

Richard Beadon Inaugural Lecture 4th July 2015

Good afternoon. Thank you for inviting me to give this inaugural lecture in memory of Richard Beadon. His legacy is designed to encourage our commitment to live out our Christian faith on the front line of our everyday lives.

Get a Life

Seven years ago I published this book, *Get a Life*, which was written to address the common problem of balancing all life's pressures, something I had struggled with for many years.

I guess you might say that *Get a Life* was born out of my midlife crisis, just after turning 40, when I realised I was living in Slave New World, and began to wonder how I was going to keep all the plates spinning in my life. One year in particular stands out in my memory.

My brother was diagnosed with a fatal brain tumour, and he and my parents needed a lot of support. Our teenage sons were going through that phase in their launch into life that NASA refers to as 'maximum aerodynamic stress'. My Church had lost its minister as a result of an illness, and I was the Church secretary - in pole position to take care of the organization until we could find a replacement. My job was incredibly demanding. I was the Finance Director at Hewlett-Packard, with a lot of international travel that took me away from home, my wife told me I was distant. And to cap it all I had a French boss, who spoke exactly like Inspector Clouseau. Incredibly difficult to keep a straight face sometimes!

And the way it felt to me then was that there were not enough hours in the day. When your life is overloaded or out of balance it feels like time pressure. But in fact time pressure is just one symptom of a much deeper problem. Time pressure is like the one tenth of the iceberg above the surface. Nine tenths are below the surface and not so visible.

In every situation, and in every culture, behaviours flow from beliefs and underneath those beliefs are a set of assumptions, or a worldview if you like. Behaviours and some beliefs may well be visible, but the assumptions are often hidden and 'below the waterline', so to speak, rather like an iceberg – represented on this slide by a triangle. And it is the assumptions that really determine the culture. So in order to influence behaviours, we have to be able to identify those things we can't see, to discern them in order to then be able to become more intentional about change.

In my experience, there are three hidden and false assumptions in our lives that have become so normal in our society, so much part of daily living, that they are part of the cultural air we breathe and we are often unaware of them.

False Assumptions

The first false assumption is that our identity is based on our performance. We are what we do and what we can achieve. That is a belief that leads us towards drivenness and perfectionism as we try to validate who we are by what we do. We can't let up or fail to perform, because we feel our identity and our very self-worth will be threatened. It's like an internal psychological driving pedal that's got jammed down, because we believe our self worth depends on our ability to perform. We see it in education, where your grades are what determine your position, we see it in sport where your score determines whether you're a winner or loser, and we see it in the workplace where results are what matter above all else. This is the message we get from the world isn't it. Acceptance is conditional and based on performance. You are what you do – or fail to do.

This assumption that our identity and self-worth is based on achievement is completely contrary to what the Bible says. Our self-worth and identity do not come from achievement, they come from relationships, and for the Christian, they come from our relationship with God as his adopted and beloved children.

Yet even Christians can be deeply affected by the performance culture we all live in. Some of the most driven people I have encountered have been Christian ministers, who seemed to believe it was essential that they maximise their time and their impact in order to achieve as much as possible. In many ways a laudable motivation, but one that is founded on the false assumption that achievement is what matters most. That is where burnout begins.

The second false assumption in our world is that our purpose in life is to maximise our own wellbeing and happiness and fulfil our own dreams. For some that means achieving status and significance through position or through wealth. For others it means to find fulfilment vicariously through children. And for others it may mean having a 'bucket list of things I want to achieve' by a certain time, or before I die.

If we follow a self-fulfilment purpose, we're following self. And for the Christian that should set off a warning buzzer. Our role as children of God is not to try to invent our own future, but to discover God's dream for our lives and embrace it. To follow God and not self.

The assumption that our purpose is self-fulfilment leads to making life choices that we think will maximise our own wellbeing, and that often this equates with maximising our wealth; because there is an unwritten belief in our culture that if we can get enough money we will be happy and fulfilled. That leads to materialism, consumerism and pressure to make as much money as possible in order to maximise our standard of living. This is the kind of thing that leads people to want to live in houses as large as possible with mortgages as large as possible and cars as smart as possible and possessions as impressive as possible. We see it in others but we don't always see it in ourselves. We want the iPhone and the iPad and the i-everything because everyone else seems to have them. Well Scripture is pretty clear about that.

Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. 1 Timothy 6:9-10

These hidden false assumptions about identity and purpose are like hidden taskmasters driving us into patterns of activity and busyness that can damage the quality of life, rob us of true fruitfulness and fulfilment, and damage relationships as well as other people around us. They come from the world and they are what the Apostle John referred to in his letter..

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever. 1 John 2:15-17

Get a Life was written to help unmask these false assumptions about identity and purpose, and the choices that flow from them, and to help us think about how we can be better aligned with what God says about us in his Word, and how we can live a life where our identity, purposes and choices are more in harmony with his will.

The Sacred / Secular Divide

But today I want to go deeper and expose a third hidden assumption that undermines our ability to live authentic Christian lives. And that is the idea that God is more interested in some parts of our lives than others. Here's a quote from a teacher...

“I spend an hour a week in Sunday school and they haul me up to the front of the church to pray for me. The rest of the week I’m a full time teacher and the church has never prayed for me. That says it all.” And here’s another one from a businessman. “The church appreciates my tithe, but not the enterprise that gives rise to it.”

These comments reflect the assumption that things done in the religious or ‘sacred space’ are somehow more important, or more valuable, than things done in the so-called secular space – in life outside church. You see, from the days of the enlightenment, a division between the religious and the non-religious has emerged in our worldview. AW Tozer quotes a famous Englishman who centuries ago testily said: ‘Things have come to a pretty pass when religion is permitted to interfere with our private lives.’

People today are still making the same kind of statements. Yvette Cooper, a member of the front bench of the Labour party, in a recent interview said: ‘I have a private spiritual life; I don’t think it is relevant to my job.’ And Matthew Parris, who ironically is an avowed atheist, wrote this in response to her statement. He said “That is wholly inconsistent with Christ’s teaching. Of course one’s faith, and the moral code anchored in it is relevant to one’s job. It is impossible to read the gospels in any other way.’ He is right, our faith is relevant to all of life, it affects and pervades everything we do and are involved in – everything we do! There is no hidden corner of life where God is not relevant. The biblical truth is that all the world is God’s world.

Yet underneath the surface, the false assumption of a sacred/secular divide lives on. And ironically it lives on in the church. Take for example, the passage about Mary and Martha, where Martha fusses over the food preparation and Mary sits at Jesus’ feet listening to him. Jesus says that Mary has chosen what is better. I have heard some church leaders extrapolate that into a general principle. If sitting at Jesus’ feet is better than preparing the food, then building up our worship in church must be more important than getting involved in the messy and challenging world outside of church.

Is that right? I don’t think so. Jesus is not downplaying the role and significance of offering hospitality and the work that is necessary to do so, or saying that a contemplative life is better than an active life, or teaching that learning is preferable to domesticity. The Mary and Martha passage is more about the issue of anxiety than it is about role. The true general principle is that a focus on Jesus is the primary thing, the essential thing, whatever we are doing.

The Bible says in Colossians:

'Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart as working for the Lord, not for people, for you know that you will receive an inheritance as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.' Colossians 3:22-24

Whatever you do... it is the Lord Christ you are serving. Whatever you do in your everyday life can be dedicated to God and done for God and God can be glorified through it. God created the world; it is his world, and everything that happens in it is of direct concern to him, whether it is work, leisure, caring for someone, or just talking to people as part of our common humanity.

The sacred/secular divide means there is kind of unspoken 'holy hierarchy' in the way we see our jobs or our roles.

At the top of this holy hierarchy are worship leaders and missionaries. Then pastors and paid church workers. Then church members and after that poor Christians and the unemployed, followed by that despicable group of people, rich Christians, who are only just ahead of advertising executives, and of course last are the bankers and politicians!

In this year's Spring Harvest book *Immeasurably More* by Cris Rogers, he says: 'The danger with the idea of sacred space, like a church building, is that we must then conclude that other spaces are less sacred. People talk about 'sacred' and 'secular' with the latter referring to all the places where God's presence seems to be absent. But what if your car, or your home, or your workplace, or even your children's nursery could be a place where God dwells? What if God is closer than you think?'

What we often do is treat life a bit like an orange – we pull it apart into segments – our church life, family life, work life, leisure life and so on. And we unconsciously think the 'sacred stuff' like church is the segment that God is most interested in. But Jesus wants whole-life discipleship. That is the great challenge facing Christians today. Whole life discipleship means that we do not compartmentalise our lives, because God sees life as more like a peach – a whole. He made all things and takes pleasure in them, he values them. And when he looks at you he values all that you do and is interested in all that you are involved in.

Our frontline, (where we spend most of our time), is, in fact, the primary context for our discipleship to Christ. Yet most Christians are not equipped for living the life of Christ on their frontline, because we still have this tendency to be preoccupied with what happens in gathered church, which by comparison takes up only a few hours a week.

In seminars I often use this picture of Daniel Craig and talk about the fact that when James Bond goes out on a mission he is always briefed, trained, resourced, supported and commissioned. But when the average Christian goes out on their mission to their everyday frontline, they are often not briefed about how to live as a disciple of Christ, and they are usually not trained in how to deal with the challenges to their faith in everyday life, and they are often not resourced with any reading or DVD material, or supported in prayer, or commissioned by their church for activity on their frontline which occupies over 90% of their waking lives!

LICC & Resources

And that is why in 1982 John Stott founded the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity, or LICC for short. Our Mission at LICC is to make whole life discipleship central and unavoidable in the UK church, and our dream is that every Christian would go on to their frontline, confident that the gospel is good news for what they do there, good news for the people they are with and good news for the place they are in. And that is why LICC have produced specific resources to help Christians be equipped for frontline living. Our frontline is simply where we spend most of our time.

This year we published *Fruitfulness on the Frontline*, a book and a DVD resource for groups in eight parts, to help resource Christians on their frontline and to open their eyes to see what God might be doing there.

The word fruitfulness in Scripture means reproducing the likeness of what was sown. For the Christian, what was sown in us by faith is the Word of God and the life of Christ by his Spirit, and so fruitfulness means reproducing Christlikeness.

The key principle that underpins all fruitfulness is rootedness. That is what Jesus emphasised in John 15 in the symbolism of the vine and the branches. Cris Rogers says 'roots have to grow down before a tree can grow up'. In writing to the church at Ephesus the Apostle Paul says they need to be rooted and established in love. It's the roots of a plant that create a solid foundation for the plant to thrive. Basically, you cannot have fruit without a root.

We are not fruitful on our own, we are fruitful when we allow the grace of God to fill our own lives. As the aircraft safety announcement says 'Put your own oxygen mask on first, before trying to help others' That's not selfishness, it is recognising our dependence on oxygen. In the same way the Christian is dependent on the Holy Spirit. Abide in me, Jesus said, and you will bear much fruit.

When we face difficult or dry times on our frontline – and we will - our fruitfulness will depend on our rootedness. Richard Foster says in his book *Celebration of Discipline*, 'The greatest need today is not for more intelligent people or more gifted people, but more deep people'

With that rootedness in Christ in mind, LICC have developed a framework to help us remember six attributes of the fruitful Christian on the frontline, all beginning with M.

Modelling godly character

Making Good Work

Ministering Grace and Love

Moulding Culture

being a ... **M**outhpiece for Truth and Justice

being a ... **M**essenger of the Gospel

I want to talk about some examples of these attributes to show how they work in practice.

So let me walk you through these six Ms of being fruitful on your frontline.

Modelling Godly Character

First, modelling godly character. Sometimes it is in the most difficult situations that godly character is revealed. Martin and Myra were both lay ministers within the Anglican church (in fact she persuaded him to do it). He retired from a business career in 2007 and five years later they received Myra's diagnosis of posterior cortical atrophy (a form of Alzheimer's). All his plans had to change and he had to learn lots of new skills, especially domestic skills like cooking and washing. He also had to learn to bite his tongue, because although Myra had always been a very gentle person, the illness made her blunt, impatient and rude.

Myra is now no longer able to be a lay minister. She finds it very hard to construct sentences and it is incredibly frustrating for her because she can't do what she used to do. Her driving licence has been taken away and she is completely dependent upon Martin.

Previously, when Martin thought about his main gifts they would have been teaching and leading. Being a 24/7 carer would have been way down the list. But now he has had to reduce his involvement within the gathered church. He has resigned from the PCC and has had to come off the finance committee, management committee and to stop leading a home group.

Recently he said to God “When I got married at 22 years old, you knew that Myra would get Alzheimer’s at the age of 65”. He felt that God said to him “I chose you because you are the best person to care for her.” He said to God, “if that’s the case then you’re going to need to give me lots of grace, because this is not a natural gifting that I’ve got.” So every day he prays that God will help him to be loving, patient and kind, because being a carer involves lots of patience.

Martin is somebody who likes to get on with things, but his activities are often interrupted by Myra’s needs. Sometimes she may say that she doesn’t need help and so he goes away to get on with something, but then after a few minutes she’ll say she does need some help and he has to stop what he is doing to go and help her.

Who would have guessed that learning patience – a fruit of the Spirit - was fruitfulness on the frontline? But it is!

Ironic, isn’t it that many of the godly character qualities we most admire in others are the ones we do not choose to develop ourselves. Nobody I know would want to sign up for that kind of training in patience. Yet this difficult situation has opened up another frontline for Martin with the Alzheimer’s Society, and he and Myra have spoken at conferences for healthcare professionals about the challenges of living with Alzheimer’s. In fact they have been able to share about how their faith has helped them.

Martin says that now he gains strength and joy from focusing on the second coming of Christ and on our resurrection. He knows that ultimately, Myra is going to be alright – one day she will be in her right mind, and she will have a healthy body. In the meantime, Martin’s godly character is growing on his frontline, and other people are noticing that. He is becoming more and more of a living testimony of the grace of God.

This is a poignant and challenging example. But modelling godly character is also a challenge in the more common everyday examples of a difficult boss or difficult customer or supplier, or when frustrated by the system, or the traffic, or whatever it is that gets our goat.

Making Good Work

Secondly, making good work. Good work is often underappreciated isn’t it. I try to go swimming three times a week. I wish the pool looked like this idyllic picture. Anyway there’s a guy called Eddie at the pool, who cleans the showers and changing rooms every day. He’s over sixty years old and he works in a hot and humid atmosphere, washing down the walls and scrubbing the floors and the fittings. And I’ve noticed that he does his work thoroughly - he really takes care over it.

I spoke to him one day and said “You know I really appreciate what you do here. What you’re doing keeping everything clean is really important and I’m very grateful.” His eyes lit up and he said “Oh well, got to do our best haven’t we.” But that’s just it, in jobs like that people don’t always do their best, but he chooses to do his best and I believe God is pleased with that.

The Hebrew word Avodah is a word meaning worship and it is also a Hebrew word for work. The same word for work and worship. I find that significant. Everything we do – even the mundane – can be meaningful if we are doing it for Him - if we are choosing to worship Christ through what we do. To worship God with good work means being diligent, effective, careful, creative, purposeful and doing your work in good relationship. Good work is on spec and on time and on budget and it brings a sense of satisfaction. How well you change your child’s nappy can be an offering to God. It is redemptive work isn’t it! Taking something smelly and transforming it to something clean.

Making good work is being Christlike. As Dorothy Sayers once said: ‘No ill-fitting drawers or crooked table legs ever, I swear, came out of the carpenter’s shop at Nazareth.’

Ministering Grace and Love

Here is a short example video clip from our fruitfulness on the frontline DVD on the topic of ministering grace and love.

When Peju first started turning up at the school gate with her oldest child, it was a pretty dispiriting experience. It’s often the way isn’t it, everyone else chatting away in cosy little groups. She felt really lonely, but she didn’t want to force herself on anyone else, so she prayed to God and asked him to show her the people that he wanted her to be friends with. And over time he did. Grateful for that grace, she decided that she wanted to be someone who would reach out to the other people who were standing on their own. She didn’t have to, but she did.

And that’s how Peju came across Aday, who always seem to be in a hurry to drop off her son, and always seemed to be on her own. Peju discovered that Aday’s husband was working in Rwanda and that she really didn’t have much close family around. That must be exhausting she thought. And then she realized that half term was coming up. Nine straight days without a break, Peju thought. Somebody needs to give her a break. Now Peju didn’t know Aday all that well, but still she said ‘Give me your kids for a day’. And then she invited her over to spend time with her and a friend, so Aday came.

They chatted, they relaxed, they laughed. And as the day drew on, Peju gave Aday a hand massage. Mums do so much with their hands; peeling potatoes, doing the laundry, wiping bottoms. Their hands are a gift from God – a gift to their children. As Peju massaged Aday's hands, praying silently as she did so, it was a way to honour all she had done with her hands, and a way to bring life back to those hands.

We don't deserve grace, because that's what grace means - getting something you don't deserve. So ministering grace and love to others is giving them something good that they don't deserve. It doesn't have to be a big thing. A small act of kindness can have a big effect. Grace and love are always on the outlook for possibilities – the small as much as the big. Grace doesn't have to do something, but grace does!

Moulding Culture

Now on to moulding culture. A couple of months ago I was at a retreat house near Marlow Common, (which is a woody area). And in this wood there are signs to explain that this was where in World War I the Army sent its troops to practice digging trenches. Being there reminded me how the word 'frontline' is also a military term and how we are in a spiritual battle.

We operate in a culture that is opposed to Christ, sometimes quietly and sometimes openly. For us to be fruitful for God on our frontline sometimes means going up against the values and principles and patterns of this world and choosing not to be conformed by them. When I have asked people which of these six Ms is most difficult in practice, almost always moulding the culture comes up as the most challenging.

Let me tell you about Anita. She works in a pharmaceutical company. No-one talked much in her workplace, they mostly just stayed in their cubicles and communicated by email. The culture was one of isolation and relational disconnection. So Anita decided she needed to do something about it. What would Jesus do? She prayed.

Then she brought in biscuits once a week. Miracle biscuits... Chocolate hobnobs! And she held up a drawing of a teacup in the office to signify biscuit and tea time.

Gradually people came to eat – and sure enough the behaviour gradually began to change. It started to become a place where people began to communicate – good for them as individuals and good for collaboration around projects. A simple targeted initiative that shifted the culture of that workplace.

The behaviour was that people didn't talk to each other, the belief must have been that it wasn't expected. But underneath was the assumption that work output mattered more than relationships, and that was what was really driving the culture. So finding a way to encourage relationships was an antidote to that negative. And ironically that led to better work through better collaboration.

You don't have to be very important to influence the culture on your frontline. But you do need to be intentional. Name the culture to help define the issue and then pray and do something that works to change it. Anita named the culture as isolation and relational disconnection. That's what gave her the idea. Our God is relational and so encouraging relationships **is** kingdom fruitfulness.

If you have a leading role on your frontline then you have additional opportunities to influence the culture. I think of a head teacher. When she arrived at her school she noticed her desk was positioned at the far end of her room and she had a big chair and two low ones in front so she could tower above whoever came in, so they knew the head teacher was boss. So she moved the desk nearer the door, put the low chairs round a low table, bought a desk chair that lowered, so she could be at the same height when she met with people, whether it was a parent or child, or staff member. She set the tone in a different way to really value people - the way God values people. She is helping to mould the culture of her frontline.

Mouthpiece for Truth and Justice

Then there is the opportunity to be a mouthpiece for truth and justice on our frontline.

Chris was a GP who was new in a practice, where there was a lot of opportunity to develop patient care. When he arrived there he discovered that the admin staff had received no pay increase for seven years. He knew funding was tight, but seven years?! That seemed to him like an injustice. He felt as a Christian he needed to take a stand, but the senior partner paid no attention. Chris kept praying and occasionally asking about it and before the year was up a pay increase was given. Some justice was done!

Being a mouthpiece for truth and justice often takes both courage and perseverance. It took Wilberforce his entire political career, didn't it, to achieve the abolition of slavery. I was struck by how Steve McQueen used his acceptance speech for best picture of *12 years a slave*.

He said “Everyone deserves not just to survive but to live ...I dedicate this award to those who have endured slavery, and to the 21 million who still suffer slavery today. He used his frontline to speak out against an issue he saw as an injustice.

But sometimes to speak up risks us being rejected. Here’s a great quote from Samuel Goldwyn...‘I want everyone to tell me the truth to my face...even if it costs them their jobs!’ This is exactly the kind of fear that stops many people from speaking up.

A junior solicitor in a city law firm involved in mergers and acquisitions noticed in a takeover bid that the minority shareholders in a company were not getting as much information as the other major shareholders. She raised the issue in a meeting with senior partners. That was a courageous thing to do, because the culture was male dominated and testosterone driven. It could have been ‘career death’ for her.

There was some resistance. But she stood her ground and cited the reputational risk the company was taking by not treating all shareholders equally. And she had an impact; Information sharing was changed.

Messenger of the Gospel

And finally, being a messenger of the gospel. You know the word evangelism strikes fear into two groups of people. The first group is people who don’t know Jesus, and the second group is the Christians who do!

The fact is that many of us are afraid and somewhat tongue tied when it comes to talking about our faith on the frontline. We may not be evangelists, but we are all called to be witnesses. As witness we are called to tell other people in our own words about the Jesus we know, about what Jesus has done for us, and who he is to us day by day in our lives. And for that task Jesus has sent his Spirit to empower us. As Liverpool fans might sing it, you’ll never walk alone.

Whatever your frontline, you can be sure of two things: God wants people to be saved and it is God who saves people not us. But we do have some role – however small – and we have three things going for us on our frontline. We are there, God is in us, and we have a faith story.

Someone has said that evangelism is not just about delivering a message, but about creating an environment in which that message can be heard. On the frontline our first challenge in terms of sharing the message, is to simply **be** the message. And there is plenty of opportunity for that. In a world where trust is very thin, and relationships sometimes shaky, people

who are honest, hardworking and have a forgiving and gracious attitude stand out like beacons. These qualities reflect Christ. These are the attributes that will create interest, credibility, and questions about why we are like we are.

Maybe someone says something like: “I just do not understand how you can be so calm in your situation. I’d have murdered him.” And that gives you the opening to talk about forgiveness and why you feel able to forgive and live differently.

If we have been the message, then people are more likely to ask us something about ourselves, and that gives us the opportunity to say something. In a politically correct world it is more difficult to speak out without any invitation. But if someone asks you a question, because you behave differently, that’s different. Pray for opportunities like this and for the Holy Spirit discernment to recognize them. What do you say, for example as happened to me, when someone by the coffee machine hears you whistling and says ‘How come you’re so happy?’ Or ‘Why don’t you swear?’

One of the most helpful things we can do to prepare is practice telling our personal stories and faith journey’s to each other. So then when someone asks, you have something to share instead of being tongue tied. A personal story used to be a standard tool in the Christian’s armoury, Scripture calls it ‘the shoes of the preparation of the gospel of peace’. But many of us are going around without our shoes on - we aren’t prepared to share ‘the reason for the hope that is in us’ - even if someone asks. Many Christians just don’t know what to say in response to questions that come as a result of being different. What about doing some role plays in Church about a frontline situation to get people thinking about this?

Conclusion

In this lecture I have tried to unmask three hidden assumptions that drive us away from living out our Christian faith in our daily lives. They are having a performance driven identity, a self-fulfilment purpose and the sacred/secular divide. And I have tried to show what living as a Christian on the frontline might look like in practice.

How do we smash the ‘sacred/secular divide’ that lives on in our churches, in our so-called sacred spaces? After the break I want to consider how we might change the culture within our churches to become more oriented towards supporting our people on their frontlines. We’ll be talking to some practitioners and having a more interactive time over that.

In the conclusion of *Get a Life* I point out that the Great Commandment has a key word repeated three times. That word is **all**. Love the Lord your God with **all** your heart and with **all** your mind and with **all** your strength. Loving God involves **all** our work and life with no hidden compartments. There is no sacred/secular divide. So in conclusion I want to quote Eugene Peterson's paraphrase of Romans 12:1 from *The Message* paraphrase. *So here's what I want you to do, God helping you, take your everyday ordinary life- your sleeping, eating, going to work and walking around life and place it before God as an offering.*

To close I would like to pray for us all on our frontlines and ask God to make us fruitful there. Let's pray.

Closing Prayer

Our Loving Father God,
Thank you for your body of believers gathered here. Thank you for the presence of your Spirit in each one of us and for the promise that you will be with us and never leave us.

Father we accept our commission from you to be salt and light in the world. We bring to you our everyday frontline. In our homes, in our workplaces and in our communities we ask that Jesus will be seen in our lives and that by your Spirit we will always and everywhere model the life of Christ with authenticity and zeal.

Lead us in the path of service that you have planned for us. Enable us to work and serve well and minister grace and love to the people that we meet. Inspire us to find ways to influence and mould the culture around us, so that your Kingdom will come on earth as in Heaven.

We pray for the Spirit of wisdom, courage and boldness to speak out for truth and justice in all the situations in which you have placed us. And we ask that you will make us effective and faithful ambassadors for you in sharing the gospel.

Father I pray that you will defend and protect these servants of yours in the days ahead and make them very fruitful. In your name, Jesus, I commission them in your service on their frontline, and pray that your Spirit will refresh and empower them there. For your glory Lord. Amen.

