



## A Season of Thanksgiving

<sup>4</sup> Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

<sup>5</sup> Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.

<sup>6</sup> Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

<sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:4-9, NIV

Dear Friends and Family,

We hope that you are well, that God's presence and peace are your experience, and that you are finding ways to share that presence and peace with those around you.

I gave a little talk on the above passage on Sunday at a Café Church that we were trialling in our village pub. I spoke about how St Paul links the act of thanksgiving to the reduction of anxiety – as we express our thanksgiving in prayer to God, the peace of God fills our hearts.

I was able to share how science has recently proved St Paul correct and that expressing gratitude and thankfulness has a major positive impact on many different areas of our life and well-being.

Little did I think that God would be asking me to practice what I preached so quickly!

As you may remember my 3 day a week post supporting pioneering mission in Leicester Diocese was due to end on 31<sup>st</sup> March. We shared with you that the diocese was looking for ways in which they might be able to keep me around beyond that.

Sadly, the financial situation caused by the COVID-19 crisis has put a block on my continuing this work.

The 3 day a week post I had supporting the Avon-Swift team of rural churches is also being ended at the end of March.

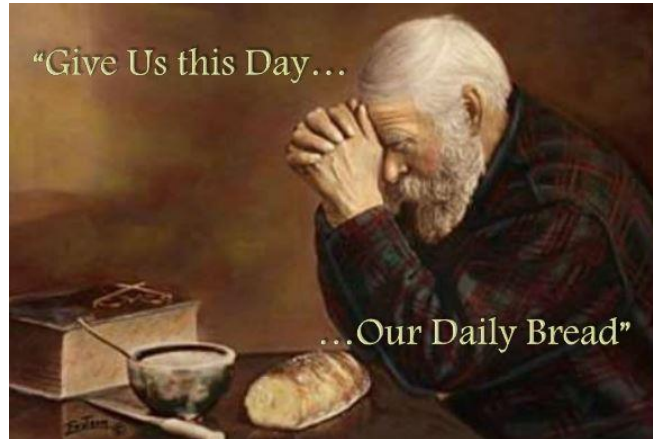
So as of 1<sup>st</sup> April I will be unemployed. Nothing ironic there!



Sharon and I are very conscious that many are in more difficult circumstances than ourselves.

We still have a roof over our head we hope; no-one has yet talked about ending Sharon's House for Duty post, and ironically pioneering new ways of being church is exactly what is needed at this time!

But we are going to have to experience first-hand that prayer that we pray so often as Christians, 'Give us this day our daily bread'.



So, firstly, can we ask for your prayers?

- That we would live this season well.
- That we would stay thankful, joyful, and hopeful.
- That we would hear what God is saying to us and learn what He wants to teach us through this.
- That we would continue to be able to serve the community of faith where we are and to reach out to those in our community who don't have the deep peace that only Jesus can bring.
- That we would stay in the centre of God's will for our lives – whatever that is.

Those of you who have known us for a while will know that having to trust God for our survival is not a new experience for us. Indeed for the majority of our 25 years following God in the adventure of ministry we have been self-funding – usually a mix of us earning some money ourselves and also being kindly and generously supported by others who have sensed God's call to partner with us.

We have been massively blessed by the Scriptural Knowledge Institute – part of the George Muller organisation – who collect financial gifts (one-off or regular), claim back Gift Aid and then forward them monthly to us, for absolutely no charge. They have done this for us since the mid-90s – God bless them (<https://www.mullers.org/ski>).

We are aware that everyone's financial circumstances are changing, but if you sense God might be asking you to share with us, then the relevant info can be sent to you by email or post. And of course if any of our existing supporters need to withdraw, they are very free to do so – God bless you and reward you for all you have done for us.