Bradford North Prayer Column: January 2026

The year ahead

Once a year in the Covenant service, now or in September, we Methodists affirm our commitment to follow Jesus, in the prayer which begins, "I am no longer my own but yours." It used to continue, "Put me to what you will… let me be employed for you or laid aside for you…" I pause there to reflect on being "laid aside" for the Lord, while others seem to march on, leaving us on the sidelines. But: we are no longer our own, but his. And if he decides to lay us aside, it is just as much "for him" as being employed "for him". In the Covenant, we are promising to serve the Lord faithfully and obediently whatever he calls us to do, or not do.

I can imagine several reasons why the Lord may lay me aside: to rest; to stand back and reflect; to clear my mind; to restrain my impulses; to widen my vision, or deepen it; or just to be, with him, in stillness, and absorb his peace. That may be for my needs, and you may be able to add other suggestions, but he may have a purpose beyond our needs. It may be a time to glorify him in a different way. Think of an orchestra: not all the instruments sound at the same time. Some have to await the right moment, while others carry the music forward. Till then they have to remain attentive, focussed on the conductor – "laid aside" until the right moment comes for them to play their special part which no one else can. It seems a pity to me that recent versions of that great prayer have omitted "for you", because we always need reminding that our being employed or laid aside are both "for the Lord", as part of his great all-encompassing mission to rescue all creation: each of us and all else.

Roy Lorrain-Smith

A prayer for each week

Lord of all being, in your mercy you have called us into your service, in Christ. Please help me to do all you say, whenever you tell me. Amen.

Lord of all seeing, we may or may not be set high in the world's eyes, but your eye is always lovingly upon us. May we seek your glory in all things. Amen.

Lord of creation, we may or may not have much of this word's goods, but help us focus always upon you, and use what we have at your command. Amen.

Lord of eternity, you have given us time on earth, with its blessings and challenges. May our promises of obedience now, be ratified in heaven. Amen.

Your own prayers