

Dear Friends of Cornerstone

It has now been over three months since the start of lockdown. Restrictions are beginning to ease and people who have not ventured out of their house at all, are starting to come out. Cornerstone is still not open and will be weighing up the risks and benefit of opening before making any firm commitments to open. For those of us who thrive in an environment full of people and the joy and challenges that brings, its been very strange and sometimes quite lonely. Of course I am never alone, I have two primary school age children and a husband, I sometimes dream of my own space! Joking aside, I still miss the busyness and fullness of working at the Cornerstone. The regular customers, volunteers and staff who are more like friends or even an extended family, the routine, the challenges and the really good coffee.

Early into lockdown I decided I would read all the Psalms and perhaps even learn a few. Where would I start? Psalm One seemed like the most obvious place. "Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the Lord and on his law he meditates, day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers". It's a good start and I have the whole Psalm written out neatly in my notebook. I think it is fair to say that my expectation of what was to come was probably based entirely on Psalms 23, 121 and 139 – "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want...", "I lift my eyes to the hills, where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth" and "You have searched me and you know me..." so I was expecting a mighty God who created the heaven and the earth but still knows me and will even vanquish my foes to bring me comfort. That may be a good summary of the book of Psalms but it did not prepare me very well for Psalms 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7, Psalms of lament in the midst of battle which I almost skipped straight over. However, it occurred to me that it certainly felt, very early on in this pandemic, that we were in the midst of battle and maybe there is a place for lamenting and crying out to God. I probably fall more into the trap of being overly positive and hopeful, rarely giving into lamenting or crying out to God but that is sometimes exactly what I should be doing. Sometimes I am so caught up in making it look like I have it all together, that I even convince myself! God knows though and David wasn't too proud to cry out to God, neither should I be, God wants our worship in every season, rejoicing and lamenting.

- ¹ LORD, how many are my foes!
How many rise up against me!
- ² Many are saying of me,
"God will not deliver him."¹
- ³ But you, LORD, are a shield around me,
my glory, the One who lifts my head high.
- ⁴ I call out to the LORD,
and he answers me from his holy mountain.
- ⁵ I lie down and sleep;
I wake again, because the LORD sustains me.
- ⁶ I will not fear though tens of thousands
assail me on every side.

May the Lord sustain you, whether you are lamenting or rejoicing.

As you consider this prayerfully, remember those who are still shielding or who are in isolation, and join with me in praying for them to feel safe and confident to return to places they visited before, like Cornerstone, when they are allowed to again and when we are open.

As you consider Cornerstone in your Prayers, thank the Lord that we have been able to weather this storm financially, and that our staff and board have been able to stay in contact and meet virtually during this time. Remember our volunteers and regular customers, some of whom have been shielding and are likely to have missed the human contact. Pray for wisdom for the staff and board as we decide when and how to re-open.

Blessings to you all

Sarah