



PORTSOY CHURCH

FAMILY NEWS 5/1/25

Happy New Year and welcome to our weekly news bulletin, keeping you up to date with the latest information on what's happening in Church life in Portsoy, Fordyce and Sandend and also giving you a digest of John's sermon for the week. It is also available on the CFN page of the Church website. **If you know of someone in the community who isn't online and would like a copy delivered please contact John on 07941 511192.**

Weekly Prayer Topic

"So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them "Matthew 7:12

Please pray for all those affected by recent flooding and snow storms. May they be given protection and safety in the midst of them and comfort for those who are anxious and fearful. May we be especially mindful of elderly and infirm neighbour, too, who may be in need of company and care in any way.

Movie Monday: 'Movie Mondays are back next Monday 6th January and will continue each Monday through the winter months. Movies start at 2pm in the meeting room in the Church Centre. Next Monday's movie is "Rumour Has it" a romantic comedy about family, love marriage and other major catastrophes starring Jennifer Aniston and Kevin Costner. Come along and enjoy an afternoon movie in a warm space with good company and teas, coffees and snacks at our interval. Everyone is welcome. Next Monday's movie will be the last until after Christmas and New Year.

Help needed: John is away for the next two weeks, and we would appreciate some help in delivering Church Family News. There is a list at the back of the Church with a list of those who have a delivery. If you can help delivering any please put your name against that address and take a CFN to deliver. Thank you.

Coffee 'n Company: Coffee 'n Company starts again next Tuesday 7th January and every Tuesday morning from 10.00am until 12 noon. Please come along and enjoy a cup of coffee or tea, scone and pancakes and a time to catch up with friends old and new.

Well Café: Well Café starts again this Friday 10th January and every Friday during term time from 9.15 to 11.15 providing free tea, coffee, fruit and snacks together with a play area for the children.

Monday Prayers: Our morning prayer gathering takes place every Monday at 8.30am in the Church Centre. Everyone is welcome!

Message from John Gow

Daniel 1: 1-16

Happy New Year!

At a new year begins, for many of us our thoughts turn to new year resolutions. They might involve making healthy choices in terms of eating or drinking. Maybe they'll include financial changes, promises to read more or scroll less on our phones (that's a resolution I could be doing with making!), maybe they'll be resolving to spend more time with parents or children. With any resolutions we make, though, the intent behind them it is to better ourselves – and any resolutions that make us a

better person, well, I think that God wants us to make them.

In the Bible passage we're looking at in church this week, Daniel and his friends were very clear about what God wanted them to do. They'd been taken under the wing of the Babylonian king, who wanted them to change their diet and their lifestyles to fit in with his people's, but Daniel resolved to hold firm to his principles, in order to please God. But what about us? Does God care about the resolutions we make or don't make this new year? I think he does. But what might these resolutions actually be, what would be *most* pleasing to him?

I looked up Christian New Year resolutions on the web and they were pretty much as I'd expected. Be kind, love your neighbour, love your enemy, help those who're in need, forgive, things like that. I dug a little deeper, looking for something a bit more specific and came across a church website that listed resolutions all good Christians should make. The top two were to read the Bible for 15 minutes every day, and to set aside the same amount of time for prayer every day.

But then I thought a little deeper. Does God really want us to do these things?

So what about the first one? Read the Bible for 15 minutes every day. You know, I don't think I've read the whole Bible all the way through. I've started a reading plan, the kind that breaks down the whole Bible into bite-sized chunks, a few chapters at a time, but I've never stuck to it all the way. And that's partly because I'm not so sure following a plan and setting aside a certain amount of time every day to read the Bible is all that important, really. What I do think is important is to read it selectively but when we do, we should actually go and live what we read, we should actually apply the Word to our lives. And I think we're told that in the pages of the Bible itself, in James 1: *'If you look closely into the perfect law that sets people free, and keep on paying attention to it and do not simply read or listen and then forget it, but put it into practice – then you'll be blessed by God in what you do.'*

Reading the Bible simply for the sake of reading it, for the sake of ticking off another 10 chapters every day, I'm not at all sure that's the best use of our time. And, in a way, the same goes for prayer. When it comes to our personal prayers, I'm not sure that that religiously setting aside a fixed time every day is entirely pleasing to God.

Imagine, for example, being in a relationship with someone who only speaks to you out of obligation and even then, with the clock running for a certain period of time? I'm not sure about you, but me, I'd rather have somebody speak to me because they want to, not because they think they have to. I think we should all pray when we feel like praying, pray freely, spontaneously, pray when we want to, pray when we feel the need to. Francis of Assisi is supposed to have said, 'Preach the gospel constantly – when necessary, use words.' And the same goes for prayer, 'when necessary, use words.' The only one who really wants to hear our prayers is God, and words, well, they're not always needed.

So those are the two resolutions I'm making this year. How about you?