|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| |  | | --- | |  | |

|  |
| --- |
| 1st Wednesday Reflection & Prayer HourMarch 21 MMI keeps the first Wednesday of the month as a day for corporate prayer. Please use these notes to pray for an hour at some time during the day. Do please share with us any scriptures pictures or insights that you receive as you spend time reflecting and praying  FOR AUDIO VERSION:  [Here is the link](https://www.mmi.org.uk/?email_id=184&user_id=650&urlpassed=aHR0cHM6Ly8xZHJ2Lm1zL3UvcyFBb0dEMlp1RVUzRUdyVEc5ZkI3cEQxMmVNN3A2P2U9NnlmZ2xN&controller=stats&action=analyse&wysija-page=1&wysijap=subscriptions)   Reflection: Mat 18:20 For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them. (NRSV)  Is: 43:19 See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.  Ps 25:1 "To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul; O my God, in you I trust."  This past year has seen closed churches, social distancing, working from home, lock-down, and generally not being able to gather together physically for worship, fellowship or prayer. Many churches, organizations, and charities, including MMI, turned to on-line gatherings. For MMI this has been amazingly blessed and fruitful, we have prayer and fellowship groups meeting regionally in all our regions and a discipleship and teaching group meeting in one region. In a single year the Lord has extended and increased the MMI ministry in an amazing, almost scary way.  This was not what we had in our minds at the January retreat in 2019, when we felt the Lord give us the words of Is 43:19 ‘ See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland’. Through the rest of that year, I was struck by how many other Christian organizations also sensed being given that verse during the year, including New Wine and Flame International.  Most of us find extended times on zoom or teams tiring and difficult – and look forward to being able to meet in a physical way, to hug, feel, sense, even smell the physical gathering of others around us. Such times are special, and yet………. we have achieved much through online contact and have received much ourselves.  Initially some people were suspicious and doubtful if gathering on-line to pray would be ‘real’ prayer. I think this was tied up with the concept of the ‘virtual world’. Although a word with a specific meaning for those in the world of computers, to many people ‘virtual’ suggested an ‘unreality’ and the world of make-believe video games. To meet virtually sounded as if people weren’t really present, almost dis-embodied, or that the meeting didn’t exist because it was ‘in a virtual space’; some questioned whether the Holy Spirit would still be able to move in a ‘virtual’ meeting.  Those who have joined MMI times of prayer on-line this year will have experienced the answer to that particular question – a resounding YES!!!  For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them. Mat 18:20.  Perhaps we have to be more intentional ourselves, rather than being carried by those sitting next to us; certainly there is a need for intentionality and focus – an intentional discipline not to glance at the in-coming emails and so forth but to truly focus on the Lord and wait in his presence.  We are the body of Christ as we gather together –some people believe that has to be physically present, others believe gathering together on-line or via WhatsApp is still gathering as the body of Christ. Gathering together at the same time, in an interactive way on-line has proved to ‘work’ and to be a benefit over the last year.  Think for a moment what it is about this intentional joining together to worship, praise, pray and hear the word of God?  What makes it special, What makes it significant?  (It is not the same with a pre-recorded session, where you feel more of an observer than an active participant, although pre-recorded sessions can work well for teaching.)  There is something special about intentionally coming together as family  - what is it?   Is part of it the strength and blessing which comes through being united together, being part of the family in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  This reminds me of the strength of a 3 stranded cord. A single strand or thread is weak, but when 3 or more are plaited together it makes a strong cord.   There is a picture depicting church unity where strands have been plaited into different colour strong ropes, the ropes have been twisted to make the shape of hearts and the hearts have been woven and twisted together making the central heart. The single strands are so woven together to create the central heart they can’t be separated.   As we come together, to praise God and to focus together, to pray and to listen as brothers and sisters – united in Christ – God pours out his Holy Spirit -  it reminds me again of the verse in Matthew "For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”  **Take some time now to reflect** on the 3 verses and on what you think about online worship and prayer.  Although difficult, this year has proved the value of on-line ministry.  Our challenge in MMI is to understand how we step out of lockdown looking forward and not backward in this area, – being eager and enthusiastic to embrace on-line activity as part of our standard way of working. Not an 'instead of’ but an ‘as well as’.  **Ask the Lord to show you** how on-line ministry could work to enhance military ministry in your region of interest.  **Think** what your fears and concerns are about on-line ministry - commit them to prayer.  **Pray** for us to understand how to sensitively incorporate on-line activity, to further Gods work in the military, being aware of the difficulties of access in some areas.  By Sue Millard TL Prayer and communications Mar 21. Prayer: **We give thanks for:**  • The West Africa Prayer Summit in February, (via zoom). Pray for the MCFs leaders in West Africa, especially for the Lord’s guidance to lead their MCFs effectively, throughout this year.  • The European monthly meeting for teaching and prayer in February (via zoom).  • The wonderful recent gifts from our supporters, both anonymous and by name. We pray for the full funding of mission activity for 2021/22.  • For what the Lord is doing in many of the nations. God is at work and it is a joy to be his co-workers.  **We Pray for March activities:**  **6th March: Africa East** online prayer meeting. Pray for good attendance and participation by all invited.  **9th March:  Africa South** online prayer meeting. Pray for good attendance and participation by all invited.  **16 March: Executive Committee** meeting.  Pray for wisdom in looking ahead to the next six months, for understanding where the Lord is calling us to act and what MMI is being called to do; that we will discern where to go, as countries start to open up. Pray our plans for 2021/22 will conform to the Lord’s will and MMI will walk in obedience.  **17th March:  Trustees meeting**. Give thanks for our committed trustees. Pray for wisdom and discernment as they consider the MMI budget for the coming financial year and how to develop godly governance over the organisation.  **19th March: The Gathering** - **the 2021 Middle East regional event** – online.  This is for Christians associated with the military in the Middle East and for all those who pray for them around the world, it will include short talks, hearing from those in the region and opportunities to join together in prayer. We p**ray** this half-day conference will connect with friends scattered around the Middle East and will draw in many from across the region, for encouragement through fellowship and prayer with other believers and for a spirit of unity and fellowship in the theme of Gal 3:28.    **22nd March:  10th European MCF ZOOM** meeting, 16:00 UK time, Eric Mandille RTL Franco-phone Africa, will be speaking. Pray for a good attendance and blessed times of fellowship and prayer.  **27th March: MMI Spring Pause for Prayer (P4P) morning** - online. An opportunity to join together with other prayer supporters and those in the regions to pray for military ministry in Africa, Europe, Middle East and S Asia. Pray for a good attendance and for fruitful prayer. Details will follow.  **Prayers around the MMI regions**  **Francophone Africa**: Pray for the opportunity and the resources, to conduct the recce to DRC in July and the Chaplains training in Oct/Nov. Pray for a close and fruitful working relationship with CRU MM in this endeavour.  **Europe:**  Pray for doors to open at the General Staff College in Sofia for Grozdan and Fr Jordan, the part-time Army Chaplain there, to offer monthly lectures on Military Christian ethics.  Particularly pray that the President of the College will give permission for this new outreach initiative.  European Military Christian Meeting (EMCM) conference on 24 April (online) – Pray for planning and preparations.  We continue to pray for complete healing and recovery for Chaplain Johannes in Austria.  **India:** MCF India East is a new MCF growing in strength and influence. Give thanks for the work of MCF India East. Pray for the leader of the fellowship, for wisdom and for health.  Pray for voices of moderation to prevail and for those suffering persecution because of their Christian faith. Pray for families caught up in violence and discrimination.  **Africa South (AS):** AS Regional Conference in Madagascar (ASRC) Oct 2021. Pray that the letters of invitation which are currently being received by all AS region’s MCFs and Chaplaincies will be seen as a divine call to HIS people in Africa South militaries to gather together for refilling and renewing. Pray for Holy Spirit guidance.  **Ministry Partners:** Pray for deepening relationships with our ministry partners, especially ACCTS, MSO and CRU. Whilst these relationships are good and fruitful, we desire that they will deepen and our shared understanding both of what God is calling us to and of mission to the military in our regions will develop further, in the spirit of 1 Corinthians 3:5-9.  **NEXT MMI PAUSE FOR PRAYER MORNING:  SAT 27th MARCH.** |