



# **NEW LIFE**

## **BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

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*“For the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Rev 1:9)*

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## **HOW TO BEGIN EVERY DAY WITH GOD – Part 2 of 2**

“My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.” (Psalm 5:3)

Last Lord’s Day, we published the first part of this excellent exposition of this verse by the Puritan pastor, Matthew Henry, in which he deals with prayer in general. In this concluding part of his treatise, Henry explains why mornings are the best time for the exercise of our soul. In reprinting this article, we do fully understand that for many of us living in a modern society, mornings can be an extremely hectic time. However, extraordinary opportunities that the morning hours afford make it imperative for every child of God, who is serious about his Christian walk, to prayerfully consider how those opportune hours or minutes may be redeemed (cf. Col 4:5).

### **The Special Time Appointed for Prayer**

The particular time fixed for this good work is the morning; and the Psalmist seems to lay an emphasis upon this,—“in the morning,” and again, “in the morning,”—not then only, but then to begin with: Let that be one of the hours of prayer. Under the law, we find that every morning there was a lamb offered in sacrifice (Ex 29:39), and every morning the priest burned incense (Ex 30:7), and the singers stood every morning to thank the Lord (1 Chr 23:30). And so it was appointed in Ezekiel’s temple (Ezk 46:13–15). By which an intimation was plainly given, that the spiritual sacrifices should be offered by the spiritual priests every morning, as duly as the morning comes. Every Christian should pray in secret, and every master of a family with his family morning by morning; and there is good reason for it.

### **A. God is Worthy to be Served First**

The morning is the first part of the day, and it is fit that He that is the first should have the first, and be first served. The heathen could say, “whatever you do, begin with God.” As the world had its beginning from Him, we have ours, and therefore whatever we begin, it concerns us to take Him along with us in it. The days of our life, as soon as ever the sun of reason rises in the soul, should be devoted to God, and employed in His service: “from the womb of the morning,” let Christ have the dew of the youth (Ps 110:3). The first-fruits were always to be the Lord’s, and the firstlings of the flock. By morning and evening prayer, we give glory to Him who is the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last; with Him we must begin and end the day, begin and end the night, who is the beginning and the end, the first cause and the last end.

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Wisdom has said, “Those that seek me early shall find me” (Prov 8:17). This may mean early in their lives, or early in the day. Both ways, we show that we care to please Him, and to approve ourselves to Him, and we seek Him diligently. What we do earnestly, we are said in Scripture to do early (cf. Ps 101:8). Industrious men rise betimes; David expresses the strength and warmth of his devotion, when he says, “O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee” (Ps 63:1).

### B. We are Freshest in the Morning

In the morning we are fresh and living, and in the best frame. In the morning, our spirits are revived with the rest and sleep of the night, and we live a kind of new life, and the fatigues of the day before are forgotten. The God of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps, yet when He exerts Himself more than ordinary on His people’s behalf, He is said to awake as one out of sleep (Ps 78:65). If ever we be good for any thing, it is in the morning. There is a saying amongst poets that “dawn is a friend of inspiration.” If morning is a time for creative inspiration, so also for spiritual exercises. As He that is the first should have the first; so He that is the best should have the best. Furthermore, when we are fittest for business, we should apply ourselves to that which is the most needful business.

Worshipping God is a work that requires and deserves the best powers of the soul, when they are at the best. How can these powers be better bestowed, or so as to turn to a better account? “Let all that is within me bless his holy name,” says David (cf. Ps 103:1). If there be any gift in us by which God may be honoured, the morning is the most proper time to stir it up (2 Tim 1:6), when our spirits are refreshed, and we have gained new vigour. So David cries: “Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: [for] I myself will awake early” (Ps 57:8). Let us, then, bestir ourselves to take hold on God early in the morning.

### C. There are Fewest Distractions in the Morning

In the morning we are most free from company and business, and ordinarily have the best opportunity for solitude and retirement,—unless we be of those sluggards that lie in bed with yet a little sleep, a little slumber, till the work of their calling calls them up, with: “How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard?” (Prov 6:9). It is the wisdom of those that have much in the world, but have scarce a minute to themselves of all day, to take time in the morning before business crowds in upon them, for the business of their religion: that they may be entire for it, and therefore the more intent upon it.

As we are concerned to worship God, then when we are least burdened with deadness and dullness within, so also when we are least exposed to distraction and diversion from without. The Apostle intimates how much it should be our care to attend upon the Lord without distraction (1 Cor 7:35). And therefore that one day in seven, (and it is the first day, the morning of the week too!) which is appointed for holy work, is appointed to be a day of rest from other work. Abraham leaves all at the bottom of the hill, when he goes up to the mount to worship God (Gen 23:5). In the morning, therefore, let us converse with God, and apply ourselves to the concerns of the other life, before we are entangled in the affairs of this life. Our Lord Jesus has set us an example of this, who, because His day was wholly filled up with public business for God and the souls of men, rose up in the morning a great while before day, and before company came in, and went out into a solitary place, and there prayed (Mk 1:35).

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#### D. God's Mercies are New Every Morning

In the morning we have received fresh mercies from God, which we are concerned to acknowledge with thankfulness to His praise. He is continually doing us good, and loading us with His benefits. Every day we have reason to bless Him, for every day He is blessing us. But we should bless Him in the morning particularly, as He gives out to us the fruits of His favour, which are said to be new every morning (Lam 3:23), because though the same that we had the morning before, they are still forfeited, and still needed, and upon that account may be called still new. Therefore, we should be still returning the expressions of our gratitude to Him, and of other pious and devout affections, which like the fire on the altar, must be new every morning (Lev 6:12).

Have we had a good night, and have we not an errand to the throne of grace to return thanks for it? How many mercies concurred to make it a good night! Distinguishing mercies granted to us, but denied to others! Many have not where to lay their heads. Our Master Himself had not, for "the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head" (Mt 8:20; Lk 9:58). But we have houses to dwell in, quiet and peaceable habitations, perhaps stately ones. Many have beds to lie on, yet dare not, or cannot lie down in them, being kept up either by the sickness of their friends, or the fear of their enemies. But we have laid us down, and slept without disturbance, and our sleep was sweet and refreshing, the pleasant parenthesis of our cares and toils; it is God that has given us sleep, has given it us as He gives to His beloved. Many lay down and sleep and never rise again, they sleep the sleep of death, and their beds are their graves; but we have slept and waked again, have rested, and are refreshed; we shake ourselves, and it is with us as at other times; because the Lord hath sustained us (Ps 3:5); and if He had not upheld us, we had sunk with our own weight when we fell asleep.

Have we a pleasant morning? Is the light sweet to us, the light of the sun, the light of the eyes, do these rejoice the heart? And ought not we to own our obligations to Him who opens our eyes, and opens the eyelids of the morning upon us. Have we clothes to put on in the morning, garments that warm upon us (Job 37:17)? Change of raiment, not for necessity only, but for ornament? We have them from God, it is His wool and His flax, that is given to cover our nakedness, and the morning when we dress ourselves, is the proper time of returning thanks for it; yet, I doubt we do it not so constantly as we do for our food when we sit down to our tables, though we have as much reason to do it. Are we in health and at ease? Have we been long so? We ought to be thankful for a constant series of mercies, as for particular instances of it, especially considering how many are sick and in pain, and how much we have deserved to be so.

#### E. Morning Presents Fresh Matters for Adoration

In the morning we have fresh matter ministered to us for adoration of the greatness and glory of God. We ought to take notice not only of the gifts of God's bounty to us, which we have the comfort and benefit of; but we ought to observe the more general instances of His wisdom and power in the kingdom of providence which redound to His honour, and the common good of the universe. The 19th Psalm seems to have been a Morning Meditation, in which we are directed to observe how "the heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handy-work" (v. 1); and to own not only the advantage we receive from their light and influence, but the honour they do to Him who stretched out the heavens like a curtain, fixed their pillars, and established their ordinances, according to which, they continue to this day. The regular and constant succession and revolution of light and...

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darkness show this knowledge, even the eternal power and Godhead of the great Creator of the world, and its great ruler.

Look up in the morning, and see how exactly the day-spring knows its place, knows its time, and keeps them, how the morning light takes hold of the ends of the earth, and of the air, which is turned to it as clay to the seal, instantly receiving the impressions of it (Job 38:12–14). Look up and see the sun as a bridegroom richly dressed, and hugely pleased, coming out of his chamber, and rejoicing as a strong man to run a race; observe how bright his beams are, how sweet his smiles, how strong his influences. If there be no speech or language where the voice of these natural immortal preachers, proclaiming the glory of God, be not heard, then is it not a pity that there should be any speech or language where the voice of the worshipper should not be heard, echoing to the voice of those preachers, and ascribing glory to Him who thus makes the morning and evening to rejoice? But whatever others do, let Him hear our voice to His purpose in the morning, and in the morning let us direct our praise unto Him.

#### F. Morning Brings Fresh Thoughts of God

In the morning we have, or should have had fresh thoughts of God, and sweet meditations on His name, and those we ought to offer up to Him in prayer. Have we been, according to David's example, remembering God upon our beds, and meditating upon Him in the night watches (Ps 63:6)? When we awake, can we say, as he did, we are still with God? If so, we have good errand to the throne of grace by words of our mouths, to offer up to God the meditations of our hearts, and it will be to Him a sacrifice of sweet smelling savour. If the heart has been inditing a good matter, let the tongue be as the pen of a ready writer, to pour it out before God (Ps 45:1).

We have the Word of God to converse with, and we ought to read a portion of it every morning. By it, God speaks to us, and in it we ought to meditate day and night, which if we do, that will send us to the throne of grace, and furnish us with many a good errand there. If God in the morning, by His grace, directs His Word to us, so as to make it reach our hearts, that will engage us to direct our prayer to Him.

#### G. Temptations to reflect on sinful or vain thoughts of the night are strong in the Morning

In the morning, it is to be feared, we find cause to reflect upon many vain and sinful thoughts or dreams that have been in our minds in the night season; and upon that account it is necessary we address ourselves to God by prayer in the morning, for the pardon of them. It is certain, the thought of foolishness is sin (Prov 24:9). Foolish thoughts are sinful thoughts: the first born of the old man, the first beginnings of all sin. And how many of these vain thoughts lodge within us wherever we lodge! They are more than the hairs of our head. We read of those that work evil upon their beds because there they devise it; and when the morning is light they practise it (Mic 2:1). How often in the night season is the mind disquieted and distracted with distrustful careful thoughts; polluted with unchaste and wanton thoughts; intoxicated with proud aspiring thoughts; sown and leavened with malicious revengeful thoughts; or at the best diverted from devout and pious thought by a thousand impertinences. Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts which lie down with us, and rise up with us, for out of that corrupt fountain, which, wherever we go, we carry about with us, these streams naturally flow. Yea, and in the multitude of dreams, as well as many words, there are also divers vanities (Ecc 5:7).

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And dare we go abroad till we have renewed our repentance? Are we not concerned to confess to Him that knows our hearts, their wanderings from Him, to complain of them to Him as revolting and rebellious hearts, and bent to backslide; to make our peace in the blood of Christ, and to pray, that the thoughts of our hearts may be forgiven us? We cannot with safety go into the business of the day under the guilt of any sin unrepented of, or unpardoned.

#### H. Morning is Preparation Time for the Day

In the morning we are addressing ourselves to the work of the day, and therefore are concerned by prayer to seek unto God for His presence and blessing, we come, and are encouraged to come boldly to the throne of grace, not only for mercy to pardon what has been amiss, but for grace to help in every time of need: And what time is it that is not a time of need with us? And therefore what morning should pass without morning prayer? We read of that which the duty of every day requires (Ezra 3:4); and in reference to that we must go to God every morning to pray for the gracious disposals of His providence concerning us, and the gracious operation of His Spirit upon us.

We have families to look after it may be, and to provide for, and are in care to do well for them; let us then every morning by prayer commit them to God, put them under the conduct and government of His grace, and then we effectually put them under the care and protection of His providence. Holy Job rose up early in the morning to offer burnt offerings for his children, and we should do so to offer up prayers and supplications for them, according to the number of them all (Job 1:5). Thus we cause the blessing to rest on our houses.

We are going about the business of our callings, perhaps, let us look up to God in the first place, for wisdom and grace to manage them well, in the fear of God, and to abide with Him in them; and then we may in faith beg of Him to prosper and succeed us in them, to strengthen us for the services of them, to support us under the fatigues of them, to direct the designs of them, and to give us comfort in the pains of them. We have journeys to go, it may be, let us look up to God, for His presence with us, and go not whither, where we cannot in faith beg of God to go with us.

We have a prospect perhaps of opportunities of doing or getting good, let us look up to God for a heart to every price in our hands for skill, and will, and courage, to improve it, that it may not be as a price in the hand of a fool. Every day has its temptations too, some perhaps we foresee, but there may be many more that we think not of, and are therefore concerned to be earnest with God; that we may not be led into any temptation, but guarded against every one; that whatever company we come into, we may have wisdom to do good, and no hurt to them; and to get good, and no hurt by them.

We know not what a day may bring forth; little think in the morning what tidings we may hear, and what events may befall us before night, and should therefore beg of God, grace to carry us through the duties and difficulties which we do not foresee, as well as those which we do: that in order to our standing complete in all the will of God, as the day is, so the strength shall be. We shall find that sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof (Mt 6:34), and that therefore, as it is folly to take thought for tomorrow's event, so it is wisdom to take thought for today's duty, that sufficient unto this day, and the duty of it, may be the supplies of the divine grace thoroughly to furnish us for every good word and work, and thoroughly to fortify us against every evil word or work; that we may not think of, or speak, or do any

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thing all day, which we may have cause upon any account to wish unthought, unspoke, and undone again at night.

## **Application and Conclusion**

First, Let this word put us in the mind of omissions; for omissions are sins, and must come into judgement. How often has our morning worship been either neglected or negligently performed. The work has been either not done at all, or done deceitfully; either no sacrifice at all brought, or it has been the torn and the lame, and the sick; either no prayer, or the prayer not directed aright, or lifted up. We have had the morning's mercies, God has not been wanting in the compassion and care of a Father for us, yet we have not done the morning's service, but have been shamefully wanting in the duty of children to Him.

Let us be truly humbled before God this morning for our sin and folly herein, that we have so often robbed God of the honour, and ourselves of the benefit of our morning worship. God hath come into our closets, seeking this fruit, but has found none, or next to none, hath harkened and heard, but either we spake not to Him at all, or spake not aright. Some trifling thing or other has served for an excuse to put it by once, and when once the good usage has been broken in upon, conscience has been wounded, and its bones weakened, and we have grown more and more cool to it, and perhaps by degrees it has been quite left off.

Secondly, I beseech you, suffer a word of exhortation concerning this. I know what an influence it would have upon the prosperity of your souls to be constant and sincere in your secret worship, and therefore give me leave to press it upon you with all earnestness, let God hear from you every morning, every morning let your prayer be directed to Him, and look up.

Make conscience of your secret worship; keep it up, not only because it has been a custom you have received by tradition from your fathers, but because it is a duty, concerning which you have received commandments from the Lord. Keep up stated times for it, and be true to them. Let those that have hitherto lived in the total neglect, or in the frequent omission of secret prayer, be persuaded from henceforward to look upon it, as the most needful part of their daily business, and the most delightful part of their daily comfort, and do it accordingly with a constant care, and yet with a constant pleasure.

No persons that have the use of their reason, can pretend an exemption from this duty; what is said to some is said to all. Pray, pray, continue in prayer, and watch in the same. Rich people are not so much bound to labour with their hands as the poor. Poor people are not so much to give alms as the rich, but both are equally bound to pray. The rich are not above the necessity of the duty, nor the poor below acceptance with God in it. It is not too soon for the youngest to begin to pray; and those whom the multitude of years has taught wisdom, yet their end will be fools, if they think they have now no further occasion for prayer.

Let none plead they cannot pray; if you were ready to perish with hunger, you could beg and pray for food, and if you see yourselves undone by reason of sin, can you not beg and pray for mercy and grace? Are you a Christian? Never for shame say, You cannot pray, for that is as absurd as for a soldier to say, he knows not how to handle a sword, or a carpenter an axe. What are you called for into the fellowship of Christ, but that by Him you may have fellowship with God. You cannot pray so well as others, pray as well as you can and God will accept you.

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Let none plead they have no time in a morning for prayer. I dare say, you can find time for other things that are less needful! And need I remind you that you had better take time from sleep, than want time for prayer; and how can you spend time better, and more to your satisfaction and advantage? All the business of the day will prosper the better, for your beginning it thus with God.

Let none plead, that they have not a convenient place to be private in for this work; Isaac retired into the field to pray; and the Psalmist could be alone with God in the corner of the house-top. If you cannot perform it with so much secrecy as you would, yet perform it. It is doing it with ostentation that is at fault, not doing it under observation, when it cannot be avoided.

I remember when I was a young man, coming hither to London in the stage coach, in King James' time, there happened to be a gentleman in the company, that then was not afraid to own himself a Jesuit; many encounters he and I had upon the road, and this was one; he was praising the custom in popish countries of keeping the church doors always open, for people to go into at any time to say their prayers: I told him it looked too like the practice of the Pharisees, that prayed in the synagogues, and did not agree with Christ's command, "thou, when thou prayest thyself, enter not into the church with the doors open, but into thy closet, and... shut thy doors" (Mt 6:6). When he was pressed with that argument he replied with some vehemence, "I believe, you Protestants say your prayers no where; for I have travelled a great deal in the coach in company with Protestants, have lain in inns in the same room with them, and have carefully watched them, and could never perceive that any of them said his prayers night or morning but one, and he was a Presbyterian." I hope there was more malice than truth in what he said; but I mention it as an intimation, that though we cannot be so private as we would be in our devotions, yet we must not omit them, lest the omission should prove not a sin only, but a scandal.

Make a business of your secret worship and be not slothful in this business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord (Rom 12:11). Take heed lest it degenerate into a formality, and you grow customary in your accustomed services. Go about the duty solemnly. Be inward with God in it; it is not enough to say your prayers, but you must pray your prayers, must pray in praying, as Elijah did (Jas 5:17). Let us learn to labour frequently in prayer, as Epaphras did (Col 4:12); and we shall find it is the hand of the diligent in this duty that makes rich. God looks not at the length of your prayers, nor shall you be heard for your much speaking, or fine speaking; but God requires truth in the inward part, and it is "the prayer of the upright [that] is his delight" (Prov 15:8). When you have prayed, look upon yourselves as thereby engaged and encouraged, both to serve God and to trust in Him; that the comfort and benefit of your morning devotions may not be as the morning cloud which passes away, but as the morning light which shines more and more.

*By Rev Matthew Henry, an abridgement from Works, 1.198–213 [Baker, 1979]  
Being the first of three discourses entitled "Directions for Daily Communion with God"*

# WELCOME TO NEW LIFE B-P CHURCH LONDON

## CHURCH THEME: WALK IN THE NEWNESS OF LIFE (Romans 6:4)

Our **worship services** begin promptly at **11.00 am and 4.00 pm**.

Please stay back for Bible Study and fellowship lunch after the morning worship and for tea after the evening service. Do invite your friends to come to Church.

Worship Services			WELCOME
<b>Morning</b>	<i>Today: 30/09/2007</i>	<i>Next Week: 07/10/2007</i>	We extend a warm welcome to all worshippers this Lord's Day. We specially welcome Louise Mather, Christine Voth, and D G Beedie to the morning worship service and George in the evening worship service last Lord's Day.
<i>Chairman:</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	
<i>Preacher:</i>	Rev Brian Green	Dr Stephen Scott-Pearson	
<i>Message:</i>	The Joyful Sound	Tbd	
<i>Text:</i>	Psalms 89:15	Tbd	
<i>Organist:</i>	Anthony	Anthony	
<b>Evening</b>			
<i>Chairman:</i>	Jonathan Kim	John Poh	
<i>Preacher:</i>	Rev Brian Green	Dr Stephen Scott-Pearson	
<i>Message:</i>	Accepted In The Beloved	Tbd	
<i>Text:</i>	Ephesians 1:6	Tbd	
<i>Pianist:</i>	Yanning	Grace	
Other Duties			NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS
	<i>Today: 30/09/2007</i>	<i>Next Week: 07/10/2007</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We especially welcome Rev Brian Green to the pulpit this morning. He has been the pastor of Calvary Free Grace Baptist Church since 1963.</li> <li>• <b>Family Worship:</b> Those who would like to open up their homes for family worship for the months of October and November, please inform Pr Mok.</li> <li>• <b>Those serving on the Lord's Day:</b> Please gather behind the pulpit area at 10.30am for prayer.</li> <li>• <b>Lord's Supper:</b> Next week, we will be observing the Lord's Supper. Please come with your hearts prepared.</li> <li>• <b>Parking Restrictions:</b> Please take note of the parking restrictions implemented by Brent Council for the upcoming weeks: Zone "KQ" 13 Sep to 13 Oct (inclusive of Saturdays and Sundays) and Zone "KB" 27 Sep to 10 Oct (inclusive of Saturdays and Sundays). For those who are driving, please ensure that you are not parking within the restricted area.</li> </ul>
<i>Ushers</i>	Chin Kiong/Sharon	Daniel/Evelyn	
<i>Sunday Sch:</i>	Yanning	Joyce	
<i>Lunch:</i>	Maureen	Volunteers	
<i>Washing-up:</i>	Volunteers	Volunteers	
<i>Bible Study:</i>	BBK	BBK	
Appointments of the Week			
Fri 5 Oct	7:00 pm	<b>Young Adults Fellowship: Meeting</b>	
Sat 6 Oct	4.00 pm	<b>Prayer Meeting &amp; Bible Study: Spkr: Pr Mok</b>	
Last Week's Worship Service Collections			
<b>Offering:</b> £603.76		<b>Lunch:</b> £28.52	
Memory Verse			
<p><i>Previous Week (Sept 07 Wk 4): Galatians 4:3-5</i></p> <p>Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.</p> <p><i>This Week (Sept 07 Wk 5): Psalms 89:15</i></p> <p>Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O LORD, in the light of thy countenance.</p>			