

St Andrew's Presbyterian Church Penrith

9 Doonmore Street, Penrith NSW 2750

www.penrithpresbyterian.com



ENCOURAGEMENT LETTER 2/10/2024

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

How are you today? I am thankful for the privilege of enjoying a delicious breakfast and great time of fellowship with other men from our church, plus friends and visitors, on Saturday when David Reeves was the guest speaker. Most importantly, I found David's presentation to be just so encouraging, inspiring and uplifting that I couldn't just let it pass without using it as the basis for this week's encouragement letter. Moreover, I'm certain that the essence of what he said is relevant to every one of us – as we strive to live a life that brings honour and glory to our wonderful Creator God.

As a result, this week's encouragement is focused upon, "**How we live our lives in a busy world and the challenges we have**", before heading on to church matters. - John Pickering

ENCOURAGEMENT: Putting God First

How do you manage in your life – and that of your family ... with work and church commitments?

There are just so many different demands and distractions that call for our attention – our jobs, our kids, our family, our sport, our hobbies, etc., that we need to be careful not to let them become more important, or more of a priority than our God. After all, we know we should worship God – not idols.

Surely, for Christians, there's only one perfect answer ... with God's help ... by putting God first!

In Matthew 6:33 we are reminded of the importance of seeking God's kingdom and righteousness as our main priority, above all else. *We need to remain focused upon our relationship with God.*

Do you often find yourself in an interesting, and sometimes confusing, predicament where you're having difficulty trying to work out how you can do all the things you want, or would like, to do? There's the important contracts at work that need to be worked on NOW – not later, there's the special awards night or concert at your child's school and you really have to be there, there's the family birthday celebration, the grandchild's grand final soccer match, the restaurant dinner with your spouse that you've already booked ... not forgetting the Bible Study or Prayer Meeting at church!!!

Life in our world can get VERY busy and getting to spend time with God (in a morning devotion, praying or reading God's Word) can so easily 'get in the road', and may be overlooked. Perhaps we try to rationalise our final decision about how we fit everything in by convincing ourselves that by working long hours we have more opportunities to help other people?

In Proverbs 3:6, we read: ***"In everything you do, put God first, and he will direct you and crown your efforts with success."***

I came across this transcript on the internet - a talk by Denzel Washington to new grads ... about 10 years ago – and found it interesting, in terms of our encouragement theme:

Put God first in everything you do ... Everything that I have is by the grace of God, understand that. It's a gift ... I didn't always stick with him, but He stuck with me ... While you're [on your knees], say thank you. Thank you for grace, thank you for mercy, thank you for understanding, thank you for wisdom, thank you for parents, thank you for love, thank you for kindness, thank you for humility, thank you for peace, thank you for prosperity. Say thank you in advance for what is already yours ... True desire in the heart for anything good is God's proof to you, sent beforehand that it's already yours ... When you get it, reach back, pull someone else up.

Sometimes it's easy to overlook the 24/7 *direct connection* we have with God – our God who is always available, always ready to listen and answer our prayers ... our God who is unchanging, always the same – yesterday, today and forever, a God who doesn't ever need to change, a God who is PERFECT, a God in whom we can have *complete* trust and faith, a God who tells us: ***"I am the way, the truth and the life."*** [John 14:6]

With the many different things happening in our lives, in our family and around the world, it is not surprising that we can, at times, feel unwell, miserable or tired – even to the point of doubting God's love for us and the way he cares for us.

Do personal, everyday issues and family problems ever get you down?

Do you ever feel distressed and depressed about what's happening in your life?

Do you ever feel like everything in your world is falling apart and getting you down?

Do you ever feel despondent and overwhelmed by what is happening in our world?

Do you ever feel ignored, or neglected, or bullied by what others say to you at work, or school?

I'm sure that we can all relate to these experiences/situations at some time or other. What can we do? ***When we find ourselves in these and similar situations, we really do need to do something about life's priorities ... and put God first, talk to God, lean on him ... and ask for his help. We need to PRAY!***

That's how we put God first.

That's how we cope with living in our busy world.

That's how we manage when faced with daily challenges or problems.

That's how we find peace – through the grace of God.

CHURCH MATTERS

PRAYER GROUP

Prayer group will continue to meet at Emily's house each week until after 21st October.

SAMARITAN'S PURSE PACKING DAY

Packing day is Saturday, October 19th, 9am at the hall. All welcome!

ENGAGING WITH GOD #7: Work

Our next 'Engaging with God' seminar is on 16/10 at 7.00pm. In this session we'll consider how we engage with God through work.

MANNYX FAMILY AWAY

Steve is on a combination of study leave and holidays until the 21st October. If you need anything, please speak with Hugh or one of the elders.

NEW HELPERS for the COMMUNITY PANTRY PLEASE

We would love to have some more helpers on the roster for this very strategic ministry that has brought a number of new people to our church. If you are able to help, even if only once or twice a term, please contact Nicole. I would like to give regulars, Sam and Kelly a break during the upcoming HSC Exams period. - Nicole (Ph. 0412 010 606)

INVITATION: HYMN SING at GRACE BIBLE CHURCH (80 Joseph St, Kingswood)

You may like to attend the "HYMN SING" on Monday, 7th October ... 4.00-5.30pm. All welcome!

May you be richly blessed in your walk with the Lord and enjoy him forever.

– John.