

Be still and know that I am God [Psalm 46: 10]

Making the most of lockdown

Lockdown with the coronavirus means we may have time to be still. The suggested way of prayer that follows is what is used in the Fellowship of Contemplative Prayer. It need only take 10 minutes – or it could take an hour. It's up to you. You could use this way of prayer once each day with your usual pattern of prayer, or at some other time.

Getting ready

So let's find a bible and somewhere to sit – I suggest a position where we are upright and relaxed, our feet on the floor and our hands in our lap, open to receive. Then over a couple of breaths, as we breathe out slowly, we sense the relaxation flow through our body. Jesus wants us to be here. He says "Come to me all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will refresh you". We are with Jesus.

Listening to God's word and working with God's work

Our word for this week is **Be still and know that I am God**. Leicester returns to Lockdown. Jobs are lost. The return to work and some degree of normal activity is occasion not so much for joy as an attempt to wrest back the economic life on which we all depend. Disturbing news comes from abroad. We find ourselves joining the psalmist who prayed "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble; therefore we will not fear though the earth be moved and though the mountains tremble in the heart of the sea; though the waters rage and swell." In the same breath the psalmist prays "There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God." The roaring chaos of the sea is, in God's hands, a stream irrigating the city of God. The most powerful and destructive forces we can conceive of are the tools with which God naturally works. The destructiveness of the sea is seen as an expression of the way God wreaks destruction on the earth, stopping wars, smashing weapons and saying **Be still and know that I am God**. These words are not advising calm for its own sake. These words are God's violent sweeping away of our distractions, self-importance, violence and sin, all so that we can hear God clearly again and reorder our priorities and loyalties. **Be still and know that I am God**

Do I ask God to arrange events in a way that makes me feel better? Or do I ask God to help me hear him through events? There seems to be a violence about the workings of God and nature – how do I find myself coping with that? When have I found myself reduced to stillness and hearing God's voice rather than the echo of my own? Jesus said "Eternal life is this, to know you the only true God, and him whom you sent, even Jesus Christ." What does it mean to me to **Be still and know that I am God**?

For the next few minutes let's reflect on this Word and understand it for ourselves..

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Now for a further few minutes, let's be aware of God, simply hearing the words **Be still and know that I am God** not thinking about this Word but just receiving it, just knowing.

Be still and know that I am God Let's pray for those who are on our hearts, and for those infected with Covid19; all as we work through the uncertainties of lockdown being relaxed; the people of Leicester in re-imposed lockdown; Government and National Health Service personnel; those working on a vaccine; leaders in business and industry and those facing the loss of their job... pupils returning to school, schools planning a return to full schooling... People returning to work..... the people of Hong Kong under China's new security legislation. To each and all these God says **Be still and know that I am God.**

When we have finished our prayer for others, let us thank God for his Word speaking and working in us and in our world, and then finish by saying slowly the Lord's Prayer.

Actually this is not the finish – recall this Word at times throughout the day and join God's work.

Further references: Psalm 46: 1-11; John 17: 1-5