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Excerpts from **Pray as you Go** by *Revd Helen Brown*

Excerpts from **Pray as you go** – please note that I have included contributions from various members of this face book group without naming them.

The Lord's Prayer

We now move on to the second section of the Lord's Prayer:

'Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so upon the earth.'

This is our invitation to the Lord to rule our life and we accept that He is the King and that a life with Him as ruler is better than a world in which we take charge. The Lord cannot rule us unless we are prepared to follow his ways. It is this obedience to God's will that brings heaven to earth. This is why we say 'as in heaven, so upon the earth.'

As we endeavour to turn away from selfish ways and turn to the Lord which can be challenging, prayer and reflection will help us to stay strong and

to keep the vision of a heavenly way insight. Saying, 'Your will be done' reminds us that we acknowledge we want to follow the Lord's way.

What, in your life, allows you to see the Lord's way as your way too?

What challenges you to continue to follow the Lord?

In what way does prayer and reflection help you?

"As in heaven, so upon the earth" reflects the order of influx - what is spiritual (internal) determines what is natural (external), and not the other way around. When we seek to change, it must always come from within. You cannot make someone change, they have to want it themselves. And this is what the Lord does, he leads us to change our hearts first and thereby change our actions. There is value in acting it out before we are really committed, though - that's from obedience to our king - but it's never compelled by the Lord, it is something that must be chosen by us.

'Thy will be done'

Come into my heart and soften it.

Ignite a desire to seek out what is good for all.

Lift me up out of my blinkered perspective into Your light,
and in so doing bring me into your heavenly kingdom.

This is the link:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/276157511029041>

Advent - Watching and Waiting

by Pauline Grimshaw

'I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me and heard my prayer.' These are the opening words of Psalm 40. The last Sunday in November marks the beginning of the period before Christmas called 'Advent.' The word 'advent' comes from the Latin word meaning 'to come' and it marks steps on the church's 'countdown' to Christmas when we prepare ourselves spiritually to remember and celebrate the coming of our lord Jesus Christ into the world. Of course, the way in which the church should prepare for Christmas and the way in which much of the modern world prepares are not exactly synonymous. No frantic shopping and Black Friday sales for a church but rather a period of reading, prayer and reflection, and trying to improve our own spiritual state. It should also be a time when we think about and try to bring happiness to our fellow human beings.

The words of the psalm 'waiting' and 'watching' are not often regarded as key attributes in today's world, yet for many hundreds and even thousands of years people have been accustomed to waiting patiently for things to happen. It has only been relatively recently, during the last century or so, that things have speeded up frenetically. People have become increasingly annoyed at having to wait for things - hence the world of Amazon on-line shopping. We know what we want, and want it with the minimum of waiting on our own part.

A dictionary definition of the word 'wait' gives as a secondary meaning 'to expect' or 'expectation'. My dictionary also gives the origin of the word 'WAIT' from an old English word for 'Watch' and links it to the singers of traditional English carols who went round from door to door. 'Wait and Watch' in Biblical times were two words often linked together, for people in those days spent much of their lives watching and waiting. Every precious vineyard or olive grove had its own watch-tower where guards would be stationed to watch for bands of thieves and robbers. Every flock of sheep would be watched over constantly by an alert shepherd, rather like David, waiting for, and almost expecting, wild animals or human beings who might steal one of the flock.

We only expect something when we are more or less sure that will arrive. As I type this, I am sitting at my computer half looking through the window, watching and waiting for a delivery van to arrive.

It is strange that so often when an event happens, or even when a parcel arrives, we often do not recognise it, because it does not always fit in with what we have imagined. Even though we might have seen a picture on a computer screen what arrives is not always quite what we are expecting to arrive. So it was with the birth of the Lord, a simple yet earth-changing event that went unseen and unacknowledged by an expectant world. Even today this miraculous event is masked by lesser concerns and the story is almost forgotten amongst commercialism and materialism. Why did the angels appear to the shepherds? Because they were simple, uncomplicated persons who cared only for their sheep.

How do we recognise the Lord and admit him into our hearts, minds, and lives this Christmas? We recognise the Lord because we hear or read it for ourselves in his Word. We realise through reading and study that the Lord is the source of all we have. The Writings of our church tell us that the Lord can be born in us over and over again. This happens when we have the desire to learn about him and then put into practice what we have learnt in order to love and to serve our fellow men and women. If the Lord, the Lord of love, were to be truly born into every one of us there would be no more war, no more greed, no more grudges, no more violence, and we would all live our lives for the sake of others.

WE cannot change the world in a day, we cannot change others, the only thing we can change in this world is ourselves - our own thoughts and attitudes. It takes a lifetime of patience, watching and waiting to truly recognise the Lord and to acknowledge him as the source of all our lives.