



## Church at Home 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2020



*God is our place of safety. He gives us strength.  
God is always there to help us in times of trouble.*

Psalm 46:1

Dear Friends,

As you will know by now, Sunday church is no longer possible for the foreseeable future. Nevertheless we are still church - God's people in Abridge - and so we going to have to find new ways to be 'church' even though we can't meet in our church buildings.

Abridge Evangelical Church and St Mary's Lambourne are working together to keep us all in touch and suggest ways in which you might be church at home, particularly at our normal times of worship on Sundays. This pastoral letter contains some ideas for doing this and we plan to send one weekly, along with updates of how we can go on supporting each other and offering help to our friends and neighbours in the village.

### **Here are a few ideas for church at home:**

**1.** Find a special place in your home where you can create a regular place for prayer. You may already have this. Why not place a Bible there, a candle and perhaps a cross or other Christian symbol, to help you remember that God is with you. As this Sunday is also Mothering Sunday, why not include a flower in a small vase on your focus table to remember all those who have shown a mother's care to us.

**2.** At your normal Sunday worship time, set aside some moments to sit by your special 'church-at-home' corner, remembering that, although you may be separated from others, we are all doing this at the same time and are linked by the Holy Spirit of God who is not isolated nor quarantined!

**3.** For this coming Sunday, read slowly and out loud the words of **Psalm 46**. Most of the Bible was written during periods of history when God's people faced daily pressures and uncertain futures. This psalm of trust in God comes in such a troubled time.

The repeated refrain in this psalm is:

*'The Lord of hosts is with us.*

*The God of Jacob is a stronghold'*

Take this as God's promise to you at this time

**4.** In your prayers bring before God the following groups of people:

- The medical staff dealing with this present emergency
- Government officials working on the best advice to give to this country
- Developing countries where who are less equipped to deal with the spread of the virus
- Your friends and neighbours
- Your own family and your church family - remember each one by name.

5. One way in which we remember that we belong to Jesus and to each other is by sharing bread and wine. You might like to break a small piece of bread to eat either on your own or with those who are with you in the house and to drink some wine or grape juice. As you do so, simply say 'we remember you Lord Jesus and we remember that you told us to love one another'

6. Here is a prayer that you might like to use during the week:

***Dear God***

***You have promised always to hear our prayers***

***And never to leave us.***

***Come close to us and our friends at this time of isolation and worry.***

***Remind us of your never failing love***

***And inspire us with ways to help our neighbours.***

***In Jesus' name***

***Amen***

7. You might like to end by singing a favourite hymn or chorus and finally say The Lord's Prayer

**Extra:** Many church denominations are suggesting that we put a candle (safely) in our windows this Sunday at 7 pm. It will be a sign of our unity as many 'churches at home', and also that we are praying for our country at this time. Please also pray about who you could phone and support with an encouraging call, as well as considering a donation to the local Food Bank, if you can.

Finally, if you do know of anyone who is in need of a phone call, shopping or any other form of help, please don't hesitate to be in touch with us:

Nick Mitchell - 01992 814 426

Roger Gayler - 01992 815 838

Keith White - 020 8504 9168

St Mary's will remain open for private prayer and Roger will be there on Sunday at 11.15 praying for us all. AEFC is also considering how the church can be open for prayer for some sessions in the week

God has called us to be his church in the community 'for such a time as this'.

With our prayers

Nick, Keith and Roger

