

EVENING DEVOTIONS

North Parish Church, Girvan

One of the most valuable services our Society and this publication can perform, is the spreading of information about what is going on in one another's congregations week by week. The Rev E V Simpson, at our request, submitted the following Order for Evening Devotions. In his covering letter, he outlines the basic intention of this regular service:

"Our Evening Service is really Evening Devotion. I call it by this title because it is to be understood as a complement to the Morning Service, neither a substitute nor an alternative for it.

The basic idea was to provide an opportunity for a slightly more structured liturgy than we have in the morning, to use some of the excellent modern praise which is often difficult to combine with our own CH3 in the morning, to offer prayers for the sick by name and lay before God in more detail specific issues and to look together at the Word in a 'led' Bible Study or Meditation, filling out what has been preached in the morning.

The atmosphere in the Sanctuary in the evening is certainly conducive to this kind of devotion and I can say that we have found the sense of God's Presence very real."

The following notes were also appended to the Order:

- 1 The Theme and Readings are from 'The Calendar and Lectionary' of the Joint Liturgical Group and repeat those used in the morning.
- 2 The Psalm is read responsorially from 'Selected Psalms for Congregational Reading' and the particular Psalm is decided by reference to 'Psalms for use with the Lectionary' from a Book of Services (United Reformed Church).
- 3 The Praise is from 'Combined Sound of Living Waters and Fresh Sounds' by Betty Fulkingham and Jeanne Harper (we use a piano in place of the organ - it is more dynamic and easier to follow when learning new praise).
- 4 The Collect is from our own new BCO.
- 5 The Introduction, Prayer, Common Collect and Blessing come from the Taizé Office, which also provides the basic pattern of the liturgy - following the Evening Liturgy and the cycle of the year."

The Standard Order, with the readings and praise chosen for Christmas 4,
is as follows:-

Silent Prayer as Congregation Gathers.

'Eternal and holy God, we ask you to meet with us in this hour of prayer.
As we remember your love, make us thankful. As we remember our sins, make
us truly sorry. As we remember the needs of others, make us sure that
Jesus is the Saviour of all. As we remember our own needs, deepen our trust
in you, renew our faith in your loving purposes and give us some word for
our comfort and help; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.'

M Blessed be our God for all time, now and for ever

P Amen

M Glory be to our God this night

P The Father, His Son and the Holy Spirit

M O come and bless the Lord

P All servants of the Lord

M Lift up your hearts in this holy place

P And remember your God this night

M May the Lord bless from on high

P He who made heaven and earth

Psalm 145

Hymn 1 Page 13

Acts 26: 1, 9-18

M Let us pray for the world, for peace and freedom for people everywhere;
for all leaders of the nations and those who have great power over the
lives of others

P Lord, have mercy

M Let us pray for all ministers of the Church, for all our brothers
and sisters in Christ, wherever they are this night

P Lord, have mercy

M Let us pray for our loved ones, for all our friends and those whose
lives are bound up with ours

P Lord, have mercy

M Let us pray for those who are in need of body, mind or spirit, for
the sick, the mentally ill and any who live without faith

P Lord, have mercy

M Let us pray for people who have lost their hope, who live without
feeling or face their days without joy

P Lord, have mercy

M Let us pray for the young, for all who make decisions for their life
and build for their future

P Lord, have mercy
 M Let us pray for those who make new homes and start new families;
 those who break up old homes and whose family circle grows smaller
 P Lord, have mercy
 M Let us pray for those who have no family, no one to call their own
 P Lord, have mercy
 M Let us pray for the harvest, that the earth may give her fruits in
 season
 P Lord, have mercy
 M Let us pray for our brothers and sisters who have entered their
 eternal rest
 P Happy are they who die in the Lord
 M May they rest in peace and obtain the end of their faith
 P For their good works follow them. Amen

Hymn 29 Page 30

Gospel St Mark Ch 1: 14-28

Meditation

Collect

M Almighty God by whose grace alone we are accepted and called to your
 service: strengthen us by your Holy Spirit and make us worthy of
 your calling; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
 P Amen

Intercessions

Common Collect

P Lord God, eternal light, now as darkness covers the sky, hear the
 trusting prayer of your servants in this sanctuary of worship. For
 you are the true light and by that light we shall walk without fear
 all our days until at the last with all the faithful of all the ages,
 we shall enter the glory of your eternal light in the kingdom of your
 love.
 Amen.

Hymn 101 Page 176

Blessing

M Let us bless the Lord
 P Thanks be to God
 M May God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, bless us.
 P Now and for ever. Amen

There follows an outline of the Meditation, given on the particular Sunday in question.

- 1 The First Disciples understood the Priority and the Power of the Word. The call of the first Disciples and St Paul's conversion bear witness to the absolute priority of Jesus and the power of his Word to produce the response He demands.
- 2 Consider the urgency with which Jesus 'came into Galilee' proclaiming the Gospel of God' (St Mark I: 14) -
'The time has come; the Kingdom of God is upon you; repeat and believe the Gospel' (V15). This call, which is also a demand, is a priority
- 3 Note the response of the Disciples. Simon and Andrew, 'at once' leave their work (v 18). James and John leave their Father. - We cannot escape the sense of urgency in their response. They know this is a priority. Work and family (which must have been priorities) were left for the sake of the priority of Jesus.
- 4 Compare the above with St Paul's experience in Acts 26. The same elements are present. All that Paul considered important is set aside in this encounter with Jesus who became his priority.
- 5 The subsequent ministry of Jesus confirms to us that unless the call of God is our priority, it is nothing.
Consider the numerous encounters in which our Lord makes it plain that he demands first place or none at all, e.g. St Matt 16:24 and St Mark 10:17 - 23, St Matt 6:33 and the Parable in St Luke 14:15 ff. and St Matt 13:44-46.
We see that in Jesus' own life, His father's will is the priority; St John 4:34. For Paul, everything is as nothing compared with the gain of knowing Christ, Phil 3:8.
- 6 We all understand what it means to 'get our priorities right' (time and money etc): we do not always agree on what the priorities are but the NT is certainly agreed that Christ is the priority.
- 7 How do we ensure that He remains our priority?
 - See St Mark I: 21-27
 - His Word is a word of power. He speaks with authority.
 - When we examine the call to the first Disciples and the conversion of St Paul, they almost seem to have no choice in the matter. They are constrained to answer the demand and compelled by the word, submitting to it's authority.
- 8 Thus, our Lord does not give us His word and leave us to make our response in our own strength. He is Himself the word He speaks - this word is not separate from the One who says it. As such He is the Father's word to us and at the same time our answer. It is by his

Spirit's power we are enabled to say 'Amen' to his demand to make him our priority.

- 9 Therefore, as we come under the word of God the Father in Jesus his Son, this word, by the Spirit, evokes in us the response it asks, and in this way, we keep our priority right.

SOCIETY NOTES

The Annual Meeting of the Society will be held at Greyfriars Kirk House on Thursday, May 26th at 5.0pm. The short business meeting will be followed by shared thoughts on "Eucharistic Practice in the Church of Scotland today" by Dr R Stuart Loudon and the Rev David M Beckett. Supper will be available (at approx £2) and members are asked to inform the Secretary by the beginning of that week of their intention to be present.

Colin R Williamson (Hon Secretary)

52 Pilrig St

EDINBURGH

EH6 5AS