

Prayer for Parliament

THE RT. HON SIR JEFFREY DONALDSON, MP
HOUSE OF COMMONS, LONDON SW1A 0AA

Notes of Prayer Meeting held on Tuesday, 11 September, 2018

As the room that had been booked was no longer available, the meeting was moved, with the help of Fiona Bruce MP to another room in Portcullis House. Both Sir Jeffrey Donaldson and Fiona Bruce were in attendance.

Fiona Bruce opened the meeting, welcoming everyone to the changed venue, and handed on to Sir Jeffrey.

Sir Jeffrey commented on the challenging times in which we find ourselves. There are a few difficult weeks ahead with decisions to be made that have implications for years to come. There seems to be an attitude of 'divide and conquer' from the EU. Prayer points were given as follows -

- Christians need to stand in the gap and pray for divine guidance for wisdom and strength for the best outcome
- The situation in N. Ireland continues to be critical. There is a need for leadership and for Parliamentarians to return and take up their positions.
- The Border between N. Ireland and Eire continues to raise questions with Brexit that needs a resolution.
- 2 Chron 7:14 *"If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."* This is a reminder of our need to repent, pray, seek God's face and walk in His ways
- There is a need for courage and strength for our MP's and for us. 2 Chron 32:7&8 *"Be strong and courageous; do not be afraid nor dismayed before the king of Assyria, nor before all the multitude that is with him; for there are more with us than with him. With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the LORD our God, to help us and to fight our battles. And the people were strengthened by the words of Hezekiah king of Judah. ."* This is the principle we need to follow today.
- With trust in God, He will find a way when there is no way evident.
- Another encouraging verse is Isaiah 43:5 *"Fear not, I am with you"*. We look to the Lord to uphold the UK in this time when there are so many voices all crying out one thing and another.

David Hathaway was asked to lead in prayer for the needs of the UK at this time. He prayed that people's hearts and minds would be changed by turning to the Lord. Through all this, that the Prime Minister would have a deeper personal relationship with the Lord; that she would make crucial decisions with God's wisdom; that her decisions would not be influenced by political manipulation and that the Lord would strengthen her so that she would negotiate with boldness and godly strength. Above all, that God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven. That personal ambition from any source would not dominate

David Hathaway was also asked to report on the Day of Prayer at Westminster Hall. There was a sense of a great unity in the Spirit. It was as if a great cloud of witness had been seen in the nation. Sadly, there was noticeable opposition from the secular staff. These difficulties had been evident by the number of vacant seats visible even though the hall had been declared as full. Present at the meeting were some people from Ukraine. The evident presence of the Holy Spirit had a deep impact on them. Although they had found a unity among their churches, there was a need for the moving of the Holy Spirit that they had not been aware of beforehand. Even so, the impact on the Day of Prayer in Ukraine is evident with the President recognising its influence. Even in Russia, there is evidence that they are aware of the power of prayer.

- Pray that there will be a day of Prayer in UK when all churches are involved as well as leadership from 'the top'.

Sir Jeffrey had to leave the meeting at this point.

Matters relating to MP's selection/future. It is possible that some may be de-selected when committees meet to prepare for the next election. E.g. Gavin Shuker and Steven Timms – Labour. Two others who have great political awareness are Caroline Ansell and David Burrowes - Conservative. Note: Both Caroline Ansell and David Burrowes are preparing to contest Eastbourne and Enfield Southgate respectively to regain their seats in parliament at the next Election. Among other Christian MP's for whom we should pray are Steve Double – St Austell; Michael Tomlinson – Mid Dorset; Andrew Selous; Gary Streeter; Derek Thomas; Desmond Swaine; Jeremy Lefroy; Andrea

Leadsom – the current leader of the House who has to cope with questions every Thursday morning about Parliamentary timetable. Maria Caulfield whose Pro-Life stance is well known, is a former nurse; she, and her assistant Cora, need our prayerful support. Opposition lobbyists have government money to assist them; the noise of Pro-choice is disproportionate. All who regard the sanctity of life as a standard to be upheld need prayerful encouragement.

Above all, 1 Timothy 2.1&2 reminds us that we are to pray for all our leaders. Personal belief of people in authority is never mentioned as a qualifying condition to include or not to include in our prayers. With candidates being chosen now for the next Election, we need to pray NOW that God's choice be seen in the next Election.

Family Issues: This is a matter that Fiona Bruce has spent much time in researching, presenting the needs and also ways to improve family life in the nation. Although there is much favour for the suggestions presented, to date, there is not enough movement on this subject. Research has been on-going for 10 years and has proven that the root cause of family breakdown originates in the home. This then leads to difficulties such as mental health issues including excessive drinking, under achievement at work and study and also breakdown of relationships. From this there is a feed on into the NHS.

Challenges have been increasing with those involved in military service where families no longer live together within their regiments. This is the result of the Ministry of Defence selling off the housing. Armed Forces families are now in a more vulnerable situation due to isolation. Their connection with families in similar situations has been broken so that the sense of understanding and supportive response is less likely to be available. Prisoners' families need to maintain the father's role as head of the family so that the children are not deprived. Ways to maintain a father's contact with his family in a positive way are being given practical consideration.

The subject of 'Relationships' will be included in the education curriculum. Damian Hinds, the new Education Secretary will be promoting this including 'marriage'.

There are a thousand Sure Start Units that already exist and it is hoped that these will become 'Family Hubs'. While recognising that Local Authorities are strapped for cash, the example of Isle of Wight and also Westminster who have decided to implement this initiative, recognising its impact is applauded. From this it is hoped that other councils will follow this example.

CARE interns for this autumn have been chosen from 200 applicants. This is an impactful programme giving young people the opportunity for development, with great potential. This year, Timothy Cho, who escaped from North Korea and became a Christian, is included; his testimony is remarkable.

Other needs mentioned include –

- Atheism and Humanity - there is a dumbing down in religious education.
- Prostitution and Human Trafficking cannot be ignored.
- Northern Ireland - that ministers will not interfere with the standards in place.
- Matt Hancock is the new Minister of Health; pray that he stands for that which is good and not just expedient.

The meeting had been very full of information and Bill Nelson closed the meeting with the injunction
To be faithful and to lift these matters to the Throne of Grace.

(Attendees 47: Apologies 13)