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| **SERMON NOTES Sunday 15th November** |
|  **SunnySide** |

**Bible passage Acts 4.23-31**

**Recipe for a Flourishing Church: Prayer**

**Introduction**

* life was not easy for the early church but prayer sustained the believers and caused the church to flourish
* surge of interest in prayer during Coronavirus crisis
1. **The believers prayed**
* the life of the early church was rooted in prayer and it was their first response to all the situations they faced
* ‘Prayer is a gift that God gives to us all’ Archbishop of Canterbury
1. **they prayed for courage not easy times**
* the believers recognised God’s power and asked for courage so that they would continue to proclaim the good news of Jesus despite the threats they faced
* we need to pray for boldness in sharing the love of Jesus despite the difficulties and restrictions of Covid
1. **God responded in a powerful way**
* God answers their prayer swiftly and powerfully
* God answers in different ways, but he always hears

**Conclusion**

Prayer is essential for a flourishing church because it re-orientates us towards God who is our centre and head

(The book Rebecca quoted from is: Graham Tomlin *Why being yourself is a bad idea and other countercultural ideas*)

**Some questions for discussion**

1. What is your experience of prayer? What has been good and what has been bad?
2. Read Acts 4.23-31. What strikes you about this example of the early church and prayer?
3. Why might boldness be a good prayer for you today?
4. ‘What if [God] knows prayer to be the thing we need first and most? What if the main object in God’s idea of prayer be the supplying of our great, our great, our endless need – the need of Himself?’ (George MacDonald quoted by Graham Tomlin). How does this idea deepen your understanding of prayer?
5. Prayer helps us re-orientate ourselves to God. Why might this be an essential ingredient for a flourishing church?
6. What is God asking you to do as a result of what he has said to you through this passage? It might be something to pray about, something to think more about, something he wants you to talk to someone about or something he wants you to do. Make a note of it so you don't forget!

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4.6-7

Why not spend some time thanking God for the gift of prayer and ask him to make you bold in sharing the good news of Jesus with those you meet?

Revd Rebecca Fardell