



Welcome



The theme of this newsletter is 'perspectives on prayer' and I hope you enjoy the insights and experiences shared from across our different ministries.

Most Christians would agree that prayer is vital to discipleship, but the truth

is, most of us struggle to be faithful in prayer. There is just so much to pray for. The organisations we support update us with their prayer requests; the news bulletins burden us with situations crying out for prayer; and, within our own circle of friends and family, there are always people needing our prayer. Finding time to pray can be hard enough, but finding the stamina to meet all these 'demands' is often a bridge too far.

But what if we turned prayer on its head, as it were, and saw things differently?

Jesus taught his disciples about prayer, mostly by example; they watched him pray early in the morning and late into the night; they observed him at prayer in the routines of the day; they saw how he simply spent time with God. And perhaps the most striking example of his praying is when he takes his three closest disciples up a mountain. Although they are sleepy when they reach the top, they nevertheless get to watch Jesus at prayer. But rather than hearing a list of 'prayer requests' voiced, or worthy intercessions

rehearsed, they watch as Jesus slowly changes into God's likeness, the longer he prays.

God already knows about our prayer lists, as well as the longings of our hearts for ourselves and others. What the story of the transfiguration teaches us is that, first and foremost, prayer is about intentionally being with God, so that we might be changed. Without this perspective at the heart of our praying, all our words are in danger of falling to the ground.

This perspective of prayer from the transfiguration – of primarily spending time with our God who changes us – is surely foundational to all prayer. Only once we get this perspective right can our intercessions and prayers for others come to us from the Spirit who longs to share the desires of God's heart with us. This way we won't just be praying with and for others, but be praying with God, and God's words will become ours. I wonder what new perspectives in prayer you have discovered recently.

Blessings

Martyn Payne
Volunteer prayer advocate

JULY 2025

Cover it all in prayer

'The core of my prayer life'

Chat and catch catches on

Divine Windows

Thanks to Kingsway CLC Trust

and more...

Pray with us...

In the words of this prayer by Martyn Payne

*Loving Father,
turning to you in prayer
is like coming home;
listening for your voice is
like longing for the dawn;
stilling our souls before you
is like sitting down at a
banqueting table.
Here we are this day,
ready to feast,
poised to listen
and eager to experience
your presence and
pass on your peace.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

Our prayer resources can be found at brf.org.uk/pray

PRAYERS FOR INTERCESSION

A catalogue of intercessory prayers covering different seasons and situations



Prayers for intercession

Our growing catalogue of intercessory prayers covers many different seasons and situations. They are written by Martyn Payne. You can use them with your church, for Sunday intercessions, with your family and friends, for school assemblies or however suits you best.

Explore here brf.org.uk/prayers-for-intercession



You have said, 'Seek my face'.
My heart says to you, 'Your face, Lord, do I seek.'

PSALM 27:8 (ESV)



Hello from Julie and the fundraising team



Our heartfelt thanks to everyone who has supported this year's annual appeal. Every donation is greatly valued and appreciated.

I recognise that many of us continue to face financially challenging times

but if you are able to make a donation to our appeal, to help us to continue to take God's word into this turbulent world we would be very grateful. You can do so online at brf.org.uk/donate, post a cheque made payable to BRF Ministries or call our team on **01235 462305**.

In 1978 the late American singer songwriter, Andrew Gold, released a song entitled 'Thank you for being a friend'. It certainly resonated with me and many others as it was a hit in the USA, Canada, Australia and the UK. Friends are so important to us and whenever I hear it played I give thanks, not only for my personal friends but to everyone who has become a Friend of BRF Ministries, offering regular prayers and support for our work by making a donation of £2 a month or more. If you would like to become a Friend of BRF Ministries please visit our website or telephone our team on **01235 462305**.

We are especially grateful to those who have left a lasting legacy by remembering BRF Ministries in their wills as we are reliant upon fundraising and gifts in wills to deliver our ministries.

A gift of one percent or more in your will can help us to continue our work in the future.

Our eagerly awaited range of Christmas cards along with cards for every occasion are available to order now at brfonline.org.uk/cards. If you're not quite ready to think about Christmas, a paper order form will be included with your September issue of BRF Ministries News.

My thanks for your generosity, support and prayers.

Every blessing

Julie MacNaughton, MCIOF (Dip)
Head of fundraising

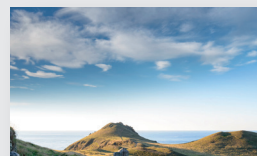
TURN YOUR CARE INTO ACTION



We are now welcoming donations on social media to support our fundraisers, including the annual appeal. You will find our current fundraising activities on the BRF Ministries Facebook page; as well as your financial donation you can support by sharing the details with your friends.

It is also possible to set up a sponsored event or raise donations in lieu of birthday gifts on social media in aid of BRF Ministries. It's very simple to do and we're so grateful for all the coffee mornings, sponsored walks/cycles/runs and birthday fundraisers that our supporters are involved in. We'd love to see any photos of your event and appreciate all your efforts to raise funds to allow us to continue our vital work.

■ Find us on Facebook @brfcharity



Everyday cards to help support our ministry

Our range of beautiful everyday cards features designs for every occasion from birthdays to Valentines to 'Just thinking of you'. All cards are printed in the UK using sustainable materials and are sold in packs of six, with three cards each of two designs.

'I love BRF Ministries everyday cards. There is a beautiful selection always available at my church and they are so reasonably priced. I am disabled and not on the internet so spend a lot of my time writing cards and keeping in touch with friends and family who all love them too.'



Registered with
**FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR**

Contact our fundraising team at giving@brf.org.uk, call us on **01235 462305** or drop us a line at the address on the back page.

Go to brfonline.org.uk/cards or call **01235 462305**

Perspectives on prayer – Anna Chaplaincy

For an Anna Chaplaincy ‘perspective on prayer’ we turned to Fran Lawson, a church warden and Anna Chaplain in the Manchester suburb of Whitefield. Fran chose prayer and spirituality as her special subject when she trained as an Authorised Lay Minister (ALM) in the Church of England. It was a natural choice.

‘My father was in the army and we’d lived all over the world before we came back to England when I was twelve. My parents weren’t churchgoers but they sent me to Sunday school. I didn’t find out until well into my adult life that an army padre had said to my mother that there was “something spiritual about me”. My mother had no idea what it meant, but years later, when I was doing various things in church, she told me what he’d said.’

Supposedly ‘retired’ Fran already had a full workload at church when a friend gave a presentation about Anna Chaplaincy to the PCC (Parish Church Council). ‘I found it very interesting, but I said I can’t possibly take on anything else.’ As time went on, however, and the community began to recover from lockdown, interest in Anna Chaplaincy grew. Another meeting was held for people to find out more.

‘Well, clear as anything, God just said to me, “You sign up!”’

‘I thought, I’m supposed to be retired here, I’m supposed to be relaxing! But it was very strong. And I knew God wanted me to be an Anna Chaplain.’

Fran trained four years ago and was commissioned along with two other newly minted Anna Chaplains. Now she visits people in their homes and in care homes, and helps run a Tuesday ‘drop-in’ in the church. ‘In the last half hour of the drop-in sessions we invite anyone who would like prayer to join us at the front of the church. Mostly they don’t but the few who do come really appreciate the time of prayer. Interestingly, it’s the people who don’t come regularly to church who are more likely to come and ask for prayer.’

Does Fran find that people’s perception of prayer changes as they get older? ‘I think as people get older, they value it very much. When I visit, it’s not necessarily that they want to talk about the “big questions”, they just find it reassuring and comforting when I pray with them.’

So what advice does she have on how best to approach praying with older people? ‘You need to listen to them, very carefully, and then you can pick up on what’s really concerning them. I don’t go in with anything written down: I listen, and then I ask God for the right words for



that person. I might not know what to say or how to pray for them, but God does, so I’m listening to the person and I’m listening to God: that’s my ministry.’

Fran works hard to maintain her own prayer life, knowing that she wouldn’t be able to do her work without it. ‘One of the most important things I do is to meet with two friends on Zoom every week. We start with a psalm, and then we all mute and we have an hour together listening to God in silence. Then at the end of the hour, we unmute and if we’ve heard anything from God we share.’

‘Sometimes we do, sometimes we don’t, but either way that hour once a week is very precious to me and almost nothing gets in the way of it. I pray in other ways and other places, but that hour is the very core of my prayer life.’

Autumn Spiritual Care Series course

BRF Ministries begins a new online Spiritual Care Series course, on Monday 29 September at 8.00 pm, followed by eight Monday evening sessions, 7.00–9.30 pm, 6 October – 1 December (with a half-term break).

The Spiritual Care Series is an eight-week comprehensive course for churches and individuals who want to provide good quality spiritual care to older people in their local community.

‘The content is insightful, wide-ranging and in great depth. A course that would help anyone working with older people.’

Spiritual Care Series online course participant.

Go to brfonline.org.uk/spiritual-care-series-september-2025



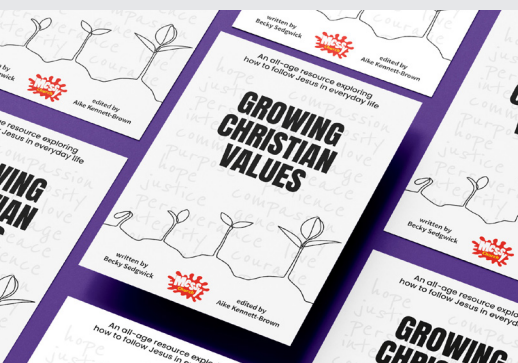
Online Course

Messy Church resources



Get Messy! Volume 3 contains twelve session outlines for Messy Churches. With themes of hope, compassion, peace, perseverance, love, integrity, purpose, justice and patience, Messy Churches can explore the values that underpin a Christian way of life. It provides everything you need to run your Messy Church, including activity photos, mealtimes discussion starter cards, social action ideas and downloadable templates.

Go to brfonline.org.uk/get-messy-volume-3



A new discipleship resource (PDF digital download) to complement the session material in *Get Messy! Volume 3*. Designed for intergenerational small groups, *Growing Christian Values* also contains twelve session outlines so that the same topic can be explored between Messy Church gatherings but using different Bible passages. It can also be used on its own or in a café church setting.

Find out more at brfonline.org.uk/growing-christian-values

Look out for upcoming Messy Church events here: messychurch.brf.org/messy-events

Perspectives on prayer – Messy Church



Lydia Harrison is the children and family work enabler in the Goole and Selby Methodist Circuit. There are five Messy Churches in the circuit and Lydia also volunteers with the Messy Church national team as a reader, writer and prayer team coordinator. 'Prayer' she says, 'is completely integral to all of that', so who better to talk to about the Messy perspective on prayer.

'I pray about everything I do. I pray as I'm setting up for toddler groups. This morning, I was praying for each of the families I thought might come today and for any new people. I prayed over the Tuff Tray which today was filled with coloured rice and shamrocks. They loved pouring the rice and by the end of the session, there was rice in every corner of the room. When I was sweeping up I was praying that God's love had reached every person who came in the same way that the rice had got into every nook and cranny.'



Lydia is involved in three of the five Messy Churches in the circuit: 'One's quite big, but it's not a traditional Messy Church; it's more like a holiday club so it's a drop off for children. The other two are quite small, but in Barmby on the Marsh all the families in the village come to so we get ten families each time. It's a tiny village in the middle of East Yorkshire, but they've come now for six years, as long as I've been here, and wow, it's a real community. We all care for each other, and they've really taken ownership as well. So it's lovely to see that change: this Messy Church is our church.'

Lydia encourages her Messy Church helpers to cover every session in prayer: 'We start every planning meeting with prayer, and we end with prayer, and then we make a commitment to pray for the organisation and the families who might come in between sessions. We often pick

an activity specifically that we can pray with. It could be making a collage. It could be hanging prayers on a tree. Or it could be saying in general conversation, maybe over tea time, "How can we pray for you this week?"'

And how do people respond to that invitation? 'I think the more they get to know us, the more open they are.'



So how does Lydia sum up the Messy perspective on prayer? 'Prayer is seen as the foundation. So when the national prayer team meet every month, we're praying for the whole community across the world. People send in specific prayer requests, but everyone says, "We're doing this this month, can you pray for us? We're trying something new. We're having a bit of trouble. Please could you pray for us?" Throughout the worldwide Messy community, prayer is understood as the foundation for everything we do, and it's absolutely essential that we pray about all things, lift all things up to God. We don't always get to know if our prayers are answered, but we have faith that we're making a difference.'



Perspectives on prayer – Parenting for Faith



Sarah Hogben is the children, families and community worker, as well as a deacon, at Gateway Church in York. She's on the Parenting for Faith speaking team and has three children aged eleven, nine and six. She's been involved in children's work since she was just a little older than her eldest child is now. She studied education at the University of York and as a student helped with the children's work at church.

'I was still volunteering all the way through till I had my first child, at which point I thought I can't go back to work, care for my child and volunteer at church!' The solution was for the church to pay her. 'It started off at 14 hours a week doing just children's work, but it's grown and grown and now it includes communities and families as well.'



Intriguingly, Sarah has been involved in Parenting for Faith 'since before it was Parenting for Faith.' A few years before she had her own children she was invited to an event in Newcastle where Rachel Turner, who founded what became Parenting for Faith, was speaking: 'I went mainly because I had done a study on Newcastle in sixth form but I'd never been to the city, so I thought I'll go and have a nice little walk around Newcastle. But I was just blown away by the teaching, particularly on being God-

connected, and the difference between being God-smart and God-connected. At the time I was leading the children's ministry voluntarily and that really spoke to me.'

Many people who value Parenting for Faith resources say they're as helpful in growing their own faith as in encouraging their children's. Would Sarah agree? 'Absolutely! Chat and catch in particular has been massively influential for me. I think I always knew that I could talk to God in my head, but having the language around it and the permission, almost, to trust that I don't have to wait for someone else to tell me what God is saying to me. That was quite new for me, and truly transformational.'



Parenting for Faith has had 'a really big impact' on the whole Gateway

Church, not just the children's work. 'We introduced it into our children's groups and our youth groups, and the person who was the youth worker at the time now leads the church so chat and catch has become something that we all talk about church wide now, in all sorts of different contexts.'

'For me, it was a real highlight when someone in the church wrote some material for adults and had put "you might want to catch from God in this moment". It's just a really helpful language to help people understand how they can hear from God directly.'



So what does Sarah say to parents and carers who want to know how to pray with their children, or how to encourage their children to pray themselves? 'It's about teaching them to recognise the voice of God. Jesus says: "I am the good shepherd, my sheep know my voice and I know them." If we can teach children to recognise the voice of God then it doesn't matter whatever happens in the future, wherever they are, they can get themselves in all sorts of trouble, but if they know the voice of God, then he will meet them in that place. Even if it's somewhere that none of us as parents or children's workers or friends can get to, God can meet them in that place because they know the voice of God. That, for me, is the most powerful thing.'



Be Still

Parenting for Faith lead Anna Hawken warmly recommends Lucy Rycroft's new book *Be Still*:

Like Lucy, I'm a busy mum of four, juggling a job and a shedload of other commitments. More than anything I need to learn how to be still, rest and recharge with my heavenly Father, not dash through life in my own strength! Which is why I am so glad Lucy has written *Be Still*. You can hear her kind but no-nonsense 'big sister' energy throughout each page. There's no shame or shoulds: just a hunger to really apply the biblical mandate to 'be still' and a refreshing practicality about how to do so in our whirlwind world. I cannot think of anyone who wouldn't benefit from this book, so grab one for yourself and one as a gift for someone else.

■ Go to brfonline.org.uk/be-still

Divine Windows



The Revd Dr David Gregory is a Baptist minister and former meteorologist and climate scientist. He

serves as a missionary for science and environment and as 'Dr Dave' is known for Messy Church Does Science and Messy Adventures. His new book is *Divine Windows: Seeing God through the lens of science*.

One Sunday evening in late February, as dusk fell, I set up my small telescope in the front garden. The crescent moon and the planet Venus were already visible. As darkness fell, other lights emerged. First Jupiter, then Mars with hint of red, popped into view overhead. Having watched the sky for over fifty years, these were all familiar objects. But I was patiently waiting for something that I had rarely seen. Often hidden in the glow of the setting sun, Mercury, the closest planet to our star, finally popped into view. A tiny speck of light just above the horizon, revealed as a small disk as I turned my telescope towards it.

Others joined me too, curious as to what I was up to. Passers-by and those parking their car to go to the nearby shops. Our new neighbours and friends from around the corner. As they gazed through the telescope, some for the first time, each exclaimed surprise, wonder and delight at what was revealed beyond their eyes alone. Yet, is there something even deeper to be found here?

Long ago, the writer of Psalm 19 thought so. Looking up, they exclaimed 'the heavens declare the glory of God' (v. 1). To be honest, I've not always been sure of this myself. Science too often seems to strip away the mystery of the universe and the world around us. Yet, over time, looking up into the night sky, along with a fascination at what science reveals of the wonder, variety and order of the cosmos, led me to begin to seek and encounter God.

In my new book, *Divine Windows*, I take people on a journey through eight images of our planet and across space. From the dance of microscopic life in the oceans and swirls of clouds in the sky, out to the moon and planets, and beyond to the vastness of the deep cosmos, we look through the wonder, variety and order that science reveals to glimpse the creativity, playfulness and love of God in creation.

Whether you go out on a chilly winter evening to gaze at the night sky, or stay cosy at home, watching the amazing images in science and nature documentaries on TV and social media, *Divine Windows* will enable you begin to see in a new and surprising way – just like my small telescope did for my neighbours, friends and passers-by. And looking deeper, I hope you will see – like me – not only something of the wonder of creation, but also the wonder and love of the creator.

Go to brfonline.org.uk/divine-windows

Thank you to
KINGSWAY CLC TRUST



Last July our distributor went into administration and we urgently had to find a new home at very short notice. Our friends at Kingsway CLC Trust (KCLCT) stepped in to help and in August two lorryloads of our books and Bible reading notes made their way up the motorway from Bedfordshire to Deeside in North Wales.

A year on, we want to pay tribute to the team at KCLCT and thank them for the speed with which they absorbed our stock into their warehouse, enabling us to be operational again by the beginning of September. Their hard work and dedication continued through the autumn and into the winter period as they absorbed not only us but three other organisations into their operation. They are great people to work with and spare no effort in ensuring our customers receive the best possible service.

This successful transition was built on many years of working with KCLCT. They are the leading wholesaler and distributor of Christian resources in this country and the organisers of Hand in Hand, the annual children's and family ministry conference which both our Messy Church and Parenting for Faith teams attend.

Kingsway and CLC merged several years ago. Both organisations had, and continue to have, a visionary commitment to the distribution of Christian publications and resources – including ours – in this country and around the world. Their work is grounded in prayer and collaboration and, as director Mat Owen says, a shared passion: 'We just want to get God's word out there.'

As a charity, we rely on fundraising and gifts in wills to deliver Anna chaplaincy, Living Faith, Messy church and Parenting for Faith. Your gift helps us impact thousands of lives each year. Please support our work.

brf.org.uk/give +44 (0)1235 462305



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