

### Preaching Dates

**27 April 2019**

**Hazel Brooks** at Baptist Union Day of Discovery Women's Conference, Hilton Hotel, Bellshill

**Caireen Likely**, plenary speaker at a pastor's conference on Dietrich Bonhoeffer in St. Andrews.

**Charles Sommerville** at Prophetic Witness Movement International, Barnards Court Mission, Greenock (2pm and 3.30pm)

**28 April – 1 May 2019**

**Charles Sommerville** at PWMI Conference, Bournemouth

**28 April 2019**

**Gordon Dickey** (am) at Galashiels Baptist Church

**Dawn Martindale** (am) at Leslie Baptist Church

**Andrea Mill** (am) at King's Covenant Fellowship, Glenrothes

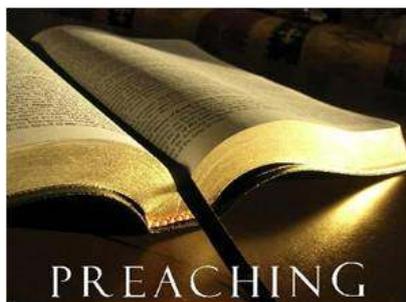
**Stan Paliwoda** (am) at Lambhill Evangelical Church, Glasgow

**Charles Sommerville** (am) at Cumbernauld Baptist Church

**Aubrey Jamieson** (pm) at Fishermens' Mission Nightcap Service, Dunrossness Baptist Church.

**Charles Sommerville** (pm) at Shettleston Baptist Church

**Brian Crockett** (am + pm) at Ebenezer Evangelical Church, Airdrie.



**"Why pray?"**

**By Jim McNulty**

Most of us have heard, and probably quoted in our sermons, the words of Archbishop William Temple, "People tell me that answers to prayers are merely co-incidences. I can only reply that when I pray, co-incidences happen and when I stop praying, they stop happening". We all know that this is true. We have experienced it in our own lives and in the lives of others. We thank God for every evidence of answered prayer.

But sometimes our prayers can become solely focussed on ourselves and our desires. They can at times just become a list of things that we want.

Do we see prayer as a means of getting **our** will or finding God's will?

Many religions attempt in their prayers to persuade their gods to do what they want. And if we are not careful, our own prayers can be narrowed to self-interest and come very close to reducing God to someone who will protect our families and be the provider of our comforts.

As we continue to pray, we become more aware that one of the first things that must change, is us. We change as we pray. Yes, prayer changes things and the first thing it changes is us!

As we pray, we become more and more conformed to God: to his nature, to His will and to His ways. In our prayers we must surrender to God's will. We do not come arrogantly before the Almighty God. There was a 17<sup>th</sup> century English Puritan writer, Ezekiel Hopkins, who ended his prayer saying, "And if this does not agree with Thine own wisdom and good will, then grant me, I pray, the favour of a denial". Not many of us pray for the "favour of a denial", but sometimes God's denials are His favours.

We must pray that God will never give us up to our own, often selfish, wills. Rather we must pray that He will keep us in the very centre of his path for us.

In the words of the Horatius Bonar hymn,

*"I dare not choose my lot;  
I would not if I might:  
Choose Thou for me my God,  
So shall I walk aright."*

It is in prayer that God allows us to work with Him in achieving his purposes. He makes us partners in the coming of His kingdom. Prayer exists to further God's purposes not ours.

Prayer is submission not manipulation. It is 'Thy will be done' not, 'My will be done'.

As we maintain a close walk with God, reading His Word and being open to the leading of his Spirit, so we are changed in our thinking, and then we find that there are more and more times when our desires and God's will coincide.