

REHOBOTH

◀ *Connect* ▶

MARCH 2010



Listen to my voice in the morning, Lord. Each morning I bring my requests to you and wait expectantly.

Psalm 5:3

Visit our Website -
www.rehoboth.org.uk

In Parenthesis

'A Christian will find his parentheses for prayer, even through his busiest hours.' said Richard Cecil, a leading Anglican clergyman of the 18th and early 19th centuries. What are 'parentheses'?

We usually call them brackets, used in sentences. Examples: Use a pointed stick (*a pencil with the lead point broken off works well*) or a similar tool. Or Banging the wall and screaming (*unrestrained by his father, I might add*), Jack was acting like a brat. Or, from John 14:22 Then Judas (*not Judas Iscariot*) said, ...

Words in parentheses break the flow of the sentence, but usually add some explanation, enlightenment or helpful comment on the meaning of the sentence. The original Greek word means 'put in beside'. I think that's what Cecil meant regarding the 'parentheses for prayer' - it provides a needful and useful break in the flow of, or alongside, the busy day (or at the beginning of such a day) to enlighten and help us in the way we live that day. (Hallo! I just used a parenthesis. Oh, and this is another!).

It should be both an encouragement and a challenge to us to read in Mark 1:35 that '*very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.*' Now, while we can't

assume from that instance that this happened every day, it seems clear from other mentions in the Gospels that Jesus regularly took time out for prayer and meditation—his 'parentheses for prayer'.

William Wilberforce lived a very busy life, and the first hours in the morning were all that he could strictly call his own. He spent them in devotional exercises. "I always find that I have most time for business, and it is best done, when I have most properly observed my private devotions. In the calmness of the morning," he observed "before the mind is heated and wearied by the turmoil of the day, you have a season of unusual importance for communing with God and with yourself."



Now I know that for some, particularly those with young children, it's a nice idea, but rather impractical to find time first thing. But as we have opportunity, we need to find our 'parentheses for prayer' to refresh us during the day.



The Bible commentator, Matthew Henry wrote: 'Let prayer be the key of the morning and the bolt of the evening.'

Steve Piggott

Mobile: 07712 685 336

Email: stevepiggott@gmail.com

EARTHQUAKES AND OTHER NATURAL DISASTERS

I've been thinking about the earthquake that happened in Haiti. Several times



I've heard people say, "How can you believe in a merciful God when such things happen?" It's very easy just to say it's because we live in a sinful world—but, basically this is true. Let me explain: In **Genesis 1:31** we read that *God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.* That, to me, means

that it was perfect in every way, so that everything was in perfect balance, there were no natural disasters and there was also no rain. **Genesis 1:6** *And God said, "Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water." So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it. And it was so. And God called the expanse 'sky'.*

Now we know that this idyllic state did not last. When Adam and Eve sinned, eating the forbidden fruit, the whole of creation was damaged. **Romans 8:19-22** *The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.*

But that is not the end of the story, for things go from bad to worse until we come to the time of Noah, when we read of the whole world being corrupt and God steps in to wipe the slate clean. Hence the flood when all living things are destroyed, except those in the Ark. **Genesis 7:11** *In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, on the seventeenth day of the second month, on that very day all the springs of the great deep burst forth, and the floodgates of heaven were opened. And rain fell on the earth for forty days and forty nights.*



The picture this brings to mind is one of great upheaval - including earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. Up to that time there had probably been only one land mass, which now would have been broken up, eventually culminating in the continents we know today. From that time on, life expectancy dropped and natural disasters, such as earthquakes, plagues and famines. In **Matthew 24:7** Jesus says: "*Nation will rise against nation, kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places.*" All these things will take place before the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

David Piggott

**In everything, by prayer and petition,
with thanksgiving, present your requests
to God.** *Philippians 4:6*

