

# Pray With Us

*a call to prayer and fasting*



## Prayer – its been a mixed bag

I've been attending The Salvation Army for 71 years. I've been a Christian for 56 years and prayer has been a mixed bag for me. I've had times where I struggle to pray, there was one time – quite a few months – when God seemed to be totally absent – and there have been other times when I have witnessed the power of the Holy Spirit as soon as I prayed.

Despite my mixed bag of prayer efforts and outcomes I read over and over in the Bible about the vitality of vigorous, persistent, ongoing faith-filled prayer.

How do you feel about prayer? What are your thoughts? How important is prayer to you? I would love to hear from you by email, text or Facebook messenger – whatever is the easiest way for you to contact me. My email is [laurie.robertson@salvationarmy.org.au](mailto:laurie.robertson@salvationarmy.org.au).

Each month for the rest of the year I will be putting a few thoughts in this newsletter on prayer and fasting because Scott and Sharon along with the NBC leadership team are calling NBC to pray and (if possible) fast. And wonderfully, any comment you send me about prayer will help me write relevantly.

Importantly we are being asked – urged – to fast and pray around our NBC theme: **Wherever you go Act Justly, Love Mercy, Walk Humbly**. He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you?

To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

Micah 6:8

This is a gutsy scripture challenging the unhealthy –world revolves around me – self-centredness, that persistently penetrates our thoughts and feelings –subtly and obviously.

So while it is fantastic that we are being asked to pray about this, exactly how are we all going to fit this extra request into our busy lives?

Also we're all different in how we approach prayer. I love praying with other people or walking around and speaking my prayers out loud if it is just Jesus and me. Others love quiet music happening or silence and some people love to write their prayers out.

Well, isn't it great that our practical prayer methodology isn't being prescribed, except, if we can, would we include some fasting?

Now will we actually make time to do this? Our answer will depend on how much we believe prayer is essential in our everyday life and Christian living. Is prayer peripheral to our other action-packed activities or is prayer the powerhouse, prioritising and energising all we feel, think and do?

However, I'm presuming we are all going to at least try to do something at least once a week or once a month. Because we are such a varied NBC family I imagine we will approach it wonderfully and amazingly differently. We will be outdoors in creation, inside by our bed, praying while working, getting together with prayer pals, sitting in our favourite lounge chair, using our Bible, playing music, being silent, writing, drawing, painting and so much more. If we could video it all I know we would be overwhelmed with joy at the creativity and variety of our prayer and fasting times.

And if you have never thought much about fasting before I will have a point or two each month aimed at helping us all give it a go. Even diabetics like me, who have to eat regularly, can fast from something. Our fasting tips will gently help us to get a taste of nine Biblical fasts.

Please remember that fasting is not an end in itself. It is a means by which we can humbly come before God in worship so that he can change us to be more like him. Fasting is key if we want to become empowered to help bring change to the world. If you want to get an idea of how this can happen then please go right ahead and read the powerful words of Isaiah 58.

Thanks in anticipation of your participation!

## Prayer points

### **And now some prayer topic suggestions for March.**

- 1 March: Love Mercy – Compassion. Who do I know that needs a dose of compassion right now? How can I helpfully bring compassion to them?
- 8 March: Love Mercy – The prodigals. Who am I connecting with that is running from God? What can I do to be a positive encouragement to them to change their running from God to running towards God?
- 15 March: Love Mercy – How can I be a help and not a hindrance, to people running toward Jesus wanting to deeply connect with him? What can I pray and do to see him as Saviour, Forgiver and Renewer?
- 22 March: Love Mercy : Mercy for myself – what is needing change in my life so I can be wide-eyed and innocent as a little child so I can be totally committed to being a disciple of Jesus? How can I make the changes and who is best to help me?
- 27 March: Love Mercy: Am I ready to be merciful as Jesus is merciful? How can I keep living in tune with Jesus so I never lose my desire to keep learning from him and growing in my faith for him?
- 27 Feb- 1 Mar – Young Adult retreat
- 1 Mar – Newcomers lunch
- 22 Mar – Self Denial Altar service
- 27-29 – Riverfest/ State youth camp

*Laurie Robertson*