



Widcombe
ST THOMAS & ST MATT'S

November Blog, 2020

Lockdown again!

Where are some of your favourite places you will miss visiting?

I have received a number of messages and in conversations heard peoples' lament about not being able to go to our beloved church buildings once again. These are places where it is easy to sense the presence of God, to be guarded from distraction and enabled to pray and worship. Sometimes just resting in the stillness of those places whilst the muddle of the world is momentarily kept at bay, brings refreshment of spirit and hope. They are 'thin places', holy ground – where the connection between heaven and earth becomes tangibly closer.

Lately I have become acutely aware of the importance of guarded space for prayer, not just time.

Jesus knows the importance of place too. We are often told of *where* He chooses to go to pray, whether up a mountain, in the Temple or in a garden. In teaching His disciples how to pray, intentional choice of location is part of His coaching: "*but when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen...*"

Setting apart a place for prayer can better enable us to set apart time for prayer.

During our first lockdown, many people described their gardens or their daily walk as a precious meeting place with God and opportunity for prayer, but as this season outside can be more conducive to shivering than praying, perhaps intentionally choosing and setting up a space at home for prayer would be wise and help us thrive through this season. It may simply include a candle, your Bible, a pinecone, a cross, pebbles, flowers, a painting or icon... as a means of designating the space. It may be a chair with a view, a table, a cushion on the floor. Deliberately setting aside a space for meeting with God in prayer and worship will look different for each of us.

The place becomes the access point, not literally, but somehow enabling us to connect.

Jesus knew the lure of distractions when we do not guard space.

I am all too aware that pressing pause, ignoring distractions and settling down to pray and lament is hard. And yet, it is never more necessary than now.

When we cannot 'go' to church for prayer, may I encourage each of us to set aside a place for prayer in our own home. Many of you already have your special place for meeting with our Lord.

Then, encourage one another. I include some photos of prayer spaces from some of our church family, but I would love to compile a collage to see all the 'thin places' in the homes of our church family.

Be built up in your most holy faith and you yourselves, be encouraged: I include a range of resources that may help to cheer you on in prayer this season.

With blessings to you all. Love, Jenny xxx

Ideas for encouraging and growing through prayer in your home's 'thin place'

Below are some photos of some of our church members' prayer spaces. We would like to gather a photograph collage of where our church family prays at home, as a means of encouraging one another through 'lockdown with God' this winter. If you feel inspired, do encourage others through the winter wilderness by sending your photo before Advent to curate@widcombe.church and intern@widcombe.church.

You may wish to delve into books like **Pete Grieg's 'How to pray'** for more guidance.

For more inspiration you may wish to watch a film called '**War Room**' which helps us better appreciate the value of place for prayer. (Contact Jenny to borrow the DVD!).



[Check out the Prayer Course](http://www.prayercourse.org)

www.prayercourse.org

Go deeper in prayer with your friends, family or community with the 8 week Prayer Course, which will equip and inspire you to pray in different ways.

This November, **The Church of England** is calling for Christians to make a month of prayer for our nation, saying: *"we know that we are in the faithful hands of the risen Christ who knows our weaknesses, tiredness and struggles and whose steadfast love endures forever."* The [CofE website](https://www.churchofengland.org) provides daily prayers for this month, encouraging us to pray daily at 6pm. I encourage you to join with your brothers and sisters across the land to intercede in one voice for our nation. Our country needs your prayers.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches/call-prayer-nation>

