PRAYBRUM40





...SEEK THE PEACE AND PROSPERITY OF THE CITY ...
PRAY TO THE LORD FOR IT, BECAUSE IF IT PROSPERS,
YOU TOO WILL PROSPER.

JEREMIAH 29:7

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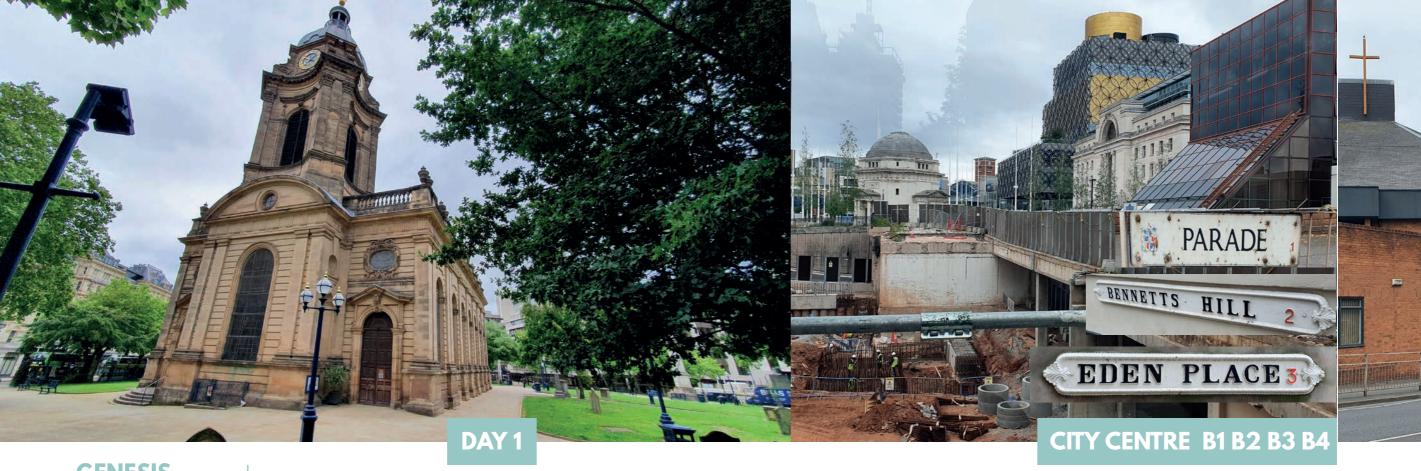
Welcome to my 40 day journey, prayer walking Birmingham. As I write, the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic has wreaked havoc across the world and the UK, affecting lives and livelihoods as well as churches having to close and move online with enforced national lockdowns. It seemed 'good to me and the Holy Spirit' to pray for the city and I found the roads and streets significantly quieter. I started out in the City Centre, outside St Philip's Cathedral, Colmore Row, with the 'blessing' of the first Bishop of Birmingham, Charles Gore (statue behind me), who was instated in 1905. I would finish back in the centre with the current Bishop of Birmingham, David Urquhart, joining me also on Day 40.

I decided to use the first 40 books of the Bible, one each day, as 'prayer fuel' for my walks, the 39 books of the Old Testament starting with Genesis (the book of beginnings) and finishing with the first book of the New Testament, Matthew's Gospel, announcing the coming of King Jesus and the kingdom of God.

I opted to meet at a church in a different postcode/ neighbourhood each day, Monday to Friday at 9am. I would pray there until 9:15am with any others who might join me, then head off to pray round the streets nearby. In every part of the city that I went to, I saw and heard stories of the light of God's people, but also of the huge challenges too.

Thank you for joining me. I hope this inspires you to pray for Birmingham or elsewhere, and perhaps even prayer walk your neighbourhood, town or city. Maybe God will call you to join us in reaching out to the people of this great city, Birmingham.

Every blessing, Andy Mackie





In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. *Now the earth was formless* and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light.

Genesis 1:1-3 NIV®

THANK GOD: He is the source of all good things.

PRAY FOR:

- Creativity across the churches and the city's sectors- Education, Healthcare, Science & Technology, Government, Charity, Faith, Arts & Culture, Media, Sports, Economy & Business, Family.
- Form out of chaos.
- **Abundance** of life out of emptiness.
- **Light** in the darkness.
- The **hovering Spirit** of God across the city.
- For God to speak, and bring 'new things' into being for the blessing of the city.

I started at St. Philip's Cathedral and circled round it several times, then headed towards the Council House to pray for the civic leaders of Birmingham City Council, overlooking Victoria Square where the Birmingham Churches had successfully held large city wide 'Carols in the City' events over the years. I then walked through the newly developing Paradise Circus to Centenary Square, praying for the Arts (The Birmingham Rep, Symphony Hall) and businesses, before moving down to Birmingham City Church (The Parade) where my good friend Mark Ryan pastors and co-ordinates a regular city leaders prayer event, that grew in response to the riots of 2011. I filmed a few short video clips across the city's redevelopment sites for visual backing for our online service at Riverside Church, as I was leading prayers for change with the 'RE' words of the Bible (notably Isaiah 61:4) - Rebuild -Restore - Renew.



Birmingham



EXODUS

I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm...

Exodus 6:6 NIV®

THANK GOD: He is the source of all freedom.

PRAY FOR:

- Addicts to find freedom from addictions, and the support to do so.
- Ministries like Betel UK supporting addicts.
- God would continue to **outstretch his hand** of mercy and rescue.
- **Restoration** of broken lives.
- **The Gospel** to break into the 'LGBT' community.
- The Power of God to reach into the **housing estates** along the Pershore Road and inner city areas.

Betel UK (graffiti wall pictured opposite) have had a committed and effective ministry to addicts, with a rehab unit on the outskirts of Birmingham (Windmill House). Their furniture and gardening ministries enables them to 'employ' many of the men in recovery and they run church services for them also from their centre in Sherlock Street (and it's new national HQ about to launch in Aston, at time of writing). Kent Martin & Timon Robbins have both headed up aspects of the ministry for many years. On the wall beside their premises is this powerful wall graffiti piece (pic. top left) with the text 'Restoring Broken Lives' breaking out from the wall, alongside a dove representing freedom & peace, like a 'jailbreak'.

Vineyard Network Church (pic. above) led by Andrew & Rosie McNeil continue to be a grace-filled and generous ministry to the city. I loved the way the city sky-line is reflected in the windows of their warehouse building.

I prayer walked through the Gay Village & Chinese Quarter, passed Birmingham Royal Ballet (Thorp St) where I had seen many come to faith through the Alpha Course in the 1990's and where I use to run very successful Alpha Guest Meals at Heroes Wine Bar opposite, with 50-70 attending each term.



LEVITICUS

I am the Lord your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy.

Leviticus 11:44 NIV®

THANK GOD: That the holiness of Jesus drew people towards him.

PRAY FOR:

- Holiness to be expressed in the **presence of the fruit of the Holy Spirit** in the lives of Christians across Aston love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control.
- The holiness of God in believers to be **attractive**.
- That God's people would be truly living as 'set apart' for God's purposes totally dedicated to his mission.
- Spiritual forces of **evil to flee** when they encounter the Holy One in our lives and ministries an awesome potency & authority.

Calvin & Pauline Young pastor Mount Zion Christian Centre (MZCC) in Aston, and have become good friends as they have served the city. They have recently spearheaded an initiative across the Birmingham churches to take a lead on issues of racial justice following the death of George Floyd in the US and the Black Lives Matter campaign. It is a privilege to be part of this initiative (called 'Time 4 Change')- and an issue that definitely needs prayer to deal with the spiritual aspects involved.

Another church is Aston Parish Church, which has always had a ministry to Aston Villa football fans, due to its proximity to the ground, and in fact many in its congregation came to faith through the Billy Graham Mission at Villa Park in the 1980's.

As I walked with Calvin & Pauline passed a fence overlooking the Aston Expressway, we passed a house where a mum had lost her son recently when he tragically jumped off the bridge fence onto the road below after taking nitrous oxide (in those silver bullet-shaped canisters). We prayed for young people. We prayed for the family. We also prayed for the nursery school that MZCC run, as well as the residents of the Barry Jackson tower block housing vulnerable people and asylum seekers.



NUMBERS

'We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! Here is its fruit. But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large.

Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, 'We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it.'

from Numbers 13:27-20 NIV®

THANK GOD: For his promises of blessing.

PRAYER FUEL:

- Pray that Nechells would become 'a land flowing with milk and honey'.
- Numbers is a book where everyone is 'counted'. Pray that the people of Nechells would know they are **known and counted**. He sees every individual and knows them by name.
- Numbers is also a book about who God can 'count on', and his people not being afraid of the 'giants' of the land. Pray for **faith over fear** for God's people.
- Pray for **ministries to be planted** across Nechells that bring great faith.

Mark Ryan (Birmingham Christian Centre) was hosting the City Leaders prayer meeting online through the COV-ID lockdown, and it was running weekly on Thursday mornings, and he asked me to join live from the streets. The live-stream all went to plan from my phone, from outside Nechells Church of God of Prophecy (pictured opposite). It was a great encouragement to have some thirty or more city leaders praying alongside me online. Inscribed on the stonework of the Outreach Centre were the ancient words 'Jehovah Jireh - The Lord Provides' (*Genesis 22:14*).

Nechells had been in the news the evening before, as five workers had died and a sixth badly injured, following the collapse of a huge concrete wall, but despite being four years on, they had still not concluded the criminal investigation and compensation claims for the families. We prayed into that issue and for the families.

I then headed off across an estate and towards another high-rise. Nechells often seems to be a forgotten area of Birmingham. It was a terrible slum in the 1950's and was redeveloped into 60's high-rises.



DEUTERONOMY

This is the blessing that Moses pronounced on the Israelites...
Reuben: Life / Salvation
Judah: Help / Protection
Levi: Skills
Benjamin: Security
Joseph: dew of God's Spirit
Zebulun: Joy
Issachar: Abundance
Gad: Increase of influence
Dan: Youthful strength
Naphtali: Fullness of blessing
Asher: Anointing
adapted from Deut 33:6-25 NIV®

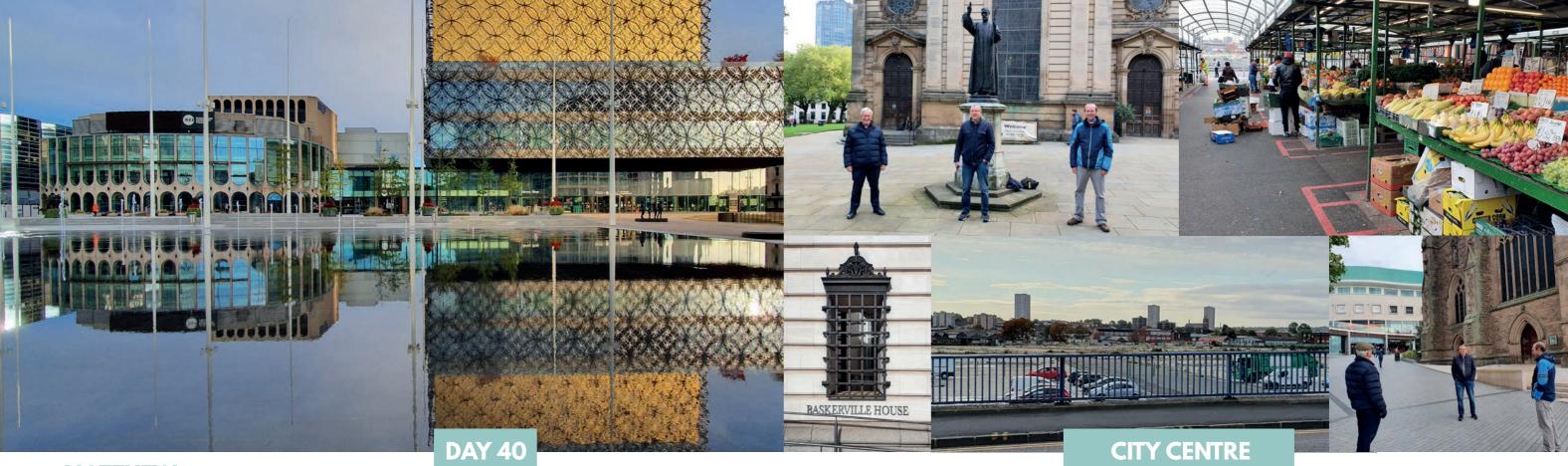
THANK GOD: That he gives life. Life in all its fullness.

PRAY FOR:

- Each of the blessings on the left for the community, across the churches and the church leaders & missionaries to Alum Rock.
- Pray for 'Jericho Road' style ministry acts of kindness & support for those in need.
- Pray for 'Emmaus Road' style ministry opportunity to give the reason for the hope we have & to answer questions of life and faith.
- Pray for 'Damascus Road' type experiences for people of other faiths and no faith to have significant revelation from heaven.

St. John's house had been a convent with various ministries to the area over the years, but has recently been taken on by Interserve to become a local ministry hub to the highly cross-cultural community. There is a large Kashmiri population for example. We prayed for community workers: that doors would open across genders because connecting with men and women in the area is difficult. I shared the three different 'roads' in the New Testament (see opposite) that can help in inspiring different aspects of ministry as we journey with people of all backgrounds. Alongside the Interserve team, Alan Holdsworth (Agapé UK) and Steve Barr (New Testament Church of God - NTCG) also joined me, as both lived fairly locally and have a heart for the area. Steve appeared to know the area well as we paired up together to walk and pray.

We walked past businesses and local shops as they tried to deal with lockdown restrictions. We walked past mosques being built or planned, with spaces awaiting funding - praying that people of other faiths would come to know God as Father. We stopped outside Grenfell Baptist church to pray for the estate before continuing round and past another mosque being redeveloped/built, then back to St John's House.



MATTHEW

... 'Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.' Matthew 2:2 NIV*

From that time on Jesus began to preach, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.'

Matthew 4:17 NIV®

THANK GOD: for the power and the glory of his kingdom.

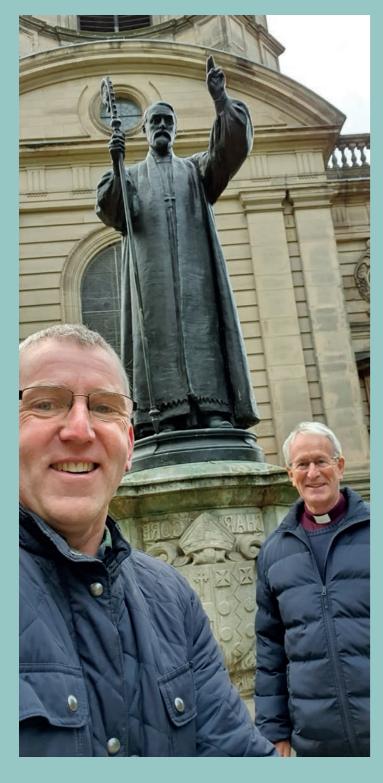
PRAYER FUEL:

- The 40th book takes us to the New Testament and Matthew's gospel which highlights king Jesus (2:2) and the kingdom of God (4:17). The first half of Matthew reveals king Jesus to us:
 - (1) His **person is revealed** (chapters 1-4)
 - (2) His **principles made known** (Sermon on the Mount, chapters 5-7)
 - (3) His **power displayed** (chapter 8ff) grace to the outcast, peace for the disturbed and restoration for the broken.
 - Pray for each of these across Birmingham and through the churches.
- Pray for **leaders** civic leaders, church leaders, business leaders and leaders across the Arts, Education, Health and Emergency Services.

For this final morning of the forty, Bishop David Urquhart joined me, along with Matt Churchouse (curate at St Martin in the Bullring) and Mike Hill (Friends International). On my approach to St Philip's Cathedral, I bumped into Dave Fisken (friend at Riverside), on his way to work at Baskerville House - supporting employment & economic growth in these challenging times. He said his eye had been drawn to the gold cross on top of the Cathedral as it glinted and glowed in the morning sun - it had lifted him and reminded him that God was on high and in control. Just yesterday we had prayed for such encounters with the cross symbols in the city! On the day that the Chancellor, Rishi Sunak, was to announce post-furlough measures for businesses and with further lockdown of hospitality and arts looming, we prayed for rescue - that shop owners would call to God for provision and that Christian businesses would model faith to others. We also prayed for the Birmingham Commonwealth Games 2022 committee (led by Cllr Ian Ward) that was facing challenges around diversity and representation.

Bishop David and I prayed round the market area, and particularly inspired by the colours and aromas of the variety of fruits on display, we prayed for the fruits of the Spirit to be vibrantly displayed through God's people and the churches - with all flavours and with great pungency of taste - love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. We also prayed for the demolished & cleared land that was once the flower market - for its regeneration. We looked across to Highgate with the silhouette of St Albans and the school visible, and Vineyard Church nearby - praying for young people. We

then re-joined the others to pray outside St Martin's and return to the Cathedral to pray into the 'Great Commission'.



THE LORD BLESS YOU AND KEEP YOU; THE LORD MAKE HIS FACE SHINE ON YOU AND BE GRACIOUS TO YOU; THE LORD TURN HIS FACE TOWARDS YOU AND GIVE YOU PEACE.

NUMBERS 6:24-26 NIV®



THANK YOU...

To everyone who joined me in out on the streets, or online from the Thursday Birmingham City Leaders prayer live stream, whether for 15 minutes, a full hour, or on several occasions.

To all of you who shared your precious stories of people's lives, your neighbourhoods and your personal journeys of ministry.

To God for keeping the rain off for 39 of the 40 days! - (although I reckon would have persisted regardless). For inspiring me to set off on this prayer journey, and encouraging me along the way, through the words for 'prayer fuel' throughout the entirety of the Bible. For calling me to Birmingham many years ago, and giving me a heart for evangelism and mission-focussed prayer, and for the variety and diversity of people across this wonderful city of Birmingham.

To my wonderful wife and best friend, Ruth, who is always an encouragement and incredible support to me.

Andy Mackie. 2020

FURTHER INFORMATION

If you want to know more about how you can help transform Birmingham or other West Midland areas; or you are a church planter and/or someone who is called to be involved in a planting team; or you are a church that is looking to plant or would like to offer help or resources; or perhaps you are a mission agency or ministry organisation and want to partner, then I would encourage you to connect through 'Engage West Midlands.'

Email: info@engageuk.org.uk - Website: www.engageuk.org.uk



