

Seeds of prayer is a resource for prayer for individuals, groups, church services and other meetings. If you would like to feed back your own insights and prayers then we would be very happy to hear from you.

Sustainable farming

The new Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) (bit.ly/sfi23) has finally been launched. The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) is now inviting 'expressions of interest' from farmers, who will then be invited to apply. Actions that will attract funding include: improving soil health, hedgerow management, nutrient and pest management and improving grassland. Apparently, this proposed financial support is independent of any other environmental scheme that may be running; this is good news for those farmers who have already been working to protect nature. A concern is that an over-emphasis on the environment could prejudice our home-produced, healthy food industry. *Give thanks to the Lord for this potential income stream for farmers in a time of huge financial pressure on agricultural business. Pray for wisdom for those implementing the SFI. Above all, let us all 'return to the Lord' ([Amos 4:6-11](#)).*

A gathering storm?

We seem to be in a season of acute contrasts. Continuing days of sunshine and mild weather have seen blackberry and raspberry plants still bearing fruit, with bees and butterflies feeding and flying around the bushes, making the garden feel like a place of peace and sanctuary. But this has been interspersed with times of dark foreboding clouds gathering and periods of heavy rain, and moments of great stillness with the scent of change in the air. A calm before the storm? Nationally and internationally, all things continue to be shaken, with great changes in politics and the economy and in values and morality, and many familiar institutions foundering ([Haggai 2:7-8,21-23](#)). *Pray that we will be alert to a new era and sensitive to the hand of God moving in us and in our time. Pray we will be deeply rooted in our faith, anchored in our hope which is in Christ Jesus alone ([Hebrews 6:17-20](#)), and willing to let go of all that is extraneous to the call of Jesus on our lives in these days. May we cry with the early believers, "Maranatha, Come Lord Jesus" ([1 Corinthians 16:22](#); [Revelation 22:20](#)).*

Weathering the storm

If, as above, a storm is gathering, then we need to be prepared for it. If the 'foundations [of society and culture] are being destroyed', then the righteous remnant needs to 'return to the stronghold' of trust in God's total sovereignty over human affairs (Psalm 11), live as radical disciples with close attentiveness to His word, and create shelters where others can weather the storm (bit.ly/exilehope). If it is the 'eleventh hour', then Jesus' disciples need to return to the Scriptures with new fervour, and cultivate deeper fellowship with Jesus and with one another ([Luke 24:13-35](#)) (bit.ly/11hour). Rural Christians may have a special role and calling here, by creating 'sanctuaries in the wilderness' ([Psalm 55:6-7](#); [Jeremiah 9:2](#); [Ezekiel 11:16](#)) and providing contexts for study, learning, prayer, fellowship and equipping, close to God's creation. *Pray that the Lord will open the eyes of many rural believers to the resources and opportunities He has blessed them with, and how to use them in His service. Pray that the Lord will create in His people a deeper love for His word, for one another, and for those who do not yet know Him. Pray for a renewed apprehension among believers of what it means to be disciples of Jesus and to be His Church in our current times.*

Tabernacles

This year the Feast of Tabernacles or Booths (Succoth) ([Leviticus 23:33-44](#); [Numbers 29:12-34](#); [Deuteronomy 16:13-15](#)) started on 30 September and finished on 6 October. Tabernacles commemorates the time when the Lord brought Israel out of slavery in Egypt and the people dwelt in booths ([Leviticus 23:42-43](#)). It reminds us of the Word who "became flesh and tabernacled among us" ([John 1:14](#)) so that we could be freed from the slavery of sin. And it looks forward to the time when the Lord God will make his "tabernacle with men" ([Revelation 21:3](#)). Also known as the Feast of Ingathering ([Exodus 23:16](#)), Tabernacles marks the end of the harvest season, when the Lord "crowns the year with His goodness," and looks forward to the age to come, when the "pastures of wilderness overflow and the hills gird themselves with joy" ([Psalm 65:11-13](#)). *Give thanks for this year's harvest and for the Lord's provision of our material and spiritual needs, and pray that He will bless this coming year's harvest. Give thanks that He is still working His purpose out and the time draws ever nearer when He will 'gather His people and bring His final harvest home'.*

*You crown the year with Your goodness,
And Your paths drip with abundance.
They drop on the pastures of the wilderness,
And the little hills rejoice on every side.
The pastures are clothed with flocks;
The valleys also are covered with grain;
They shout for joy, they also sing.
([Psalm 65:11-13](#))*

*And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying,
"Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men,
and He will dwell with them, and they shall be
His people. God Himself will be with them and
be their God. ([Revelation 21:3](#))*