

## Prayer 4

A bright spot in all this coronavirus lockdown has been the opportunity to read some of the writings of some of the great Christians of previous centuries and this one.

The writings of J.C. Ryle, the 19th.Century Anglican Bishop of Liverpool have been particularly noteworthy for two reasons:

- a) his complaints about the state of the Church echo those of many today;
- b) they have been extremely challenging on a personal level.

Among his challenges on the subject of prayer he expresses his belief that if a person has no private prayer life then that person is not a true Christian. He writes: 'In short, to be prayerless is to be without God - without Christ - without grace - without hope - and without heaven. It is to be in the road to hell.'

As for those who do pray, Ryle sets out twelve exhortations.

He calls on Christians to enter prayer with:

- a) reverence and humility;
- b) spirituality;
- c) regularity;
- d) perseverance;
- e) earnestness;
- f) faith;
- g) boldness;
- h) fulness;
- i) particularity;
- j) intercession;
- k) thankfulness;
- l) watchfulness.

In a couple of articles I would like to share with you snippets of Ryle's teaching on these exhortations for our prayer life. I don't know what effects they will have on your prayer life. I *do know* the effect they are having on my prayer life!

By the grace of God may the effects on our combined prayer lives result in our fellowship being more steeped in spirit-led, effective prayer.

I leave the last words in this article to J.C. Ryle:

'I want the readers of this paper to be really happy Christians. I am certain I cannot urge on them a more important duty than prayer.'

Yours in Christ,  
Douglas