

## St Andrew's Presbyterian Church Penrith

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### ENCOURAGEMENT LETTER – 8JAN25

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Happy New Year! How are you today? I am thankful for the year that has passed and God's blessing and faithfulness to us in Christ Jesus.

Our Encouragement today is "Anticipation – Prayer" before moving onto other church matters.

#### **ENCOURAGEMENT: Anticipation – Prayer**

January, at least for me, feels like it is between years. There are very few official church activities. The kids are on holidays. The pace is slower. The year does not kick off properly until about the beginning of February. It is a time to relax, rest and renew. But it is also a time of anticipation – looking forward to the year ahead. And I am feeling eager for the year ahead, waiting to see what God will do. It is this anticipation that should drive us to prayer to ask God for the things that we are eager to see happen.

In Psalm 5 we can see David struggling with his enemies. He goes to God for his defence and he writes:

*In the morning, O LORD, you hear my voice;*

*in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation.*

Psalm 5:3

David presents his requests before the Lord, asking God for what he wants to see happen, asking God to deal with his enemies, the wicked. In laying his requests before God, he then waits with expectation. He expects God to act and answer his prayer. He expects God to help his people. He expects God to hear him and answer his prayer.

We too can pray in the same way. Jesus has gained for us access into God's presence. We can talk with God in his very throne room and tell him of all that is on our hearts that we want to see happen in the world. The

more that we pray, the more that we learn to pray in step with God's will. John writes in his first epistle:

*This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.*

1 John 5:14-15

There is a promise here that if we pray according to God's will he will answer us. What is God's will? God has shown us his will – that people will know him and Jesus whom he has sent, that his people grow to unity and maturity in Christ, that the gospel will spread through out all the earth. God's will is revealed in the Scripture and we are to pray in accordance with his will so we might see his kingdom come and his will done on earth.

Often we end our prayers "In Jesus' name. Amen." We say this because Jesus says in John's gospel –

*You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.*

John 14:14

This is not a blank cheque to get anything we want. It is not as though we say at the end of our prayer – "in Jesus name" – that God is then obligated to make it happen. Praying in Jesus name means to ask according to his desires and purposes for what he wants to see happen in your life, in the church and in the world. To truly pray in Jesus name is to know the will of God and pray prayers in step with God's will. When our prayers are shaped by the word and the gospel then we can wait in expectation for God to answer those prayers. God is active in the world. He listens to our prayers. He answers according to his will and purposes.

So my prayers at the beginning of 2025 is that:

- my family will grow in our love of Jesus and our desire to serve him.
- our church will eagerly seek to know God and love one another as God's family
- we as God's church will take steps of faith in sharing Jesus with others to see his kingdom grow
- we together will grow in an understanding of God's will for us and an anticipation for what God will do among us.

Will you pray with me and anticipate what God will do among us this year? Will you pray such prayers and wait in expectation for God to act according to his glorious gospel?

## **COMMUNITY PANTRY**

The pantry has finished for the year and will open again on February 2nd, 2025. Thank you for your support of this ministry. We would love continued donations so we are stocked and ready for next year.

Donations we need at the moment are:

- Tinned fish
- Milk
- Light Milk
- Lactose free milk
- Baked beans
- Laundry Liquid
- Dog food
- Incontinence pads

Our \$5000 grant has been used so we are now reliant on donations. If everyone just added one thing to their groceries each list, we would have plenty, so please consider giving generously.

## **SERVICES IN JANUARY**

All three services will continue over January with a holiday kid's program at the 10.30 service.

## **COMBINED SERVICE - FEBRUARY 2ND**

We are having a **COMBINED SERVICE at 9am on Sunday, February 2nd, 2025** to kick off the year and after morning tea we will look at the results of the survey together.

## **FINAL COMMENTS**

*Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.*

Romans 12:12

As always, love and prayers,  
Steve

