

*Unless the Lord builds the house, the
builders labour in vain.*

(Psalm 127)



Thank you so much for taking part in our **Prayer Vigil**, (or for using these notes to **pray at home**).

In my recent letter, 'A Call to Prayer'**, I wrote:

Prayer is a very personal thing: God doesn't much mind which way we do it, so long as we do it (with or without words; sitting, kneeling, walking, lying; while doing something else, or while very still and quiet). Just pray in your way.

It's so important that we don't make prayer complicated: communicating with someone we love is a simple, basic human activity. And, if we try and give too many instructions, we can find that what helps one person hinders another.

However, it can be helpful to have one or two 'hooks', or prompts, for prayer – just to keep us focussed. So this leaflet aims to provide some; use them only if they help you:

- Take up one of the Bibles which are around the church, and turn to a favourite passage: a Psalm, or whatever you think is appropriate.
- Use some of the Bible verses printed below.
- Use one or both of the prayers offered below.
- Light a candle on the stand at the front (please be careful!), as an outward sign of the prayer you are offering to God.

From the Bible

If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.

James 1:5

It is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose. *Phil. 2.13*

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. *Luke 11.9*

You ought to say, 'If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that.' *James 4.15*

Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening. *1 Samuel 3.10*

Offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God....Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. *Romans 12.1*

An instructive story: King David thought he knew what was the right plan for a great building for the Lord: he needed to learn that it was more important to find out what God's plan was. (Even the prophet, Nathan, took a while to hear what God was saying...)

After the king was settled in his palace and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, he said to Nathan the prophet, 'Here I am, living in a house of cedar, while the ark of God remains in a tent.'

Nathan replied to the king, 'Whatever you have in mind, go ahead and do it, for the Lord is with you.'

But that night the word of the Lord came to Nathan, saying:

'Go and tell my servant David, This is what the Lord says: are you the one to build me a house to dwell in? I have not dwelt in a house from the day I brought the Israelites up out of Egypt to this day. I have been moving from place to place with a tent as my

dwelling. Wherever I have moved with all the Israelites, did I ever say to any of their rulers whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, 'Why have you not built me a house of cedar?'...

'The Lord declares to you that the Lord himself will establish a house for *you*: when your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. From 2 Samuel 7

Commit to the Lord whatever you do,
and he will establish your plans.
Proverbs 16:3

Jesus said, 'And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.
Matthew 16:18

Many years later, that same Peter wrote this:

As you come to him, the living Stone – rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him – you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For in Scripture it says:

'See, I lay a stone in Zion,
a chosen and precious cornerstone,
and the one who trusts in him
will never be put to shame.'
1 Peter 2:4-6



'Unless the Lord...': Two Prayers

Almighty God,
Jesus promised that He would build His Church,
and our earnest prayer is that He will fulfil that promise here at Pott Shrigley.
We pray that we, your church, may grow in faith,
in service,
in ministry,
in love,
in worship,
in numbers,
and in commitment to you.
Amen

Lord, St Christopher's Church building has served your people, and has served you, over many generations.
We pray in our own time that this much-loved building may continue to be a place:
Where people know themselves to be loved by you, and by one another;
Where you are proclaimed, worshipped and honoured;
Where effective Christian ministry and service takes place;
And where many meet with you, the Living God.
But we also pray, Lord, at this time, that you will guide your church and its leaders to make right decisions for this building and for our use and stewardship of it in the days and years to come,
That you may continue to be glorified and honoured by all that takes place within these walls.
Amen.

Rev David Swales, February 2019

*** Please have a read of a copy of my letter if you need a quick reminder of exactly what it is we are praying about!*