

The magazine of Portobello Baptist Church

# MESSENGER

www.portobellobaptist.co.uk • May 2016

LET EVERYTHING THAT YOU DO,  
LEAD OTHERS TO THE CROSS.

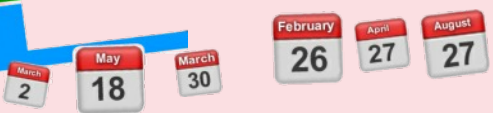


Scottish Registered Charity: SC015332

How beautiful are the feet of those who bring Good News

NEWS • TEACHING • ENCOURAGEMENT • LETTERS

# dates for your diary



May  
 Tues 10.30 a.m. Weekly Hour of Prayer  
 [drop-in for all or part of the time]  
 10th Tues 7.30 p.m. Management Meeting

[check 'Buzz' newsheet for last minute details]

## SCOTTISH BAPTIST PRAYER LINK

May  
 1<sup>st</sup> Al Nicoll (RAF Chaplain)  
 Dalkeith; Dedridge; Dennistoun Baptist Churches  
 8<sup>th</sup> Adam Plenderleith (Chaplain, Glasgow Royal Infirmary)  
 Denny; Dingwall; Drumchapel Baptist Churches  
 15<sup>th</sup> Jack Quinn (Workplace Chaplaincy Scotland)  
 Dumbarton; Dumfries; Duncan Street Baptist Church  
 22<sup>nd</sup> Rebekah Sharp (Chaplain, Q. E. Uni. Hospital)  
 Jim Simpson (Chaplain, Royal Cornhill Hospital)  
 Dundee Central; Dumferline West; Dunoon BC  
 29<sup>th</sup> David Vogan (Chaplain, Nethervale Care Home)  
 Dunrossness; East Mains; Easterhouse Baptist Church

## FUTURE SERMON PLAN

### JOURNEY TO HOLINESS – MATTHEW 18 – 20

May  
 1<sup>st</sup> Matthew Ch 19 vv 1-15 – Marriage honoured  
 8<sup>th</sup> Ascension  
 15<sup>th</sup> Pentecost  
 22<sup>nd</sup> Matthew Ch 19 vv 16-30 – True Riches  
 June  
 29<sup>th</sup> Matthew Ch 20 vv 1-16 – Whole Life Discipleship

## APRIL OFFERING



3 <sup>th</sup>	£628.00	17 <sup>th</sup>	£612.50
10 <sup>th</sup>	£959.00	24 <sup>th</sup>	£747.50

Building Fund, running total :- £4,506.35

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

*(Proverbs Ch 29 v 18)*

*"without a vision, God's people perish ..."*

*At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly. One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision...*

*Peter went up on the roof to pray. He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. He saw heaven opened...*

In Acts 10 we read of two men whose worlds were about to intersect. Cornelius was a God-fearing Gentile, and a centurion. Peter was a Jew, a Christ-follower, and the head of the Jerusalem church. Both Cornelius and Peter saw visions. An angel appeared to Cornelius and told him to find a man named Peter, send for him, and listen to what he had to say. Cornelius obeyed immediately. Peter saw a vision of a sheet filled with "... all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air" (Acts 10:12 NKJ). The Lord's voice said, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat" (Acts 10:13), but Peter refused saying he'd never eaten anything common or unclean. This vision repeated to Peter three times, each time with the Lord's response, "What God has cleansed you must not call common" (Acts 10:15).

Thanks to these men acting on these two visions, the mission of the Church was advanced. Cornelius' faith was made complete when Peter preached Jesus to him. Cornelius was baptized, filled with the Holy Spirit, and his whole household was saved. Peter's vision helped him understand that salvation was for the Gentiles also (who were considered unclean by Jews in those days).

Acting on vision is still important. Like Peter and Cornelius, we can hear from God. "Lord, what would you have me to do?" should be our prayer. The vision may start as a prick in your heart, something that causes you to raise an eyebrow and say, "Wow." Act on that. Move in the light of that vision and don't allow it to dim.

When God gives you a vision, it is specific and individual. Although it's expressly for you, it is also intertwined with His bigger picture. Your job is to obey the vision you've received just like mine is to obey the one He's sent to me. Then, as with Cornelius and Peter, when our worlds intersect, the mission of the Church will be advanced, God receiving the ultimate glory. Only by obediently acting upon the individual vision God gives us will we be operating in harmony with His bigger plan. We'll then be pleasantly surprised and awed as we witness mighty moves of God's hand, and amazingly humbled to realize He's used us to accomplish His work.

What would happen to our church if each of us spent time listening for our individual vision, then acted in harmony as we journey on? Shall we find out?

Your pastor,



## THE CHURCH FAMILY

We continue to remember, in prayer, all those who have been so faithful in the service of the Church and are no longer able to worship with us:

## PRAYING FOR THE FLOCK

(1 Thess. 5:17; Acts 6.4)

Each month this new section will include a cluster of names taken from the Church Directory so that we can uphold them particularly in prayer over this month.



*(Eph 6:18) "praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints"*

M  
A  
Y



## FLOWER CALENDAR 2016

M 1<sup>st</sup>  
A 8<sup>th</sup>  
Y 15<sup>th</sup>  
22<sup>nd</sup>  
29<sup>th</sup>

## THE MAIN INGREDIENT

### IN EFFECTIVE PRAYER

by Jonathan Parnell (desiringgod.com)



It's tragic how easily we can miss the main ingredient in effective prayer.

In our sin, we've been rewired to focus on us — on the steps we should take for our prayers to be heard. We have this bent toward believing that every result is born from method. If something works for somebody we want to know what that somebody is doing.

We've developed the assumption that if we can just strip it all down to a reproducible process to put into action, then the results will multiply. While this applies to certain things, it doesn't apply to prayer — or at least that's not the vision the apostle James gives us. The main ingredient in effective prayer is emphatically not us.

### **Often Misunderstood**

Many of us find James 5:16 to be a familiar verse: "The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working" — which is also translated, as an ESV footnote spells out, "The effective prayer of a righteous person has great power."

This is one of those coffee-mug verses. It's commonly understood like this: Be righteous and your prayers will work.

It's what I used to think. But that's the skim-milk meaning. It's what happens when we fly by the text without questions. Our broken bent is to make the burden of this passage something to do with us. We simply settle to think that if we want our prayers to be effective then we need to be righteous.

But this reading doesn't hold up.

### Reading in Context

First, look at the context surrounding verse 16. James's whole point is that prayer is effective. He asks in verse 13, "Is anyone among you suffering?" Then he replies, "Let him pray." What about cheerfulness? Or sickness? Or sin? In each case, James encourages his readers to pray. Why? Because prayer is effective, which means, God hears his people and acts on their behalf.

Then in the beginning of verse 16, because prayer is effective (verses 13–15), he says, "Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed" (James 5:16). To make it even clearer, he follows this with, "The effective prayer of a righteous person has great power." That line is the second portion in a double dose of support for our praying. James's point is to repeat his theme to pray because prayer is effective. His concern is not how prayer is made effective, but that prayer is effective. And then verse 17 comes to ground that point. What About Elijah?

Verse 17 then brings in Elijah. "Elijah was a man with a nature like ours and he prayed fervently . . ." (James 5:17).

What does Elijah have to do with our praying? Does it mean that Elijah was righteous and his prayers worked so we

should be like Elijah for our prayers to work too? Is that what he is saying?

### No way

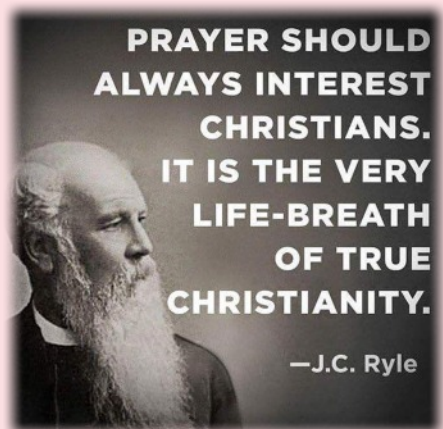
Look at the Book. James says that Elijah was a man with a nature like ours. He was just a man. He was like us. He had a nature like ours. And being just a man, being like us, having a nature like ours, he prayed fervently and God heard. The point is not that we should be righteous at the extraordinary level of an Elijah, but that he was normal like you and me. James doesn't say for us to be like Elijah for our prayers to be answered but that Elijah was like us and his prayers were answered — therefore pray.

### Don't Miss What's Main

This means that the locus of effective prayer is not us, but God. Prayer has less to do with the specifics of how we say what we say, and more to do with the one to whom we are saying it.

We pray as ordinary people who have an extraordinary God. We're just normal, you and I. We're just normal like Elijah. Prayer is effective, not because of great men who pray, but because of a great God who in Christ graciously hears his people.

He's the main ingredient. So pray.



## I LOVE THE CHURCH,

the flock bought with Christ's blood—

Sheep gone astray

He found and brought to God.

Guarded and fed by shepherds He provides,

We follow Christ, secure and satisfied.

*Refrain:*

*May Christ be praised: "Preeminent! Adored!"*

*I love the church because I love her Lord!*

I love the church,

the bride whom Christ pursued—

Poor and unchaste, yet chosen,

loved, and wooed.

Our Groom and Head

in love laid down His life

To sanctify the church, His cherished wife.

I love the church, my fam'ly o'er the earth—

Sinners estranged,

made one through second birth.

In selfless love Christ claimed us as His own,

And that same love

from each to each is shown.

I love the church, one body Spirit-led—

Each part distinct,

yet one through Christ our Head.

Each member serves,

and thus our body grows,

Strengthened by gifts the Spirit wise bestows.

I love the church, the temple God indwells.

Built by our Lord, we triumph over hell.

Founded on Truth, Apostles' doctrine sure,

We build on Christ, our Cornerstone secure.

## VISITOR RESPONSE

I am a visitor and would like .....

- Information about the Church
- A visit from the Minister
- Information about becoming a Christian

PLEASE FILL IN YOUR CONTACT DETAILS BELOW  
and either place in the offering bag, hand to a steward or post to  
189 Portobello High Street, Portobello, Edinburgh, EH15 1EU

NAME:

EMAIL:

PHONE:

I love the church, the pillar of God's Word.

We will exalt the Truth till all have heard!

We will oppose the lies of erring men

That God in grace may turn

them from their sin!

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A fully symphonic concert of praise and worship in the stunning surroundings of St Mary's Episcopal cathedral in Edinburgh and Glasgow Cathedral. The event will be led by Origin's Exile Choir and Chamber Orchestra.

Sunday 5 June:

St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, Edinburgh

Tickets will be available nearer the time.

Please note there is a flight of steps up to the sanctuary in the cathedral and there is no disabled access.

St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral,

Sun 05 June, 2016, 8.00 p.m.

Venue Location:

Palmerston Place, Edinburgh, EH12 5AW

Admission: FREE,

Parking: on-street

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CUT ALONG DOTTED LINE

