

## Thought for the day:

Monday 30<sup>th</sup> March

One of the Psalms set for Morning Prayer today is the very familiar Psalm 121:

- 1 I lift up my eyes to the hills;  
from where is my help to come?
- 2 My help comes from the Lord,  
the maker of heaven and earth.
- 3 He will not suffer your foot to stumble;  
he who watches over you will not sleep.
- 4 Behold, he who keeps watch over Israel  
shall neither slumber nor sleep.
- 5 The Lord himself watches over you;  
the Lord is your shade at your right hand,
- 6 So that the sun shall not strike you by day,  
neither the moon by night.
- 7 The Lord shall keep you from all evil;  
it is he who shall keep your soul.
- 8 The Lord shall keep watch over your going  
out and your coming in,  
from this time forth for evermore.

### Reflection

This Psalm opens with a cry about the source of help in troubled times. How appropriate for the current situation, that we reflect upon the source of our help. Given the current restrictions in place, I am sure that many isolated and vulnerable people will be asking that very same question, 'From where should I seek help?'

Watching the news today, it is heartening to see the many, many examples of help coming from the most unlikely of places. Who would have thought that the Mercedes Formula One team would have designed, within seven days, a new breathing system and can manufacture 1000 a day? Who would have thought that EasyJet cabin crew would be volunteering to work in the new hospital created from the Excel exhibition centre? I give thanks to God for giving so many people the skill and desire to think laterally and look for innovative ways to help others.

Whilst it is very heartening to see help coming from so many directions, but we should not ignore the Psalmist's second line, 'My help comes from the Lord'. As well as practical help, we, as a

church, need to offer spiritual help as well. As we explore what it means to be church without a building, we are reassured that, as a spiritual body, we are all connected in Jesus Christ. We may not be able to worship next to someone but know that all our prayers and worship join with all the prayers and worship of everyone else. So pray for those in need. Call someone to reassure them. Sing a favourite hymn or song or join us in Morning Prayer at 9am each day. If our help truly comes from the Lord, let us make every effort to continue our prayer, praise and worship. In this way we will be made strong in our God, who is faithful at all times.

The Psalm ends with such encouragement. This line seemed even more poignant as we consider all those critical workers who leave for their jobs each day. Let us pray for all those who are going out and coming in on our behalf. Let us pray for their safety and give thanks for them. Let us also pray for ourselves, unable to come and go as we would like, asking for the Holy Spirit's guidance as to the best ways we can use this time.

I conclude with a prayer which is on the Southwark Cathedral website:

### A prayer in lockdown

The doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked. (John 20.19)

Ever present God,  
be with us in our isolation,  
be close to us in our distancing,  
be healing in our sickness,  
be joy in our sadness,  
be light in our darkness,  
be wisdom in our confusion,  
be all that is familiar when all is unfamiliar,  
that when the doors reopen  
we may with the zeal of Pentecost  
inhabit our communities  
and speak of your goodness  
to an emerging world.  
For Jesus' sake. Amen.