

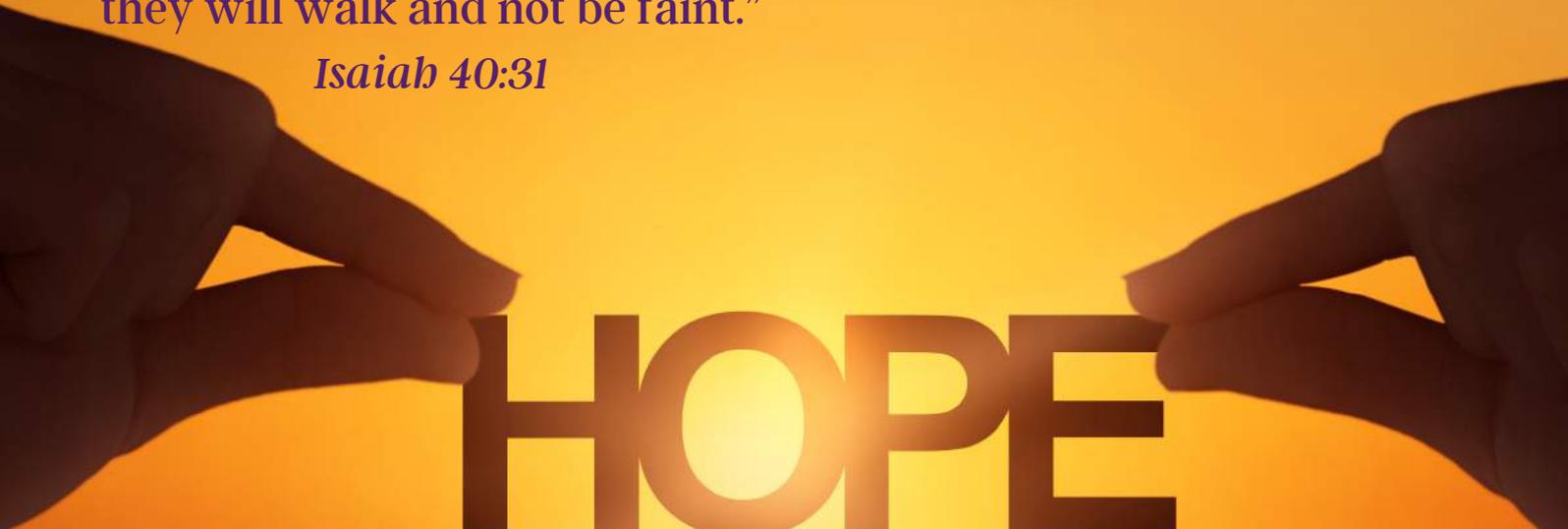
HBC ACCORD

A CHURCH FOR ALL NATIONS

ISSUE 8 | MAY 2020

“...those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.”

Isaiah 40:31

A close-up photograph of two hands, one on the left and one on the right, holding the word "HOPE" in large, bold, black capital letters. The hands are positioned as if they are supporting the word from below. The background is a bright, warm orange and yellow gradient, suggesting a sunrise or sunset over a body of water.

HOPE

100 TOP TIPS FOR ISOLATION

What to do when you get bored at home!

OUR CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE

Find out how the church is responding.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A CHRISTIAN

Luke shares his experience of faith.

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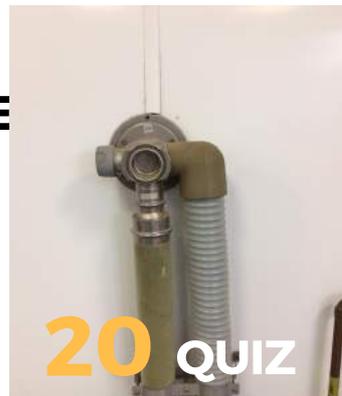
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Happy quizzing.

Could you be our next winner?



Top 100 tips for Isolation.

What to do when you get bored at home!

PERSPECTIVE



To say that a lot has happened since our last edition of HBC Accord was published would be something of an understatement. As we prepare to publish this, our latest issue, the UK has been in lockdown for several weeks, and the only way we can all meet up with each other is via the internet or over the telephone. And we are not alone in this period of (relative) isolation, as a great many other countries across the world also face restrictions on movement and social contact.

At a time when there is so much uncertainty, fear and anxiety, we felt it important to keep in touch with everyone at Hendon Baptist Church through the medium of the magazine. At the point of publication we don't know when we will be able to meet again in person, but we want to share something of our usual range of articles and news to help us all feel that we are part of the living, breathing body of Christ in this area of north-west London. So, rather than print the magazine as we usually do, we have decided to make it available online only. This way you can download and print for yourself (if you want), and share with your friends as well. And for anyone new to Hendon Baptist via our website, or through our social media presence, we give you a very warm welcome, and look forward very much to seeing you once we are all able to meet up in the same building again!

Unsurprisingly, this issue contains a number of items relating to the coronavirus pandemic, including encouragement for how we as believers in Jesus Christ can know and radiate God's presence at this time, how to separate real from fake news, and offering 100 tips for things to do while in isolation. We also have book reviews and personal testimonies and a rather different kind of quiz that will seriously test your memories! In addition to their appearing in this magazine, these items will also be featuring online in a regular HBC blog – please do share with your friends and family!

We would love you to get in touch with the magazine team, by phone or email, and let us know what you think of the current issue. We would also really appreciate any suggestions you may have for upcoming issues – we've said it before and will say it again, this is your magazine so please do talk to us about what you want to see in its pages! And may our great God keep you and your families safe and well, and knowing His presence every day and in every area of your lives.

Jacqui, Lindsay, Jo and Khadija

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Pastor's Page

Pastor Errol Jacobs

OUR RESPONSE TO CORONAVIRUS

I greet you in the Wonderful Name of our Lord and Saviour Christ Jesus. As we are all aware by now we are in one of the greatest challenges that not only we are facing but the world! The Coronavirus has taken the world by storm and has created pandemonium in all our lives. We have all been affected in some form or another. We are living at this very moment in unprecedented times and therefore we are called to unprecedented measures!

It is however more important as believers in Christ that we focus on Him as Lord more than on the situation we are faced with. 1 Peter 5:7 says "Cast all your care (or anxiety) on Him for he cares for you." Let us truly trust Him during this time.



**"CARRY EACH OTHER'S BURDENS, AND IN THIS WAY YOU WILL FULFILL THE LAW OF CHRIST."
GALATIANS 6:2**





Believe Him, honour Him, love Him and have faith in Him! This is no surprise to our God so why worry? Why be concerned? Yes, I believe this is a test of our faith and our trust in the Lord.

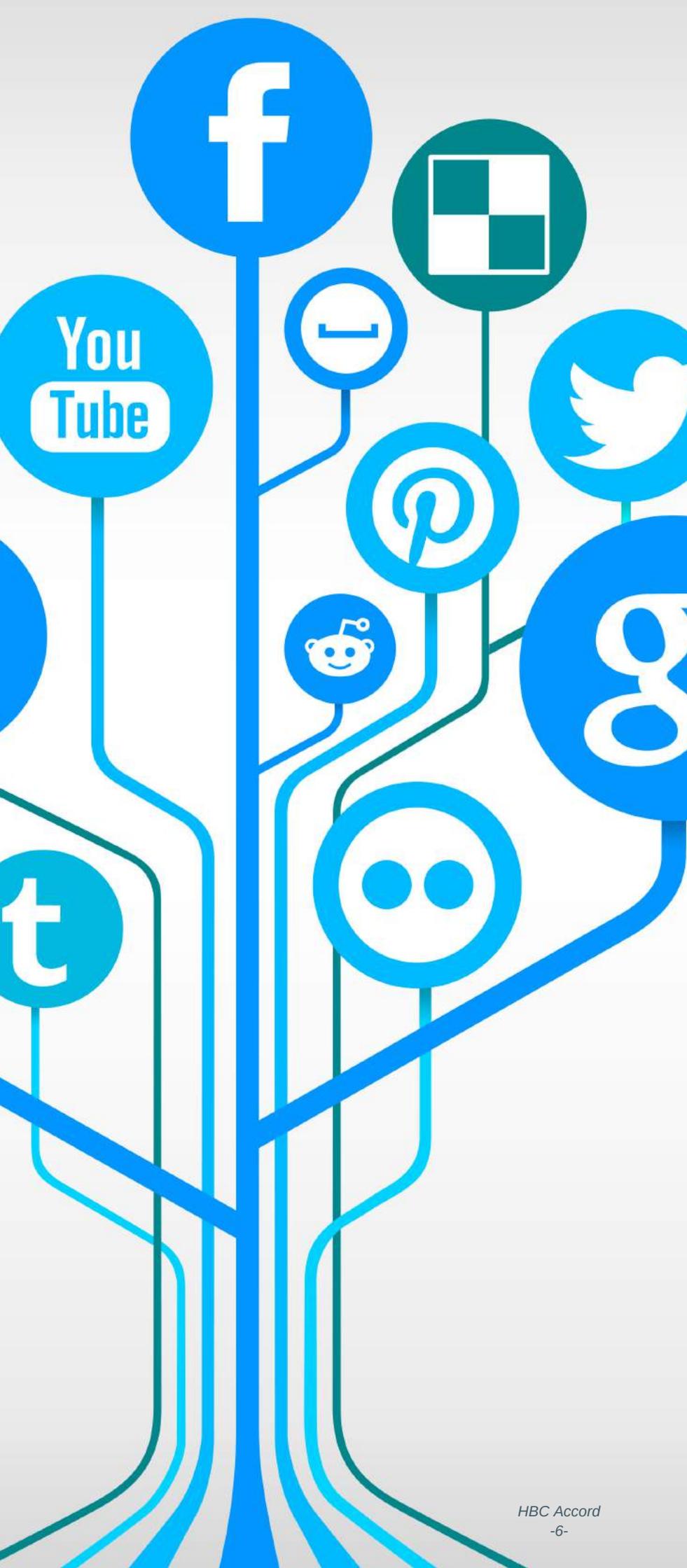
God's Word also says in Galatians 6:2 that "we should carry each other's burdens." It is therefore important that we support each other during this time. Our support should be safe, sensible and still obeying the advice to distance

ourselves from physical interaction as far as possible to keep each other safe.

As many of you know, we have moved our services online. You can watch a live stream of the sermon on our Facebook page (search for Hendon Baptist Church) at 11am on Sundays, and the sermons are available later on our YouTube channel. We are also fellowshipping together over Zoom. The details are sent out weekly on our WhatsApp group – please do get in touch if you would like to be added.

Join us for an online service on Facebook or fellowship with us over Zoom.

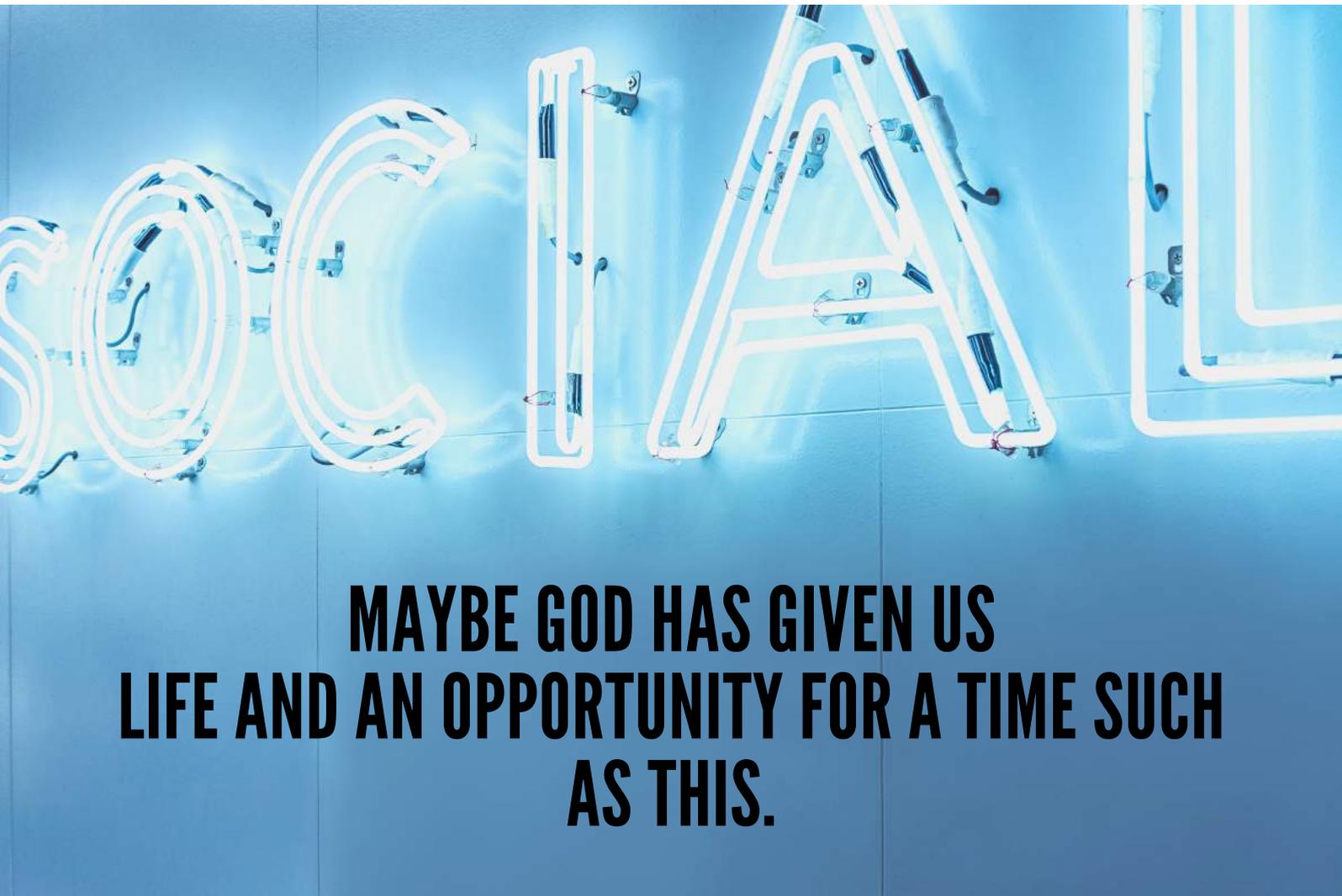
Believe Him, honour Him, love Him and have faith in Him! This is no surprise to our God so why worry?



Our weekly life groups have continued, again via Zoom or Skype. Everyone is welcome to join one - please get in touch with one of the church leaders if you would like to be added to a group. Junior Church has also continued via Zoom with children meeting in their own age groups with a team of Junior Church leaders.

If you or family members are or become infected or completely in isolation for safety sake, please let us know. Inform your Life Group, any member in church, the leadership team and or (myself) Pastor Errol. This will allow us to pray for you and to see how we can support you in your daily needs. Please also let us know if you are facing financial difficulty - we have donations of food ready and waiting to be delivered to help you through this time.

Maybe God has given us life and an opportunity for a time such as this. Let us therefore use this time to be a blessing to each other, to our community, the world and above all to our Lord. Let us be The People of God! One aspect of this is to be good examples to others by following the government's advice to stay at home. Let us avoid sharing anything on social media about the virus that may not be true, and instead point people to the NHS website so that we can all follow the guidelines to keep ourselves safe. Let's keep our distance from each other, cover our mouth and nose when we cough and wash our hands regularly.



MAYBE GOD HAS GIVEN US LIFE AND AN OPPORTUNITY FOR A TIME SUCH AS THIS.

I would like to close with a few lines from The Devotional Classics of Charles Spurgeon. He reflects on Psalm 119:15 which says “I will meditate on your commandments”

He writes: “There are times when solitude is better than society, and silence is wiser than speech. We should be better Christians if we were more alone, waiting upon God, and gathering through meditation on His Word spiritual strength for labour in his service. We ought to muse upon the things of God, because we thus get the real nutriment out of them. . . . Why is it that some Christians, although they hear many sermons, make but slow advances in the divine life? Because they neglect their closets, and do not thoughtfully meditate on God's Word. They love the wheat, but they do not grind it; they would have the corn, but they will not go forth into the fields to gather it; the fruit hangs upon the tree, but they will not pluck it; the water flows at their feet, but they will not stoop to drink it. From such folly deliver us, O Lord . . .”

What it means to me to be a Christian

BY LUKE MESSARIDES

The world seems to believe that being a Christian and receiving everlasting life simply means being a good person because good people go to heaven and bad people go to hell. Going to church isn't necessary, and telling small white lies is ok, and all you need to do is to believe in Jesus. Well, believe He is who He says He is, but no more than that.

Of course that is all a complete contradiction to the Word of God, as even the devil believes that Jesus is the Son of God, and Jesus said that no one is good except God (Mark 10:18). God wants His people to meet together and church is very necessary (Hebrews 10:25). Lies of any kind are sin (Revelation 21:8), and 'God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life' (John 3:16).



To be a Christian

...means to repent of our sins, to follow Christ, to desire Him, to fellowship with Him, to be indwelt by Him, and to bring glory to Him in our lives. It means not to be conformed to the pattern of this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds (Romans 12:2), to seek and do the will of God. I like to think that we should be fanatics. To live for Christ, to love our God with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our mind and with all our strength (Mark 12:30).

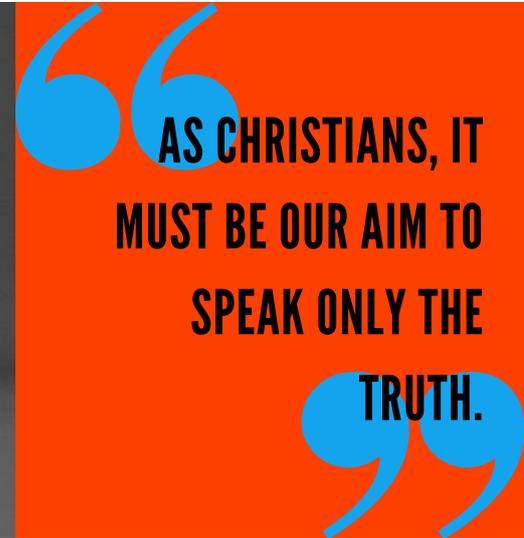
We are to live our lives by the example of Jesus, to love one another as we love ourselves and while the world looks lightly upon sin, we must see sin for what it is, an offense against a holy and just God, which destroys fellowship with Him. How wonderful it is to be in a relationship with God – a God who is just, loving, compassionate and will never leave us or forsake us. As Christians we are most blessed, and most fortunate being in the world, because we have been given life and hope from a God who loves us through Jesus Christ. We have a sure and wonderful hope that one day we will get to heaven no matter how often we have failed, because of God's grace. God purchased our freedom with the blood of His Son and forgave all our sins, past present and future (1 John 1:9, Colossians 1:14). AMEN!





GOING VIRAL

BY LINDSAY JACOBS



**THEREFORE EACH OF YOU MUST PUT OFF FALSEHOOD AND SPEAK TRUTHFULLY TO YOUR NEIGHBOUR, FOR WE ARE ALL MEMBERS OF ONE BODY.
EPHESIANS 4:25**

I don't have official statistics, but I would not be surprised if the coronavirus has been reported on the news more than any other story in history. When I opened the BBC news page today, every single story was about the virus. When I went on Facebook, nearly every single post was related in some way or another to the virus as well. When I talk to friends and family on the phone we talk of little else. And nearly every forward that I'm sent on WhatsApp is connected to Covid-19. The virus has, in every sense of the word, gone viral. In among this abundance of information is plenty of fake news. In the last few months I have seen, or been sent, the following misinformation at least once:

- The virus was deliberately created in China
- It can be cured by drinking tea
- It can also be cured by inhaling steam
- The virus is being transported on trains across China to infect people
- Chinese people are coming over here to deliberately infect us
- From now on, only babies, children and the healthy will die
- The virus will end on <insert date here>
- It is caused by the 5G network
- Ice cream and spicy food should be avoided
- Drink tepid water throughout the day and you'll be fine
- Take a hot bath to cure the virus
- If you can hold your breath, you don't have the virus



Every single one of these statements has been proved to be false. You have undoubtedly seen many more. Is this a big deal? Sadly, yes. Re-read the list and look to see which ones:

- Cause fear
- Cause complacency
- Cause hatred and racism
- Distract from the real advice from the government

I know that it is not anyone's intention to spread things that aren't true – we share because we want to help our friends and family. However, as Christians, it must be our aim to speak only the truth. We do not want to add to the spread of fear, hatred and misinformation. We want people to be able to trust what we say, knowing that what we share is the truth. How else will they believe what we say about the gospel?



FACT CHECKING

So what should you do if you see some information about coronavirus and you are not sure if it is true or worth sharing? Here are some tips:

Pause and think before you share.

There is no rush! Think – does this story seem likely? Is the aim to spread fear, hatred or complacency? Does the information match what is found on the NHS website?

“
CONFUSINGLY
SOME FAKE NEWS
ALSO CONTAINS A
MIXTURE OF
CORRECT
INFORMATION,
WHICH MAKES IT
DIFFICULT TO SPOT
WHAT IS TRUE AND
ACCURATE. FAKE
NEWS MAY ALSO BE
SHARED BY
TRUSTED FRIENDS
AND FAMILY,
INCLUDING THOSE
WHO ARE DOCTORS
AND NURSES.
STEPHEN HARRIS,
THECONVERSATION.COM

”



Ask yourself whether the information has come from a credible source.

Just because the person says they got the message from a hospital/doctor/paramedic and so on, doesn't mean they are telling the truth! If the source has not come from somewhere reputable, such as the BBC or the NHS website, be suspicious! Even if you know the person who sent it to you, that does not mean that they know the source or that it can be trusted.

Search for the story on the internet.

If you can find the story on a well-known news outlet, such as the BBC, Telegraph or Guardian, then it is safe to share it. You can also check it on fact-checking websites such as Snopes.

If in doubt, don't share!

People share because they want others to be warned or helped by what they are sharing, but often these posts do more harm than good. We are all capable of searching for the information that we want online about the coronavirus without having multiple WhatsApp messages sent to us. If you want to share something useful, why not send the link to the NHS website or a news stories from the BBC. Best of all – share the good news about Jesus. This is what people really need to hear now and always!

USEFUL WEBSITES

Latest official advice: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Fact checking: <https://www.snopes.com/collections/category/health/>

Latest news: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/coronavirus>



VISIT TO HYDERABAD IN INDIA

In November 2019, Pastor Errol, Mike and Claudiu went to Hyderabad for one week on a missions trip. Mike Gardner shares his experience of the trip.

At 08:15 a.m. on Monday 3 November 2019 Pastor Errol, Claudiu and I caught a coach from Golders Green to Stansted airport. We were off to catch a flight to Dubai and then another to Hyderabad in South India. We were going to visit Vimukthi Baptist Church, the church that Rebecca and Sunil have come from. Pastor Jeevan, who is Pastor of the church, is Rebecca's brother, and the church was founded by her father. We were collected from Rajiv Gandhi International airport by Pastor Jeevan, Sungita his wife and two of the Church deacons. We were then driven across the city. This was our first experience of Indian traffic – there was so much of it, and it was so noisy!



Mike, Claudiu, Pastor Errol, Pastor Jeevan and Sangeeta

Trying to count how many people were on some of the mopeds was amazing, as was seeing what else people managed to transport on their mopeds. Then there were the dogs and cows in the roads. We stayed in Rebecca and Sunil's apartment and our first trip out was to KFC, but that was the only time we had western-style food during our trip. Next it was back to the apartment and off to bed as it was Tuesday night (in India) and we had been awake since Monday morning (UK time).

Every day we met with some of the Church Leadership for a time of prayer and teaching, and during the week we met with the deacons of the church, visited church members in their homes, and one night we met on the flat roof of a house for a time of singing and teaching. We met with the village Pastors who are supported by the main Church, attended a Bible Study, a Revival Meeting, their Women's meeting, and on the Sunday morning after the Service we experienced their Harvest Festival. People brought things that they had made, cooked, drawn, painted and grown, and sold them, with the money going to the Church.

THIS WAS OUR FIRST EXPERIENCE OF INDIAN TRAFFIC – THERE WAS SO MUCH OF IT, AND IT WAS SO NOISY!



We visited many people in their homes during the week, and we saw the very basic conditions that some lived in. Yet wherever we went we were always made extremely welcome, which always seemed to include being offered something to eat and drink.

The weather was wonderful, the temperature was about 30°C every day, but it was a dry, comfortable heat and the evenings were cool. Many of the people spoke English, although during any of the Services when we spoke everything was translated into Telugu, the local language. The food was fantastic and we were looked after so well. I learnt so much during my time away, how I take so many things for granted, how much freedom we as a Church have and the opportunities that we take for granted.

Claudiu was alarmed at how they painted the outside of the buildings by being suspended on a rope from the roof. I was horrified watching how the pedestrians tried to cross the roads in constant flow of traffic, and brave Pastor Errol eagerly accepted the offer of a ride on the back of a moped.



On our last full day we became tourists and went into the centre of Hyderabad to look around the old city and see some of the shops and markets. At the centre of the old city we saw the outside of the Charminar, a mosque built in the 14th century. However, we declined the offer of a trip to IKEA.

Our journey back to the airport seemed so calm, in just a week we had got used to the traffic, the noise, the mopeds and the animals. And then after a flight back to Stanstead, via Dubai, we were back on a coach to Golders Green where Lavinia and Daniel were waiting to pick us up.



Mike eating with his hands

I LEARNT SO MUCH DURING MY TIME AWAY, HOW I TAKE SO MANY THINGS FOR GRANTED, HOW MUCH FREEDOM WE AS A CHURCH HAVE AND THE OPPORTUNITIES THAT WE TAKE FOR GRANTED.



I hope that many others in Hendon Baptist Church will have the opportunity to visit Vimukthi Baptist Church in the future and that we can establish links and share and support one another in new ways. We are so thankful to Rebecca and Sunil for all that they did in organising our week and to Pastor Jeevan, Sangeeta, the deacons and the whole Church for making us so welcome.



We asked Pastor Jeevan's wife, Sangeeta, to share some prayer requests with us. She asked that we pray for:

- The spiritual growth of the church members
- The leadership of the churchThe ministries in the church, specifically - Sunday School, Youth, Women, Outreach
- The church would like to have a van and a projector
- Healing for those in the church who are unwell
- The small population of Christians in a Hindu majority country
- Let us also pray for those affected by Covid-19 in India, particularly the poorer communities.

“ I HOPE THAT MANY OTHERS IN HENDON BAPTIST CHURCH WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT VIMUKTHI BAPTIST CHURCH



"...THE CHALLENGE IS GREAT, BUT OUR GOD IS GREATER!"

By the time you read this, the country will have been in 'lockdown' for some weeks, an unprecedented situation brought about by the coronavirus pandemic. Although this has come as a great surprise to most of us, we know that it is not a surprise to our God. We know too that He cares about us more deeply than we could ever imagine and He knows the full range of fears and anxieties, the frustrations and perplexity that we are all feeling to varying degrees. We know also that Jesus is interceding for us at the right hand of the Father, and that He experienced the full range of human emotions when He walked this earth - He saw the suffering and pain of ordinary people at first hand and His heart went out to them as He reached out in compassion to help them.

The writer of Hebrews urged believers not to forsake meeting together (Hebrews 10:24-25), something we know to make very sound sense as we come week by week to worship God and build up our fellowship. But now that we can no longer - for the time being - meet together in a church building, in each other's homes or anywhere else, how do we continue to heed the advice of scripture?

In Issue 6 of this magazine, I wrote about what was then - to me - a new experience, and that was praying with another person over the phone. This wasn't something I'd ever really contemplated before as I was used only to praying in groups or with one other person face-to-face. But it arose out of a common concern for friends who were going through a very difficult time, and Ugo Ogbonnaya and I started to ring each other daily, exchanging our latest news about the growing number of people for whom we were praying, and then doing just that - bringing them to God over the telephone. And this has continued to today, although we were beginning to find it increasingly hard in our very busy lives to set aside the time to ring each other and pray every single day. Now that has all changed and once again, praying over the phone has become a priority - not only for the two of us, but with a growing number of friends in the church as we become more and more aware of the exceptional circumstances in which we in this country, and indeed across the world, now find ourselves.

What started as two friends sharing concern for a small number of individuals through daily phone calls to each other and to God, has, over the past few weeks, begun to grow and grow. More and more, people have started using the phone and the many platforms offered via the internet, to come to God in prayer at a time when we can no longer, for now, meet up in person. We have started exploring Skype, Zoom, WhatsApp and various other means of talking and praying together. The leadership team regularly meet and pray, and so do the life groups, and we have also been able to invite the whole church to come together to pray, as happened on the National Day of Prayer on 22 March (Mothers' Day). We really thank God for all the opportunities He is giving us to come to Him together with other believers and urge everyone reading this article, if you haven't already started to explore these unexpected avenues, to talk to the Pastor or one of the deacons, or life group leaders, and find out how to make a start on this tremendous adventure. As one friend said - most of us wouldn't usually expect to see each other from one Sunday to the next, apart from one or two meetings during the week. But now, we surely have never been 'meeting' so much and certainly not praying together so often. Exceptional circumstances call for exceptional measures - and we have a more than exceptional and all-powerful God who longs for us to come to Him and bring Him our every concern, for ourselves, for our families, our friends, our church, our country and our world. So, don't hold back - the challenge is great, but our God is greater!

JACQUI PEARCE



**LET US THINK OF WAYS TO MOTIVATE ONE ANOTHER TO
ACTS OF LOVE AND GOOD WORKS. AND LET US NOT
NEGLECT OUR MEETING TOGETHER, AS SOME PEOPLE DO,
BUT ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER, ESPECIALLY NOW THAT
THE DAY OF HIS RETURN IS DRAWING NEAR.**

HEBREWS 10:24-25 (NLT)

PRAYER SPACE

In January of this year, we held a week-long prayer space in the prayer meeting room at church. Prayer spaces provide an interactive way to pray and are often used in schools with children who do not usually go to church, to help them explore the Christian faith. Lindsay Jacobs shares some of the prayer ideas from the church prayer space and suggests some ways to use this at home.

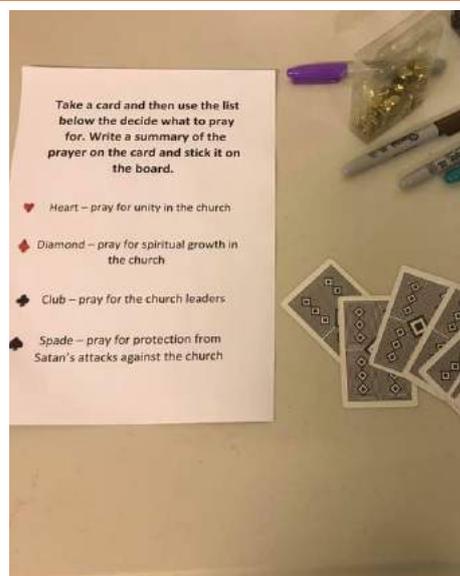


FRIENDSHIP FLOWER

Write the name of an unsaved friend and add it to the flower. Pray for other names on the flower.

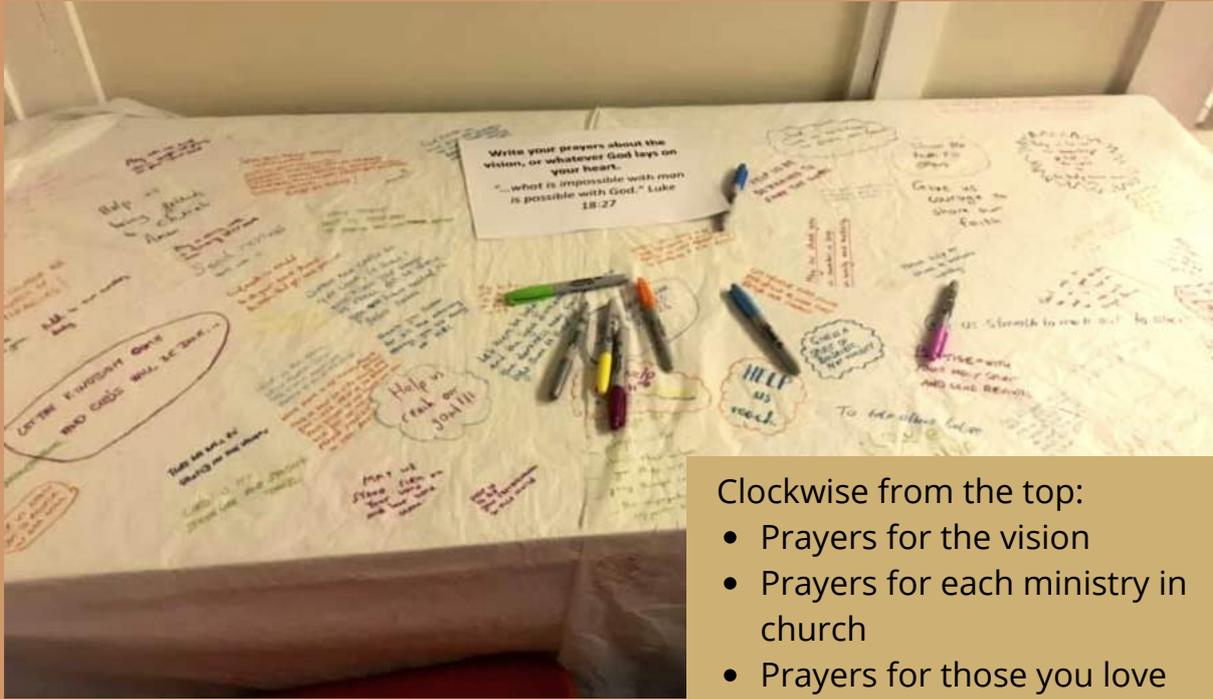
PRAYER CARDS

Pick a card at random and use the suit to inspire your prayer.
Write the prayer on the card and pin it to the wall.



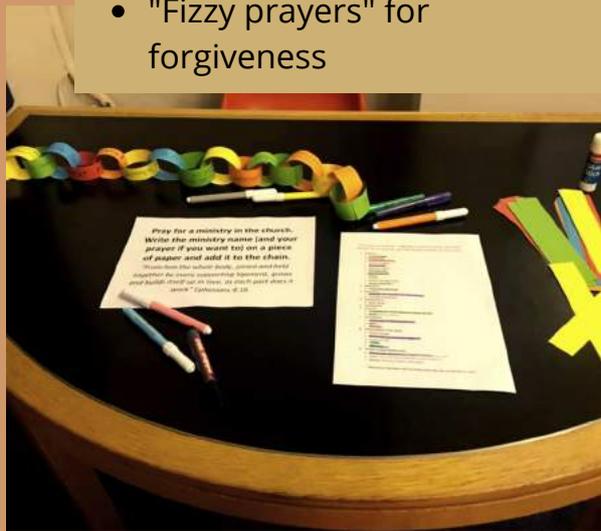
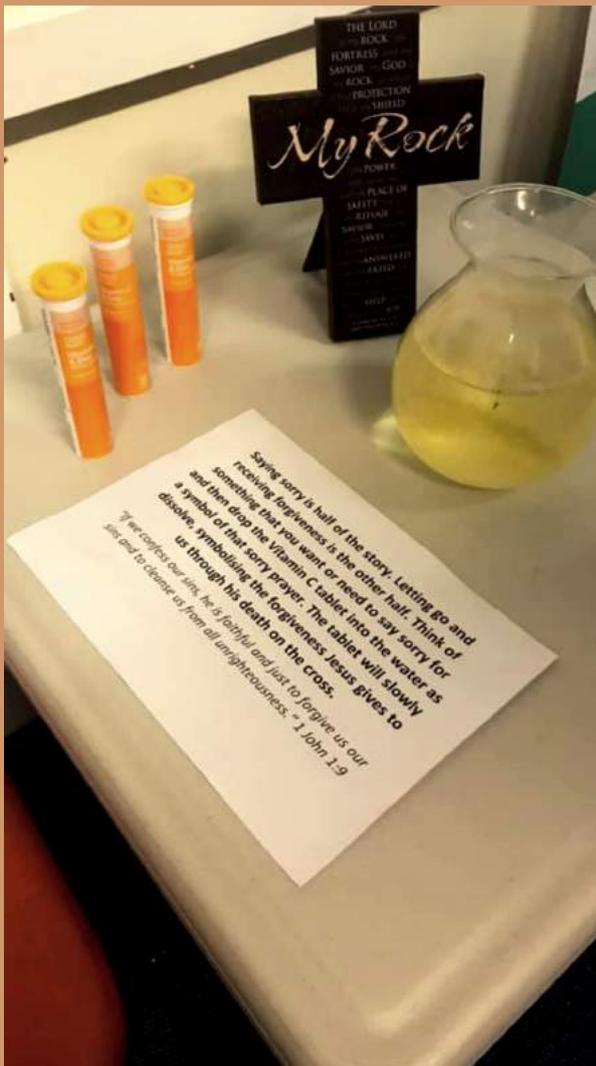
GROWTH FLOWERS

Write a prayer for growth on the flower, fold over one petal at a time then drop in the water and watch it open.



Clockwise from the top:

- Prayers for the vision
- Prayers for each ministry in church
- Prayers for those you love
- "Fizzy prayers" for forgiveness



PRAYER SPACE AT HOME

There is an excellent website (<https://www.prayerspacesinschools.com/>) full of ideas for prayer spaces, and which has recently been expanded to include a section on using prayer spaces in your home. Here are some ideas for how you can use prayer space to help your prayer life during lockdown. These can be done with children, but are also very beneficial for adults.

HELP THE NHS

We are all so grateful for the work the NHS is doing. We can do our part to protect the NHS by washing our hands regularly. When you are washing your hands for 20 seconds, spend that time praying a prayer of protection for the doctors, nurses and other frontline staff.



PRAY FOR THE WORLD

Stick your prayers to a map or globe using post-it notes

THANKFUL JAR

You will need an empty jar, strips of paper and pens. Every day, ask every person in the house to write down something they are grateful for or a happy thought that they have had that day. Put them in the jar each day and at the end of the week, open the jar and read what you've been thankful for together. Say a prayer of thanks to God together.

GET WELL SOON

For this prayer, you will need some plasters and pens. Think of some people that you know who are unwell and write one name on each plaster. Stick them somewhere you will see them so you can remember to pray regularly for these people.

FIZZY PRAYERS

Think of a sin that you need forgiveness for. Add a fizzy Vitamin C tablet or spoon of sugar to the water, ask God for forgiveness and as it dissolves imagine that your sin is being forgiven, and forgotten, by God.



MINUTE OF PRAISE

Set a one minute (or longer) timer and spend that time praising and thanking God.

BE THE LIGHT

Who do you know who needs some encouragement at this dark time? Light a candle with an adult and pray for them. Perhaps you could send them a message or call them to encourage them.



LETTING GO

Write the things that are worrying you on a piece of paper and throw them in the bin, symbolising that you've given these worries to God.



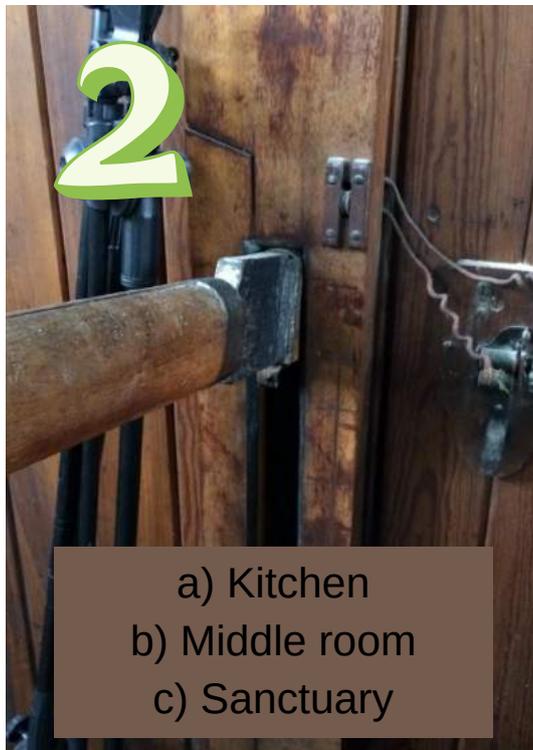
Esther and Ethan took 12 photos at church - can you work out where they were taken? Send your answers to Lindsay Jacobs by 30th June.

1



- a) Kitchen
- b) Hall
- c) Sanctuary

2



- a) Kitchen
- b) Middle room
- c) Sanctuary

3



- a) Creche
- b) Office
- c) Middle room

4



- a) Stairwell
- b) Hall
- c) Sanctuary

5



- a) Kitchen
- b) Creche
- c) Toilets

6



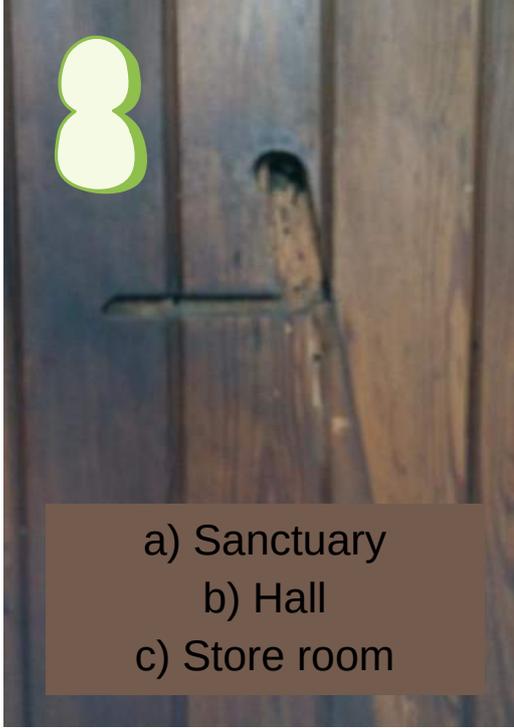
- a) Kitchen
- b) Hall
- c) Store room

7



- a) Prayer meeting room
- b) Hall
- c) Store room

8



- a) Sanctuary
- b) Hall
- c) Store room

9



- a) Ground floor entrance
- b) 1st floor entrance
- c) 2nd floor entrance

10



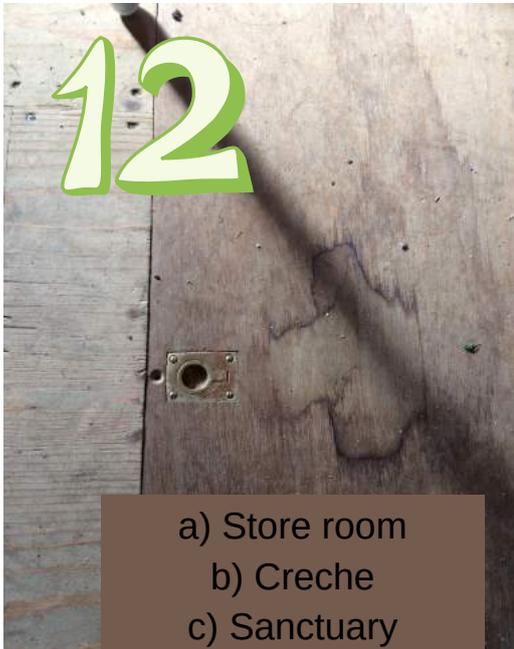
- a) Store room
- b) Creche
- c) Sanctuary

11

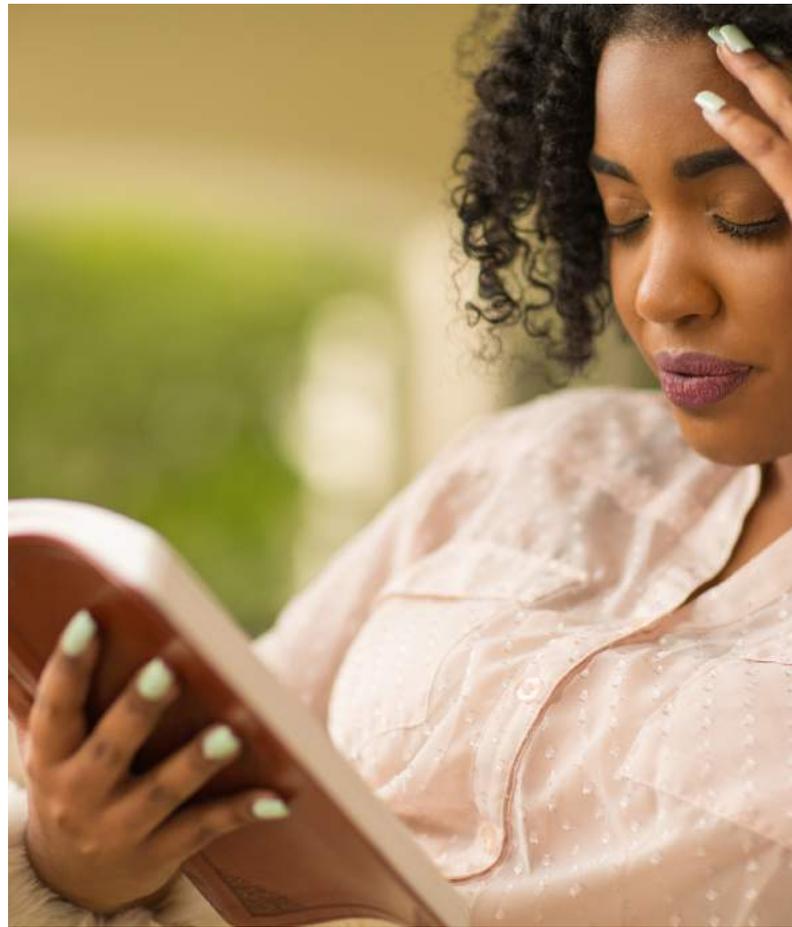


- a) Ground floor entrance
- b) 1st floor entrance
- c) 2nd floor entrance

12



- a) Store room
- b) Creche
- c) Sanctuary



SHARED HOME EXPERIENCES

BY KHADIJA NATHAN

Sylvia is a close friend of mine and we grew up together. She is the eldest of four children and made herself a home – after years of upheavals, moving overseas from Africa. She was abandoned by her family, and decided a change of life could be the answer, so she set up home in faraway Canada.

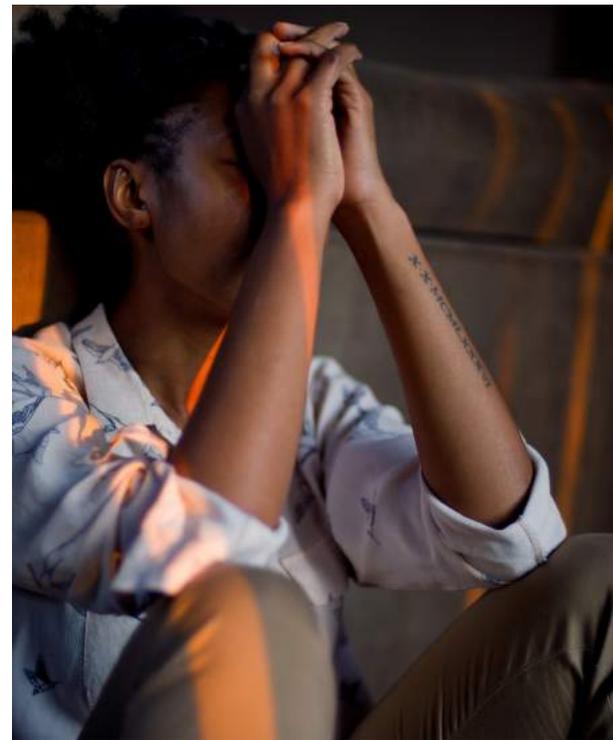
What makes a home?

What makes a home has been on my mind a lot over the years, living in a household with an extended family. What makes a home is a place that forms the centre of family life, lovingly assembled – a tight, neat nest filled with love and affection for each other.

That was what Sylvia had always hoped for as she had a deep love for her family, especially her three siblings and friends. She was a people's person and had an aura that was magnetic. She had helped her mother care for both her younger sisters since birth, and was therefore very protective of them.

The atmosphere at home in a traditional African environment during Sylvia's early years in life was a joyous one, filled with love and laughter as she had always dreamed and hoped for. Sylvia had eventually become the breadwinner of her family at the age of thirty. She worked hard in order to provide for them. Life was good during this time as she booked multiple jobs to make this possible. She also showered her family with lots of gifts, especially her parents. As a teenager, Sylvia had encountered God once in a crusade that was held in her locality. However, she had never truly accepted the Lord, although she was open to the idea. She was caught up in the things of this world.

After several years Sylvia made a decision to go to university. She still lived in the same household as her extended family during this time. This was not an easy decision for her to make as she lost her job in the process. Furthermore, her family slowly began to slip away from her. For the first time in her life she felt a sudden emptiness and longing in her soul, and that was not a good feeling. This was a far cry from what she had envisaged. Her home and family became cold overnight.



‘SO DO NOT FEAR, FOR I AM WITH YOU; DO NOT BE DISMAYED, FOR I AM YOUR GOD. I WILL STRENGTHEN YOU AND HELP YOU; I WILL UPHOLD YOU WITH MY RIGHTEOUS RIGHT HAND’ (ISAIAH 41:10, NIV)

The place she called home was gone. The hardships started sinking in. No more frequent gifts, no money coming home to the family. Sylvia dramatically became the fourth child. Her family began to despise and loathe her. Sylvia was unprepared for this and was taken aback by the dramatic change in her life.

Sylvia's siblings were now the new favourites in the home and she found herself in a really helpless state. She was in a state of panic and not knowing the way forward. She was numb.

As time passed, her younger sisters had suitors and were the new providers for their parents. Sylvia felt abandoned by her family because she couldn't provide for them anymore. She was lonely and felt broken to the point where she didn't think she would ever bounce back. More time passed and she suddenly started to have a constant yearning to fill the emptiness and void inside.

She met an old friend one day and shared her predicament. Her friend, who was a Christian, told her about the Lord and witnessed to her.



"No matter how large, small or even absent our home is during our time on this planet, our true home is with God"

After their encounter Sylvia then felt peace. She began to feel whole again and started going to church. She was not bothered now by the circumstances at home and started living for God. 'So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand' (Isaiah 41:10, NIV).

Not very long after that she started courtship with a foreigner from her university. He asked her to marry him and she did. They both went abroad where she continued her studies. Sylvia continued in her faith as she had accepted Christ as her Lord and Saviour. In becoming a Christian Sylvia eventually found a purpose for her life. She now attends church with her husband who was already a Christian brother. Sylvia finally found herself a home.

Application

'Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!' (Psalm 27:14, NIV). Sylvia waited for the Lord patiently while pruning was taking place in her life. Her cries were finally heard. The Lord blessed her abundantly because she believed. 'For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future' (Jeremiah 29:11, NIV).

When she moved abroad, Sylvia grew deeper in her Christian faith. She spoke about how coming to a faith and to church felt like 'coming home'. When Jesus was speaking to his disciples about the cost of following him, he said 'foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head' (Matthew 8:20, NIV). Yet he made his home amongst us – his home was with his disciples, the people he ministered to.

Jesus' home was found in being at the centre of the father's will. In the presence of God, 'I and the father are one' (John 10:30). No matter how large, small or even absent our home is during our time on this planet, our true home is with God, where we become homes ourselves – temples of the Holy Spirit. That in turn points us towards our real destination.

TOP 100 TIPS

For things to do during lockdown



- 1) Write a book – Tenesan
- 2) Read that book – Tenesan
- 3) Do an online course – there are loads of free ones – Tejinder
- 4) Write a quiz for your family and friends to do via video calling – Lindsay



- 5) Play music you used to listen to and remember when you last heard it – Louise
- 6) Start an online Bible study with fellow self-isolators – Tenesan
- 7) Stretching and exercise inside and outside – Andrea



- 8) An excuse to show the love of God by checking up on people from a distance – Tenesan
- 9) Enter the quiz! – Lindsay
- 10) Learn a language online – Tenesan
- 11) Write a poem – Lindsay

- 12) Don't spend the entire day in your pyjamas. It's important to wear clothes you associate with work or being outside. Doing so will greatly help you to be more active and activate a productive mindset – James



- 13) Make bath bombs and soap – Andrea

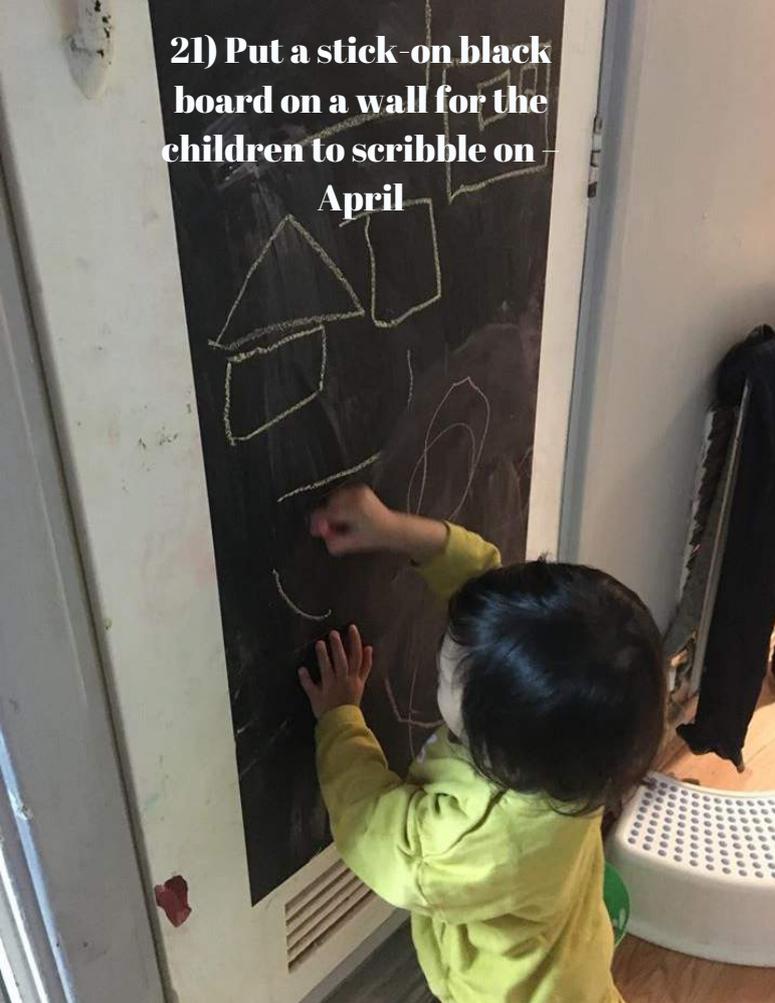
- 14) Share some interesting and unknown facts about yourself with friends - Barrie
- 15) Come up with a new dish out of your limited ingredients – Tenesan
- 16) Watch the TV programmes you've recorded but never watched – Louise



- 17) Pray and meditate on God's word – Tenesan
- 18) Do cross stitch – Andrea
- 19) Family games night – Tenesan
- 20) Teach your children to cook – Geormina



21) Put a stick-on black board on a wall for the children to scribble on – April



33) Art, craft and painting with the children – Andrea

- 22) Declutter your bedroom – Esther
- 23) Sing worship songs – Lindsay
- 24) Knitting – Andrea
- 25) Give your home a spring clean – Lindsay
- 26) Make a DIY car track for the children – April
- 27) Painting by numbers – Andrea

- 34) Spend some time in the mornings with the children reflecting on God's word – April
- 35) Do all your schoolwork on time – Ethan
- 36) Do a bake-off competition – make cakes and post pictures of them both inside and out – Vincent
- 37) Spend quality family time together – Joan

- 28) Build a fort – Michelle
- 29) Card and board games – Andrea
- 30) Learn New Testament Greek – Barrie
- 31) Do the DIY repairs that you've postponed for months – Enitan
- 32) Sort out the cupboard of random plastic tubs and lids – Lindsay

- 38) Play board games or other games like charades over WhatsApp with family and friends that you cannot be with – Lindsay
- 39) Pray for every country in alphabetical order – Anton
- 40) Take a multivitamin to stay healthy – Juyoung
- 41) Card-making – Andrea

42) Let your children have a pretend tea party, with cold water, teabags and sugar cubes. Be prepared though, it could get messy!

43) Play an instrument – Rosanna

44) Video call your family and friends – Lanie

45) Learn an instrument using YouTube – Esther

46) Pilates – Rosanna

47) Read a book – Rosanna

48) Stay positive – Ethan

49) Set yourself challenges like how many doughnuts you can eat in one minute! – Esther

50) Manicure your nails – Rosanna

51) Read to your children – no matter how old they are! – Lindsay

52) Attempt to read the whole Bible – Lindsay

53) Join an online HBC life group – Tenesan

54) Do a puzzle – Esther

55) Make flashcards for all your school subjects – Lindsay

56) Memorise scripture – Esther

57) Capture a garden insect and keep it as a pet – Esther

58) Movie marathon night / family movie night – Tenesan

59) Play on the Wii (or other games console) – Rosanna

60) Draw a picture – Rosanna

61) Make something out of clay – Esther

62) Build a Lego model – Esther

63) Have a mini photoshoot – Esther



- 64) Make a movie – Esther
- 65) Binge watch Netflix – Esther
- 66) Set up a Netflix-watching party – Joan
- 67) Listen to an audio book – Sandeep
- 68) Invent something – Esther
- 69) Teach your family something they don't know – Esther
- 70) Join a Facebook group dedicated to helping vulnerable people during coronavirus with things such as grocery shopping – Joan

- 78) Plant a tree – Esther
- 79) Make a time capsule – Michelle
- 80) Tidy up stuff in the wardrobes and cupboards – Andrea
- 81) Put on a puppet show – Michelle
- 82) Collate your photo albums – Enitan
- 83) Have a talent show at home – Tenesan
- 84) Make a treasure hunt – Michelle
- 85) Play Monopoly – Rosanna



- 71) Online shared Bible studies through the Bible app – Joan
- 72) Sort out your paperwork – Enitan
- 73) Buy and read a Francine Rivers book – Anne-Marie
- 74) Do a science project – Michelle
- 75) Decorate your bedroom – Esther
- 76) Build an obstacle course – Michelle
- 77) Learn to count to ten in ten languages – Mani

- 86) Learn the names of the books of the Bible in order – Barrie
- 87) Sleep more! – Rosanna
- 88) Assign a project to those in the house and they have to present it at the end of the week – Mani
- 89) Listen to some old HBC sermons on the website – Lindsay
- 90) Have a sleepover with your siblings – Esther
- 91) Keep a diary about your time in isolation – Esther



92

Keep a prayer journal – Lindsay

93

Do Bible journaling (look this up if you don't know what it is!) – Lindsay

94

Learn a viral dance via YouTube – Tenesan

95

Invent a new board game – Lindsay

96

Experiment with new ideas like sewing, baking, cooking etc – Khadija

97

Pray with others over the phone every day – Jacqui

98

Learn to juggle – Lindsay

99

Make a scrapbook – Michelle

100

Re-read old issues of HBC Accord magazine! – Lindsay

Paul's Conversion and Confirmation Story

By Khadija Nathan

Through the power of Christ, a man who had been a hate-filled villain became a love-filled hero by submitting himself completely to Jesus. Paul was able to spread the gospel throughout the known world. He was originally a Pharisee and grew up in a Jewish home. Because of his upbringing he was fiercely loyal to defending the beliefs and customs of the Old Testament. After his conversion he was the leading figure in the doctrine and mission of the New Testament era. Acts 9:1–20 shifts from one person in particular at the beginning, and then transitions to another key figure at the end. In the beginning there was one man called Saul whose name was later changed to Paul, and he is one of the great leaders of the New Testament.

Paul's road to Damascus conversion (Acts 9:1–9)

The story of Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus is told in Acts 9:1–19 and is retold by Paul in Acts 11:6–21 and Acts 26:12–18. After the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ, Saul swore to wipe out the new Christian church. Acts 9:1 tells us that Paul was breathing out 'murderous threats against the Lord's disciples'. He obtained letters from the high priest authorising him to arrest any followers of Jesus in the city of Damascus. On the road to Damascus Saul and his companions were struck down by a blinding light. 'Saul, Saul why do you persecute me?' (Acts 9:4, NIV). When Saul asked who was speaking the voice replied, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do' (Acts 9:5–6, NIV). Saul was blinded. His companions led him into Damascus to a man named Judas, on Straight Street. For three days Saul was blind and didn't eat or drink.

Saul's Confirmation (Acts 9:10–20)

Meanwhile, Jesus appeared in a vision to a disciple in Damascus named Ananias and told him to go to Saul. Ananias was afraid because he knew Saul's reputation as a merciless persecutor of the church. Jesus repeated his command and told him that Saul was his chosen instrument to deliver the gospel to the Gentiles, their kings and the people of Israel. So Ananias found Saul at Judas's house, praying for help. Ananias laid his hands on Saul telling him Jesus had sent him to restore his sight and that Saul might be filled with the Holy Spirit. Something like scales fell from Saul's eyes and he could see again. He arose and was baptised into the Christian faith. Saul ate, regained his strength and stayed with the Damascus disciples three days. After his conversion Saul's name was changed to Paul.

Points to note:

- Paul's conversion showed that Jesus himself wanted the gospel message to go to the Gentiles, quashing any argument from the early Jewish Christians that the gospel was only for the Jews.
- This helps us to understand God does not hold our past against us. If God chose a man who was the leading enemy of his movement and who was directly responsible for killing one of the very first deacons or leaders within the Christian movement (Stephen), then certainly he can use us today.
- It is important to know that if God can use a man like Saul, who was the leading figure in making sure that Christians were persecuted, and out of all the people God could have used to advance his kingdom on earth, he chose the one who was completely against him to be the leading figure for him – then that ought to give us encouragement that God can use us as well.

GOOD BOOKS

All of us have a list of good Christian books that have made an impact on our lives. If we have profited from what others have written, then it is really good to be able to share our recommendations – which is what this feature is all about. It is part of an occasional series of book reviews highlighting publications that we would like to recommend. All of these titles are available from the usual online sources, although we would particularly recommend the Christian bookseller eden.co.uk.

Pete Greig, *How to Pray: a Simple Guide for Normal People* (2019, Hodder & Stoughton)



Pete Greig may be known to you as the founder of the 24-7 Prayer movement. He is a man whose life is immersed in prayer – but this does not mean he occupies some unapproachable spiritual peak. Far from it – this book is exactly what it says on the cover: a simple guide for normal people. I found it totally refreshing and immediately approachable, very easy to read and challenging at the same time. It's one of those books that you want to start re-reading as soon as you've finished it.

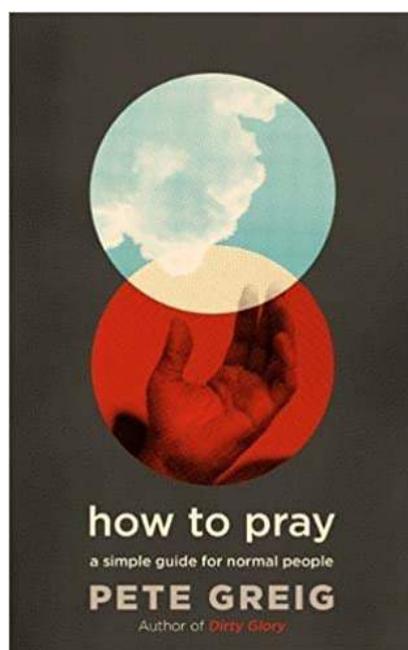
In his first chapter, Pete Greig tells us 'How to read this book in a couple of minutes', and that is probably the best place to start in trying to sum up what the book is all about. When the disciples asked Jesus, 'Lord teach us to pray', he responded by giving them what we now know as 'The Lord's Prayer' (Matthew 6, 9–13). Pete introduces us to the theme of his book through the acronym P.R.A.Y. This stands for: Pause; Rejoice; Ask; Yield. In a nutshell, we are being encouraged to 'put down [our] wish list and wait', gather together our 'scattered senses' and re-centre ourselves on God's eternal presence before we do anything else. We then move on to adoration, which must be the only appropriate response to a realisation of who God is. Jesus then invites us to ask, to bring our requests to God for ourselves and for others, and we finish by surrendering to His will through contemplation, listening, confession and spiritual warfare. The rest of the book is divided into sections that expand on what these mean for us in practical terms. Illustrated with his own personal experiences and those of other Christians, Pete takes us through the Lord's Prayer in detail, and offers very practical advice on how we can approach what Jesus himself taught us, and experience the reality of coming close to our heavenly Father through it.

Pete Greig's whole approach to prayer is encapsulated in his advice to: keep it simple; keep it real; and keep it up. This is what first inspired me to get hold of a copy of the book, after reading an article about it in Premier Christianity. We don't have to try and convince God that He should listen to us through the use of elaborate rituals, fancy 'religious' words and long speeches, and we don't have to persuade others of our sincerity by the same means. It is truly liberating when we realise this and come to God just as we are – He knows what we want to say anyway, but He still wants us to talk to Him about it. He also wants us to enjoy being with Him, and to listen as well as to talk.

The book ties in closely with the Prayer Course (prayercourse.org), which we are currently running in HBC. At the end of each chapter there are recommendations for further reading, and for 'prayer tools', which can be found online in the 'Toolshed'. These are well worth downloading and reading, covering a wide range of 30 different topics, from 'How to have a quiet time', and 'How to have a non-boring prayer meeting' to 'Warfare prayer' and 'How to fast'. If you buy the book, then do look at the website and make use of these valuable resources as well.

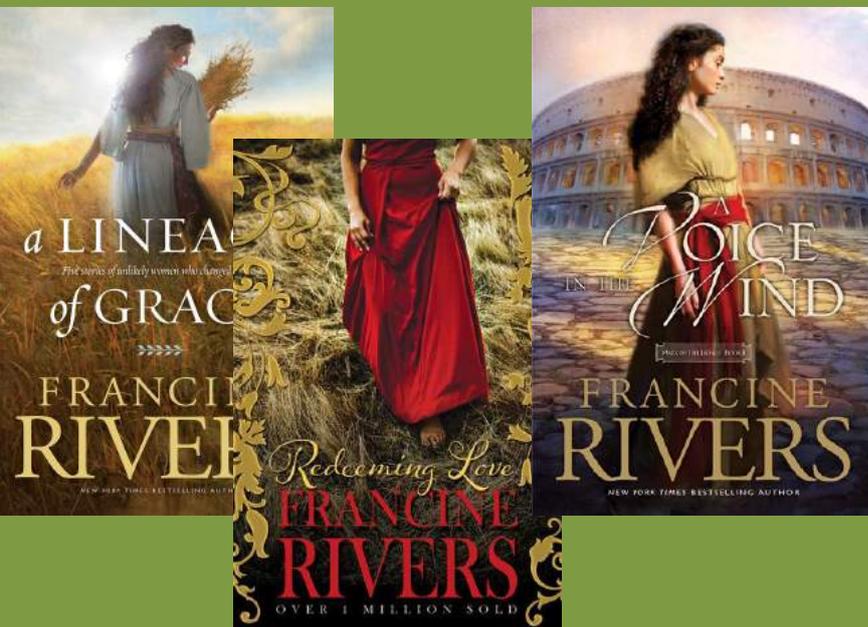
Finally, something that stands out in my memory is what Pete says about a lesson he learned when the 24-7 Prayer movement was first set up. God first gave him a vision for this when he was a student travelling around Europe, and it was several years before the vision came to fruition. He could not at first see where this vision was leading him and asked God to make it clear. When the realisation finally dawned on him that they were connected (when the movement had begun to take off), God said to him 'you need to understand that I never forget a single prayer you pray. You forget most of the things you ask me, but I never do' (p. 197).

Jacqui Pearce



LOOKING FOR INSPIRING CHRISTIAN NOVELS?

I would like to highly recommend Francine Rivers – she is an amazing author and has written several Christian novels. I have read a number of her books, and they are all compelling, inspiring and true to life. She writes beautifully and powerfully, and quickly draws the reader into her stories.



Francine Rivers had a successful writing career for several years before becoming a born-again Christian in 1986. Her first Christian novel was *Redeeming Love*, and this has become a classic. She has continued to use her talent, writing more Christian novels, which have become big sellers worldwide. Francine uses her writing to draw closer to the Lord, and she desires that through her work she might worship and praise Jesus for all he has done in her life. *Redeeming Love* is one of Francine's most popular books – a powerful retelling of the book of Hosea, set in the 1800s, it is a life-changing story of God's unconditional, redemptive, all-consuming love. It is set in California's gold country, in a time where men sold their souls for a bag of gold and women sold their bodies for a place to sleep.

RECOMMENDATIONS

My top favourite is a trilogy of three books called *Mark of the Lion* (*A Voice in the Wind*; *An Echo in the Darkness*; and *As Sure as the Dawn*). Set in Roman times, it feels so historically real that you would think the author had lived through this time herself. You won't be able to put any of these three books down! It's a story with many different situations happening that all tie together, as the characters struggle through 1st-century trials and the main character hangs firm to her faith in God throughout. More recent books include *Bridge to Haven*. Set in the 1950/60s, this is the story of an abandoned baby girl, found under a bridge in America by Pastor Zeke. She grows up emotionally scarred and insecure – it's a riveting saga of temptation, grace and unconditional love. Other books include *A Lineage of Grace*, which focuses on five inspiring women of the Bible and how God used them. I do encourage you to check out these books. They will all inspire your faith and walk with God!

BY ANNE-MARIE TEBB

GET INVOLVED WITH OUR ONLINE SERVICES AND WEEKLY ACTIVITIES...

Monday - Thursday

Various Times | Life Groups (Online Bible study, prayer and support - get in touch for further details)

Friday

Online Junior Church:

6pm | 4 - 7 yrs

6:30pm | 7 - 11yrs

7pm: 11 - 16 yrs

Sunday

11am | Morning Service on Facebook livestream

5pm | Evening Prayer

Blog

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