

Henley-in-Arden Baptist Church

“Staying Connected” 1 – Sunday 22nd March 2020

Psalm 46:1-2a

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear.

Welcome to the first edition of ‘Staying Connected’, where each week I will provide some thoughts and prayers and other information which I hope will help us during this period where we are not meeting as church in the normal way. I hope it will encourage us to ‘Stay Connected’ to God and to each other through what is certainly extraordinary circumstances and a difficult time.

In these challenging times of isolation and difficulty; where there is an understandable level of concern, anxiety and difficulty, from where do we get our strength? Well there is much help in the bible, and I would encourage you to turn to the bible; and see the supreme love and power of God in its pages and supremely revealed in Jesus. It’s from Him that we get our strength. Psalm 46 encourages us to put our fears about the present and the future in the context of God’s love and power. And it goes on to say, “Be still and know that I am God” (v10) – an encouragement for us to trust and pray; and reflect that He is sovereign over all things. And He is with us.

We can stay connected to God through prayer too.

1 Peter 5:7

⁷Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

Most of us will have times when we feel we are struggling; and so it is especially important that we demonstrate our love for each other as church family where we can. To stay connected to each other is in our ability through ‘phoning especially and checking to see if folk are OK and sharing fellowship and a chat that way.

So, a reminder of some of the things that we can do that will make a difference:

- Telephone someone – think on those who might especially appreciate a call
- Those of us who are younger and fitter might be able to help in practical ways, with shopping, for example
- Attend to your own well-being by looking after yourself in mind, body, and spirit – there is help to draw on as we need it
- Pray – there is no set way to do this, it all counts!

Lord God, our heavenly Father, we pray for our family and friends including the scattered church family, and the wider community in which we live; that You would meet individual needs. We pray for good health and protection, and for the peace that only You can give

We pray for the NHS staff and other key workers; that You would give them the strength and resources that they need to sustain their service to the country at this unprecedented time

And we pray for our politicians and particularly our government at this time. We give thanks for their work on our behalf. Sovereign Lord, we pray for wisdom and strength, that good decisions would be made. Help them to bear the weight of the responsibility they carry; and may they know Your counsel and support of them

In all these things we pray, Lord, that Your glory would be made known through Your people and however you may see fit; even when it's hard (in fact, perhaps, especially when it's hard). You are a God who creates order out of chaos, who brings victory from defeat, and who raised Jesus from the dead! We again put our trust in You; and bring our prayers with confidence in the name of Jesus Amen

Remember,
God is "able to be more than we ask or imagine....." (Ephesians 3:20)
And He has the victory over all things!

And finally, there is strength in knowing that we share with our brothers and sisters in the wider church. For those on-line there is opportunity to access services in alternative formats; but for all of us we can have that sense of joining our prayers with others.

This Sunday I would flag up the following:

There is a 40-minute service on Radio 4 at 8:10am led by the Archbishop of Canterbury; and

Churches together in England has called for a National Day of Prayer and Action, saying:

"This Mothering Sunday, 22nd March, we are calling all churches to a National Day of Prayer and Action. At such a time as this, when

so many are fearful and there is great uncertainty, we are reminded of our dependence on our loving Heavenly Father and the future that He holds. We encourage you to light a candle in the windows of your home at 7.00 p.m. on Mothering Sunday as a visible symbol of the light of life, Jesus Christ, our source and hope in prayer". Do be careful with candles, however, especially if there are curtains nearby(!); you might prefer to use the symbolism of shining a torch.



And finally, please do get in touch with me at any time

May God bless you with His peace.

Mike

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Romans 15:13

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.