

Our Prayers:

Prayers from the weekly prayer sheet may be included alongside these prayers.

Philip Yancey poses a question: How often do I come to God not with consumer requests, but simply with a desire to spend time with God, to discern what God wants from me and not vice versa?

This hymn helps to focus our attention on God as we begin our time of prayer:

[StF 29](#) **Jesus lead us to the Father, by your Spirit, help us draw near.**

Invite God to shape and form your prayers as you rest in prayer with God.

We join our prayers together with the whole family of the worldwide church as we say the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples:

Our Father...

What might God be saying to you as you rest in stillness?

Be still, for my rod and staff will comfort you;
Be still, for I will lead you by quiet waters;
Be still, and spend a while with me,
for you are beloved to me and I long for your company.
Be still, for I love you, my child.
Be still and know that I am God.

Singing the Faith 18, 19 and 624 are further short songs which pick up the theme of being still. You may like to read or sing them.

Hymn [StF 20](#) **Be still for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One is here.**

Blessing

May the peace of God which passes all understanding keep your heart and your mind in Christ Jesus. Amen (Philippians 4: 7)

Worship across Darlington District

Finding Stillness

[Psalm 103](#) (StF 823) begins: Bless the Lord, O my soul
(H&P 869) **And all that is within me bless his holy name.**

Whatever our circumstances on this day we try to remember to bless the Lord from deep within, remembering who God is and all that God has done for us.

Hymn [StF 83](#) / H&P 13 **Praise my soul, the King of heaven.**

**Bless the Lord, O my soul, I remember your gifts to me...
I remember your healing; your faithful love; your compassion; your
righteousness; your guiding hand.** *(based on Psalm 103: 3-7)*

Yet, Lord, I know that I have not always followed your way and there is much you could accuse me of if you chose to do so. Many are the ways in which I have not fulfilled the potential you created in me. *(inspired by Psalm 103: 9-10)*

Our sins are forgiven:

God will not keep his anger forever. He will not deal with us according to our sins, or reward us according to our wickedness (Psalm 103: 9-10)

In 1 Kings 19 the prophet Elijah is on the run for fear of losing his life. He pleads with God to take his life, but God sustains him to travel on. Later we read that six weeks later he is hiding in a cave. God calls him out with the instruction to stand on the mountain before the Lord who is about to pass by. Pause for a moment: how do you relate to this story?

- Are you running to keep up or running away?
- Are you out on the mountain or in the shelter?
- Where are you looking for God at the present time?

[1 Kings 19: 11-13](#) tells how it was not in the explosive or the dramatic, but in the sheer silence that Elijah found God. I am told that sheer silence is quite an overpowering sensation. It is not something I have experienced – the total absence of noise. A rare thing.

The well-loved hymn Dear Lord and Father of Mankind begins with our plea for forgiveness and ends with the earthquake, wind, fire and still small voice of calm.

Apparently the hymn's composer, John Greenleaf Whittier, did not approve of singing in church, believing that God was best worshipped in silent meditation. If you have a hymn book you might like to read the words as he preferred. (StF 495 / H&P 673)

Read [Psalm 46](#) twice if you are able. Take time to notice what stands out for you as you read it through. The psalmist notices the noise, the distractions the tumult of life, but it is in the stillness that knowing God is achieved and the name of God is exalted.

A reflection on Psalm 46 by Helle Sewell, Darlington District Evangelism and Community Development Enabler

Meister Eckhart is quoted as noting '*The quieter the mind, the more powerful, the worthier, the deeper, the more telling, the more perfect the prayer and encounter with God is*'.

How easy do you find prayer?

How easy do you find it to be truly still?

Stillness is important because the two are linked. Being still not only on the outside but on the inside too.

But being still isn't enough.....'know that I am God' (v10) God has a different perspective to us. God is not human. What does God see? God sees the whole world irrespective of time, size, space, human history ...

He is the perfect Father.

- God chose to come to us, die for us.
- God loves us in a way we cannot comprehend.
- God journeys with us, never gives up on us.
- Even when we push away – God waits for our return and shows compassion and Grace.

Pause for a moment, if you are able, to read or listen to [StF 624](#):

**Calm me Lord, as you calmed the storm;
still me... Let all the tumult within me cease**

We think of God in human terms, that somehow, He is like us, because that is all we are capable of:

- But God is greater and more powerful in every conceivable way yet
- More loving, compassionate, reliable, consistent than any person can ever be.
- Great, big and yet intimate.

In the silence and stillness – we get this perspective of difference and we discover a new intimacy and closeness when we finally surrender and know that the Almighty, not us, is God.

All we have to do is:

- Come as we are
- Be open
- Ask God in
- Be still

We find:

- Perspective
- Peace
- Security
- Hope
- Love
- Transformation

Prayer is less about us changing God's mind, but about God changing us.

How willing are you to take the risk of being still and quiet with God knowing that it could change you forever?

Take time to pause and be still – if you dare!