

## Prayer

We are Your people, O God. We strive to do what is right, and ask You to sustain us as we work towards this aim. Make us conscious, we pray, of our duty to discern what is right and wrong within each of the situations we face. May we thereby please you through what we do and contribute to the greater good of all humanity. Thank You Lord; AMEN

## Other Prayer Suggestions

### Weekly Theme: Prayers about Television

Prayers this week about the television and the way it affects our lives may feel strange for some. There is no substitute for addressing issues directly, however, and many of the major influences upon our lives are taken for granted by Christians, and we often miss the spiritual significance of them. Finish the week by praying that God will use the television and broadcasting systems of the world for His purposes, and with power.

## Meditation

Like water flowing in a stream,

Your love flows over and around us.

They both bring everything around us to life,

And we rejoice in their presence and their power,

For they sustain all life; even all the Universe.

Just as water is freely available to us,

As part of our world, and there for all to use;

Your everlasting love is for ever present, freely given.

May we never forget it or take it for granted,

But rejoice that You have given it to us

Through Jesus Christ, our Saviour.

And may we never grow tired of swimming,

Soaked in the ever flowing river of Your love:

As we say 'thank You, great Lord and Creator!'

## Bible Study - 2 Peter 1:12-15

<sup>12</sup> Therefore I intend to continue reminding you of these things, even though you know them already and are established in the truth that you already have. <sup>13</sup> I think it right to stir up your memory, as long as I am in the 'tent' of this body, <sup>14</sup> for I know that my death will come soon, as I have to leave this tent, as the Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. <sup>15</sup> I will also attempt to ensure that after my departure you will be able to recall these things at any time.

### Bible Study

Peter had just written most powerfully about the path of Christian discipleship. The verses just prior to those in our text today contain some of the most significant guidance for the Christian life and the path of holiness that are to be found in the whole Bible (e.g. 1:5-7) and conclude with this stirring call; 'if you do these things, you will never fail, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' (1:10,11) I will not repeat the explanation of these verses which I have already given in the previous study, but must point out that it is not I who think the advice given in 1 Peter 1 is crucial for the spiritual life of a Christian, but Peter himself; for it is quite clear that this is what is said by the words in our passage today.

Furthermore, what Peter said were the words of someone who was dying. He spoke of his own life as lived in a 'tent' (1:13) from which he was departing (1:14), as if he knew that his end was near. We have to rely on tradition to tell us about the final years of Peter, and there is little from which we can build up a picture of what actually happened. Whatever the facts, Peter was

concerned that His words about following Jesus and living the life of faith would not be lost; and this is probably why the letter was written down. He said plainly that he would not cease to 'remind' (1:12) the church of his teaching even though it was already well established and known, and it was necessary to 'stir up the memory' so that what was known would not be lost. How important this is! We should never be tired of hearing the Gospel preached, for the evidence is that people easily forget the truths they have been told (1:12). We all need to have our memories 'stirred' in order to recall our Lord's teaching that the path of discipleship is one of constant choice between right and wrong (1:4-7), for example. Without reminders, we will succumb to the enemy's temptations to go our own way, not the Lord's.

Peter also said that he had made an attempt to 'ensure that after my departure you will be able to recall these things at any time'. In saying this, Peter was explaining why he had written down his teaching in a general letter; for once it was written, it was readily accessible to others. It is a fascinating truth that God sent Jesus into the world at a time in its development when reading and writing was becoming common, and people in general no longer had to rely on stories recited from one person to another. Writing had been available for centuries, of course, otherwise we would not have the Old Testament, but only in the first century AD could it be commonly expected that most people could read and write. The Roman Empire was the 'seed bed' for this revolution in communication, and Peter knew this and used it. Perhaps he foresaw that the writings of the apostles and other witness to Jesus Christ would be collected to form the 'holy writings' of the Church of God, eventually to become the 'New Testament'.

In our own day, we need to be aware of the importance of making the good news of Jesus available to people using every means of communication possible. For example, one feature of this website is to make Christian teaching freely available to all people. Furthermore, if it is published, it will be done so digitally, so that the teaching is stored in the latest technology, ready for all the possibilities of the future.

Peter's message is twofold. Make sure that God's people are constantly reminded of the truth of the Gospel they have received, and secondly, make sure that the means of communication used will ensure that as many people as possible can benefit from the eternal Word of God.

*Space for notes*

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## **Questions** *(for use in groups)*

1. Do people become 'bored' from hearing the true Gospel? Alternatively, are we only bored by hearing what purports to be the Gospel but is not?
2. If, like Peter, you knew that your life was close to its end, what would you wish to say about the Gospel?
3. What means of communication are important for the future, so that all will be able to hear the Gospel 'at any time' (1:15)

## **Discipleship**

In many parts of the world, Christians are asking whether they should be forming new churches and re-establishing the Christian heritage, because they feel that the traditional churches have failed in their duty to pass on the one true faith. Is this a true reflection of what is happening where you live? Consider whether your own Christian discipleship is helpful and supportive of the Gospel handed down to us from the apostles, and whether it is right or wrong to cut our ties with the past in order to go forward.

## **Prayer**

Save us, O Lord God, from the corruption of our minds by things around us which draw us away from faith; the pursuit of leisure, alcohol, the luxuries of life which we enjoy, or the temptations of money, sex or power. Keep us firmly on the path of the Gospel of truth and make us constantly aware of our salvation through the death of Jesus Christ. AMEN