

CUTTING EDGE CAMELOT, No 64

Wednesday 28th October 2020

‘Virtually Church but with some way to go...’

Welcome

Welcome to this midweek edition of Cutting Edge Camelot. Anna follows up George’s reflection last week on the importance of persevering in prayer.

Scripture Passage

James 5.13-end

Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise. Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.

Elijah was a human being like us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain and the earth yielded its harvest.

My brothers and sisters, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and is brought back by another, you should know that whoever brings back a sinner from wandering will save the sinner’s soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

Reflection

George ended last Wednesday's reflection by emphasizing the role of prayer, and prayer is also the focus of today's reflection. In just a few verses, James uses the word 'pray', 'prayer' or 'prayed' seven times! James lists a whole range of situations in which the appropriate response is prayer; in fact, I'd guess that James would have said that prayer is the appropriate response to *every* situation. So, other than the fact that we should pray, what else can we take away from this passage?

First, prayer is powerful. James doesn't encourage his readers to pray because it might make them feel a bit better; James encourages his readers to pray because he believes and he has witnessed the fact that prayer is *powerful*. We can assume James had seen people healed through prayer; he had seen relationships restored. Prayer changes things. That isn't to say that prayer is like a vending machine – prayer in, result out. Many have experienced the pain and heartache of their prayers apparently not being answered. This is never because God doesn't care or isn't listening. Perhaps it is because God has something else planned, or perhaps the time isn't right. Or perhaps, as was suggested in James 4.1-10, it is because we are asking for the wrong things – are we praying “*My* will be done” or “*Your* will be done”?

But even when our prayers don't seem to be answered or they don't seem to be answered in the way we expected, prayer still has the power to change. It has the power to change *us* – the people praying. Because prayer isn't like a vending machine: it's more like a telephone call, a two-way conversation between us and God. That doesn't mean that God is literally going to say, “Hello, how are you today?”



(although He might!), but it means we open ourselves up to hearing from God through little niggles at the back of our mind, or through the words of a friend, or through an unexpected opportunity, or just through a sense of God's presence, gently guiding us. And through all of this, we are changed, and the people and situations around us may be changed too.

Second, we learn that praying is something that everyone can do. James refers to a story from the life of the prophet Elijah found in 1 Kings 17-18, where James draws a link between Elijah's prayers at the beginning and the end of a drought. But James starts by saying, "Elijah was a human being like us": in other words, Elijah wasn't some kind of super-human and that's why his prayers were answered; no, *he was just like us*. It can be easy to convince ourselves that we aren't any "good" at praying or that it takes a certain kind of person – a member of clergy, or an especially holy person, or someone who has been a Christian for a long time – to pray "properly". But this simply isn't the case. Anyone can pray!

There is no right or wrong way to pray, and it can be helpful to experiment with different approaches to prayer. So here a few things you might like to try; they may be things you've tried before or they might be new to you...

- ❖ James says, "Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise". You could listen to some favourite hymns or worship songs and sing along to them, using them as inspiration to praise and thank God. You could also look in the book of Psalms for things to thank God for (for example, Psalm 34, 95, 100, 136), and maybe even write your own psalm of thanksgiving to God.
- ❖ "Are any among you suffering? They should pray", says James. There are many situations in the world that need prayer. You might like to buy a newspaper and then, as you read it, pause to pray for any situations which you feel especially need prayer. You could take this a step further and actually cut out a few stories and images to make a collage of things to pray for over the next week.

- ❖ In *The Message* translation of this passage, the last two verses are phrased as, “My dear friends, if you know people who have wandered off from God’s truth, don’t write them off. Go after them. Get them back and you will have rescued precious lives from destruction and prevented an epidemic of wandering away from God”. Are there certain people in your life who you so wish had a personal relationship with God? You might like to write their names down on a piece of card and hold them before God in prayer. Alternatively, you could choose something to represent them to hold as you pray for them (for example, a pebble, a bead, a mug).

How else might you try praying?

Anna

Points for Prayers

- For our spiritual growth and discipleship as we respond to the good news of Jesus Christ and for growth in our prayer life
- For further services in the Group this month and particularly for the All Souls and Remembrance Sunday services
- Thanksgiving for care, skill and courage of NHS workers and those in care homes
- Those suffering from coronavirus in hospitals, care homes and at home
- Need for further largescale testing and research into and development of a vaccine as soon as this can be achieved
- Preparations to avert or minimise a second wave of coronavirus
- Our Bishops (please see notice below)
- Prayers for those affected economically by the lockdown, for businesses and those who have become unemployed

- For North Cadbury Church Primary School and Marchant Holliday school in our benefice remembering also Horsington school as they proceed with their new school year
- Prayers and thanksgiving for contributions to the foodbanks and for those helping to take these to the foodbanks.

Forthcoming services of public worship

Please see the following schedule of forthcoming services of public worship. This includes most but not all of the monthly services across the Group held pre-lockdown. So if a service in the Group which you regularly attended is not included in the schedule you are of course most welcome to attend any other service within the Group. However, because of the limitations on capacity in the various churches through the need for social distancing it would be appreciated if you could in these circumstances let the relevant churchwarden know in advance of your intention to do this.

Services in many of the parishes on Remembrance Sunday are likely to experience particular pressure on their social distancing capacity and numbers attending may have to be limited accordingly. Please contact the relevant churchwardens for further information on this subject.

Any further additions to this schedule will be notified as and when they arise.

Sunday 1st November

9.00 am, St Mary's Yarlinton, Communion (Anna will preside)

9.30 am, St John the Baptist North Cheriton, Camelot Morning Worship

11.00 am, St Michael's North Cadbury, Group Communion

4.00 pm, St Michael's North Cadbury, All Souls Service (see below)

Sunday 8th November (Remembrance Sunday)

10.50 am, St Michael's North Cadbury, Remembrance Sunday service

10.50 am, St Mary's Yarlington, Remembrance Sunday service

10.50 am, St Thomas a Becket South Cadbury,
Remembrance Sunday service

10.50 am, St Mary's Compton Pauncefoot, Remembrance Sunday service

10.50 am, St Michael's Blackford, Remembrance Sunday service

10.50 am, St Peter and St Paul Maperton, Remembrance Sunday service

10.50 am, St Nicholas Holton, Remembrance Sunday service

10.50 am, St John the Baptist North Cheriton,
Remembrance Sunday service

Sunday 15th November

8.00 am, St Nicholas Bratton Seymour, Communion

9.30 am, St Mary's Compton Pauncefoot, Communion

11.00 am, St Peter and St Paul Maperton, Communion

11.00 am, St Michael's North Cadbury, Sunday Worship

4.00 pm, St Mary's Yarlington, Evensong

Sunday 22nd November

8.00 am, St Michael's Blackford, Communion

9.30 am, St Thomas a Becket South Cadbury, Communion

9.30 am, St John the Baptist North Cheriton, Communion

9.30 am, St Mary's Compton Pauncefoot, Matins

11.00 am, St Michael's North Cadbury, Communion

11.00 am, St Mary's Yarlington, Sunday Worship

4.00 pm, Galhampton, Evening Service

Sunday 29th November (Advent Sunday)

8 am, St Michael's Blackford, Communion

9.30 am, St John the Baptist North Cheriton, Family Service

11.00 am, St Michael's North Cadbury, Morning Worship

11.00 am, St Nicholas Bratton Seymour, Sunday Worship

4.00 pm, Galhampton, Evensong

All Saints and All Souls Service

This year our Benefice All Saints and All Souls Service will be held at 4.00pm at St Michael's, North Cadbury on Sunday 1st November. The service is a chance to remember and to give thanks for those people whom we have loved who have passed away.

During the service, there will be an opportunity to light a candle and place it on the altar as an act of remembrance. If you are unable to attend the service, but would like a loved one remembered at the service, please let Anna know the name(s) of the individual(s) you would like remembered, so that a candle can be lit and their name placed on the altar. Anna can be contacted at curate@camelotparishes.org.uk or on 441160, please let her know by Sunday 25th October.

8.00 am Communions at St Nicholas Bratton Seymour

St Nicholas Bratton Seymour has now reopened. The decision has been made for a six month period (while social distancing measures are in place) to move the 8 am Communion service at Bratton Seymour from the second to the third Sunday of each month. The first of these services will be held on Sunday 15th November.

Private prayer and Celtic worship

North Cadbury church continues to be open for private prayer on Wednesday afternoons from 2.30 pm to 4.00 pm.

Galhampton is no longer open for private prayer. However on Wednesday at 7.00 pm it is open for Celtic Worship led by Alison.

Excalibur and the Parish Office

It is planned to resume paper deliveries of Excalibur beginning with November's edition.

The Parish Office is closed although Rob does come in regularly. In his absence please contact Rob via email (office@camelotparishes.org.uk) or on 01749 850934.

Update on Bishop Peter

Bishop Peter thanks everyone for all the cards and other expressions of support which he has received. A card was sent to him on behalf of the Camelot Parishes as a whole. He says that he has been lifted on 'eagle's wings' through the love and prayers of others and he thinks that the treatment for leukaemia is going well. He is grateful that potential donors for a bone marrow transplant have been identified and he is preparing for such a transplant later this year. Please continue to pray for him and his family in this challenging time. Please pray also for Bishop Ruth and the rest of the Bishop's Staff as they take on the oversight of the diocese in his absence.

Growing as a worshipper, a servant and a family

*We pray that 'we might live in love,
as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us' (Ephesians 5:2)*