Benediction



Online at

<https://www.facebook.com/blackburnpresbyterian/>

# NOTICES

5 April 2020

Wednesday 8 April

1.30 pm Covenanted Prayer Time



Friday 10 April

9.30 am Why Good Friday?

Sunday 12 April

EASTER - Christ is Risen!

Linking online during the  
COVID-19 CRISIS.

JOIN US: Online!

Go to [blackburnpc.org.au](http://blackburnpc.org.au) and click the Facebook  
button at the top of that page.



For your prayers this week:

Congregational member: Shirley Chan

also

Kevin & Julie MURRAY - Kevin is the National Director for the

MEMBERS who wish to continue their freewill offerings during the current crisis are reminded that they can use the electronic banking details at the bottom of this page.

GARDENIA ST  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
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# GARDENIA ST. PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH BLACKBURN

5 April 2020



Praying Hands

Albrecht Dürer (1508) pen-and-ink drawing,  
Albertina Museum, Vienna, Austria.

**WELCOME**



In Bangladesh (pop 186M), Christian converts come from a variety of backgrounds, including Muslim, Buddhist and Hindu. They experience increasing pressure from the government, families, communities and Islamic extremist groups.

Christians live in fear of violence, although the immediate threat has decreased since the government crackdown on extremist activity. Forced marriage, threats and discrimination regarding the use of public resources are common.

As Islam is further integrated into the political scene, Christians are monitored and treated with hostility, especially those who have converted from Islam, Buddhism or Hinduism. Several Christians have been detained by police under the allegation of "unlawful conversion". Open Doors

Encouraging growth among believers both inside and outside conventional church structures. Churches are increasing, especially indigenous denominations... Pray for governance that is just, transparent and effective at assisting those in need while thwarting those seeking to gain at the expense of the nation. Operation World

"Given the extraordinary human densities in Bangladesh, globally accepted modelling techniques and parameter assumptions forecast the impact of COVID-19 without interventions (to result in) between half a million up to 2 million lives lost during the epidemic wave," according to the memo dated March 26. The Australian 29/3/20

## Sermon Notes: LEARNING TO PRAY LIKE JESUS

Jesus deepened the self-giving service (righteousness) of his disciples way beyond the routines of the scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 5:20). Today we discover he also radically transformed their expectation in prayer to reveal a startling new intimacy with God. Today Jesus invites us into this intimacy.

### 1. Putting on a performance.

The awful danger that our religious self-giving becomes a performance is perhaps only trumped when our prayers are for the attention of spectators. The religious leaders of Jesus day had slipped into this tragic farce.

Well, said Jesus, in such a case the applause of the viewers is the only reward. Jesus suggested a different approach, a different priority.

### 2. A quiet secluded place

This is not to say that it is wrong to pray in groups. Jesus taught us to prayer together ("*Our Father*" v.9), and times of praying together are necessary. But there is a danger. We need to guard against conning ourselves. Especially "empty phrases" and "many words" (v.7). See current *Eternity* article (p.5).

The Bible gives examples of believers praying in all kinds of situations, but here Jesus is introducing us to a benchmark of new personal intimacy. Find a quiet place to be alone. This maybe more difficult for some. Not everybody has a room of their own. Consider Jesus himself. He was on-the-road with the disciples. They noticed that he went apart from them from time to time for prayer.

### 3. Tempted to get what you can from God?

There are two common misconceptions i) is that prayer is about getting what you want from God. If that wasn't error enough we are ii) tempted to think if we are good enough God will grant our requests. Both popularised in Janis Joplin's song *Mercedes Benz*.

Both these misunderstanding are grotesque caricatures of prayer. Jesus explains that at the heart of prayer is a familial relationship.

### 4. This is your Father

Here is the heart of Jesus perspective on prayer. Recall the homecoming of the prodigal son. Jesus' story reminds us that the relationship with God who said at his baptism, "this is my Son, my beloved", is a relationship into which he invites us.

Through faith in Jesus we become "in Christ" as the New Testament puts it, and united with him in our baptism. So we are children

"And when you come before God, don't turn that into a theatrical production either. All these people making a regular show out of their prayers, hoping for stardom! Do you think God sits in a box seat?"

"Here's what I want you to do: Find a quiet, secluded place so you won't be tempted to role-play before God. Just be there as simply and honestly as you can manage. The focus will shift from you to God, and you will begin to sense his grace.

"The world is full of so-called prayer warriors who are prayer-ignorant. They're full of formulas and programs and advice, peddling techniques for getting what you want from God. Don't fall for that nonsense. This is your Father you are dealing with, and he knows better than you what you need. With a God like this loving you, you can pray very simply.

Matthew 6:5-8 *The Message*

"adopted" into the family of God. We are invited to know God as "our Father". There is no 'blind fate' or 'mere chance'.

Jesus' "Father" has become "our Father". This changes everything.

### 5. He knows what you need

Parents typically know what a child *needs* (cf., *wants*) before the child does. Parents long to see their children develop maturity and interdependence. Achieving this requires a wise and delicate balance.

So God, our heavenly Father, knows what we need. Our task is to learn to think God's thought after Him. To become Christ-like. "Let this mind be in you that was also in Christ Jesus (Philippians 2:5-11) says St Paul.

This takes prayer to a new level. This Palm Sunday we are mindful of what doing the Father's will meant for Jesus.

Learn the story of Terry Waite. As Special Envoy of the Archbishop of Canterbury he was captured and held for 1763 days, the first four years in solitary confinement.



What might the privilege of Jesus' kind of prayer mean for you and me in our 'social-isolation'?