

ST MARY'S SPEEN PEW NEWS 317

The coronavirus is now affecting everyday life for almost all of us. You may be wondering what you can do to help on a practical level, when physical connection is becoming increasingly prohibited. As Christians, we know that we can pray. Here's an adapted extract from *5 Things to Pray For Your World* by Rachel Jones to help guide you in praying for those working on the front line response, based on 2 Corinthians 1 V 3-11.

1. Praise God

Praise God that he is “the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles” (v 3-4).

Think back to emergency situations or periods of ill-health when God has comforted you. Thank God that he stands ready to comfort all those who turn to him for help.

2. Comfort in trouble

“... so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God” (v 4).

Pray that Christian doctors, nurses, chaplains and patients would have opportunities to share something of their own faith with those in trouble. Ask God to help them speak of the only good news that can offer lasting comfort—that Christ can heal our relationship with God so that we can enjoy life to the full, for ever. Pray by name for any Christians you know personally.

3. Reliance on God

“We felt we had received the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead” (v 9).

However good our healthcare is, only God is in control of life and death. Pray that both patients and professionals would come to appreciate their own helplessness in the face of death—and turn to rely on God, who raises the dead.

4. Deliverance from danger

“He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us again. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us...” (v 10).

God loves to deliver people from danger, including ill-health—in his grace, he often works through the skill of doctors and nurses. Ask him to use these professionals to save many lives and restore people to full health.

5. Answers to prayer

“... as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favour granted us in answer to the prayers of many” (v 11).

Give thanks for the way God has answered your prayers in the past. Who else can you “help by your prayers” right now?

Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy in this time of uncertainty and distress. Sustain and support the anxious and fearful, and lift up all who are brought low; that we may rejoice in your comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Merciful God, we entrust to your tender care those who are ill or in pain, knowing that whenever danger threatens your everlasting arms are there to hold them safe. Comfort and heal them, and restore them to health and strength; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

We are not people of fear: we are people of courage. We are not people who protect our own safety: we are people who protect our neighbours' safety. We are not people of greed: we are people of generosity. We are your people God, giving and loving, wherever we are, whatever it costs For as long as it takes wherever you call us.

Amen.

Sunday 22nd March MOTHERING SUNDAY

Prayers

We stand before the throne of God
with countless crowds
from every nation and race, tribe and language.
Blessing and glory and wisdom,
thanksgiving and honour, power and might
be to our God for ever and ever. Amen.

Prayer for the day

Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy.
Sustain and support the anxious,
be with those who care for the sick,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may find comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Psalm 46

1 God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble
2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,
3 though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.
4 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells.
5 God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day.
6 Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts.
7 The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.
8 Come and see what the LORD has done, the desolations he has brought on the earth
9 He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth. He breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire.
10 He says, 'Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.'
11 The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.