

## “Keep on praying ”

We are offering a series of reflections for individuals and churches who may be finding it difficult to provide midweek prayer and shared learning from Scripture. You can use these by watching the YouTube video, reading the relevant Bible passage and then reflecting on the questions below. To help make this a shared activity, you are encouraged to reflect on this together with friends using an online conference package, or simply arrange with a friend for them to watch it too. Then ring each other up, share your thoughts and responses and then pray for one another, and pray together for our world.

Read Daniel 6:6-10

If you can, watch the YouTube Video: <https://youtu.be/2YffHNvehXc>

Daniel is a great character from the Old Testament, he faces significant trials, is fearless in defending his faith, becomes one of the most senior politicians in the world and is used by God as a prophet and an interpreter of visions. But he never appears to aspire to any of these things, he simply seeks to remain faithful to his God. Take some time to reflect on this moment when he kneels at his open window and prays. Try to forget anything you may know about Daniel and simply focus on him as an ordinary man, praying to his God. We may be finding the present situation wearying and troubling – one way in which we can be sustained is not so much by attempting to do or become anything spectacular, but by seeking to remain faithful in our prayers. As we look at Daniel's actions, we might draw some encouragement for ourselves from them.

**Daniel maintained a rhythm of prayer:** From these verses we note that he had a place of **prayer**, a **position** of prayer and a **routine** of prayer. Our lives have been severely disrupted by recent events, so we may have lost many of our familiar “markers”. Take time to consider how you are maintaining and developing your own rhythm of prayer. Do you perhaps need to find a regular place, a regular position or establish a regular routine for your prayers? Without these things we can easily lose that rhythm. This could be as simple as deliberately sitting in a different chair, creating a regular timeslot each day, or perhaps even agreeing with a friend to establish a rhythm of praying together. This is not about locking ourselves into a burdensome routine, but creating the regular reminders that we need to sustain us in these challenging times.

**Daniel had a direction for his prayer:** Daniel faced Jerusalem. This was not simply hankering for the past or hoping for the future – Daniel was a senior official, he very much lived in the here and now. Daniel faced Jerusalem to focus on his God as he embraced the present. As well as sustaining our rhythms of prayer – how do we retain the focus of our prayers? Our focus is not Jerusalem but Jesus, expressed in the New Testament as “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith [Hebrews 12:2] How do we stay focussed on Christ in our present situation?”

**Daniel's prayer made an impact:** We have to recognise that the initial impact of Daniel's prayer was to make things more difficult. We might also recognise that Daniel's prayer had already made an impact on his contemporaries – this was how they could be certain they could trap him. As we reflect on this, we might recognise that this impact was not so much the result of WHAT Daniel prayed, but the fact that he did. We can recognise that whatever the consequence or situation, there is value simply in praying – Daniel did not pray as a reaction to the situation but as part of his regular rhythm and focus. Some Christian traditions describe prayer as “the raising of our heart and mind to God”. Encourage yourself with the fact that you did pray – whatever the impact. We pray not because of what we want, or what we hope for but because prayer is a good thing to do.

### PRAYER

Loving God, though this road is wearisome and troubling, help me to pray. Help me to find those rhythms that draw me continually to your side. Help me keep my focus on Jesus and to centre my life each day on you. Help me to know that whatever might happen around, there is blessing and purpose in simply making myself present to you. Be my help, be my shield, be my sustainer in these challenging times. AMEN