

Enjoying God in prayer



Moderator's Prayer Week
1-8 MARCH 2020

Moderator, **Dr William Henry**, explains why he is launching a prayer week in March.

One of my most vivid memories of a car journey is from a holiday in Arizona, not long after we were married. Staring straight ahead, not a word spoken for mile after agonising mile. The cause of extreme quiet in the car was not due to argument or disagreement, but due to circumstance – it was late at night and we were on a motorway through a remote desert with our car fuel indicator silently screaming empty. We were so desperate for the sight of a signpost to services or twinkling lights in the distance indicating an approaching town that this was the only thing we could focus on. We hadn't the energy for casual chatter, and it was a sweet relief when we eventually spotted a garage and freewheeled off the slip road to where our problem could be remedied.

In that memory I'm reminded that we knew we needed the fuel, and we were aware that this was the only way that our ongoing safety could be assured. It was an occasion when I had an awareness of a desperate need and a concern that would not lessen in my mind. It's not hard to see the connections to how we view prayer and our urgent need to rely fully on God.

In my term as Moderator, as I have talked to people throughout our congregations, many have spoken to me of such a real deep longing and concern for God to awaken the church. It's been mentioned to me time and again of the need to know the blessing of God upon his church and our land. Looking back, it was this same spiritual yearning that I believe God laid upon my heart as I chose my Moderatorial theme – 'Enjoying God'. There is something about that little phrase that resonates with all of us, reminding us of what is most essential and where our focus should be centred. Regardless of the age or stage of life we are at, we are called to live resolutely and freely for God. I believe there is a growing sense that

God can work in a new and refreshing way in our own land. I also believe that prompting is Spirit-led and that God is calling us to renewed prayer. That is why I am asking for a special week of prayer in March where we will pray as individuals and as churches, seeking God's blessing and a renewed awakening to God.

When we consider prayer, our minds so often drift to pressing needs, such as illness, family issues, or some other problem or event. There is a place for such concerns but in this instance, I am calling the Church to pray for the spiritual needs of our land and specifically for God's church in this land. This is an urgent need and I encourage you to make it a genuine focus. When a Church prays for revival that Church is praying for a power not their own, but for the power of the Holy Spirit to be poured out in greater measure than they can imagine.

To encourage this initiative to be accessible for everyone I have prepared a variety of materials for different purposes.

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Personal quiet time

Personal quiet time is important and there are already a variety of PCI-produced devotional materials, which hopefully many of you are subscribed to. (See panel for details.) During this week of prayer these will follow the common theme so that we are focused in our praying.

Family devotion

I believe it is important to encourage our children to pray and to see what God

can do through his church. Families can make use of a daily prayer activity.

Whole church worship

The times when we gather together are special, and to aid our corporate worship there will be material suitable for a congregational evening of praise and prayer – from what is provided you can select whether to have it interactive or more traditional. On top of this, suggestions for intercessory prayer on Sundays will be available.

All these materials will be made available on the PCI website to be downloaded (www.pciireland.org).

For this special week, as we pray focusing on Enjoying God, let us be aware of God himself, praying for an awakening to him, and a fresh feeling of being awed by his saving power. Jesus said, "Apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). We, our friends, family and nation need God infinitely more than anything else. And because we can do nothing of any real and lasting value without God, we cannot do anything real and lasting without prayer.

Join with me as we pray with passion and power, with urgency and expectancy, with humility and without ceasing, to: "Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine" (Ephesians 3:20).

The Moderator's Prayer Week will run from 1-8 March 2020.

PCI devotional material

Tides is a short Bible reflection emailed out daily.

Let's Pray is a weekly email and A5 booklet resource, providing prayer topics and requests on all aspects of the life and work of the Church. It is also available on the popular PrayerMate mobile app.