

## **Promoting peace and wellbeing**

By Bill Pugh

It's a hard lesson because we can so easily allow annoyance, disagreement and anger to take over.

And people can be hurt by such behaviour.

Marriages can break up because we lose self-control.

Physical injury can result if we lose control of our temper, and some of us have a short fuse.

A teacher controlling a class of teenagers can allow frustration to take over and the children suffer.

Court cases result between people who cannot settle disputes.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus advised certain patterns of behaviour as essential to human wellbeing.

One troubling piece of advice was that Kingdom people should be meek in attitude and behaviour.

Most people, especially the Putins of this world, would reject this advice straight out.

The meek would be walked over by the strong, surely.

But Jesus had a different slant on that word.

For him, a truly meek person was self-controlled because he was God-controlled.

Such behaviour would be at the forefront of decision making and lead to worthy outcomes.

A society with that sense of self-control would lead to peace and wellbeing.

The meek are Kingdom people.

The prophet Micah put it this way: "What does the Lord require of you but to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God." (Micah: 6:8)

## **Family influences**

By Bill Pugh

My grandparents on Mum's side came out from Scotland and bought a place in Surrey Hills and we lived with them.

Grandad was a loyal member of our Church and he was there every Sunday.

His sense of reverence in worship was outstanding.

Being a Presbyterian he did not kneel for prayer but bent forward in reverence as the Minister led us in prayer.

I sat next to him and was greatly influenced by his solemnity and sincerity.

And he lived his faith outside the Church each day and was involved in the community.

Our grandmother also influenced me.

She had been a teacher in Scotland and retired when she came to Australia.

She never forgot her calling and she taught us our times tables, writing skills and residing at home.

When we went to school we had a very sound basis for learning.

She always acknowledged the teachings of Jesus as central to her life.

Alexander and Henrietta were valuable building blocks in our family life.

And her grandchildren took on their calling of teaching and ministry as a result.

The study of Bible readings and family prayers were daily observances in our lounge room and we owe much to their influence then and now.

### **Reflection**

Spend time noting the names and importance of Christian influencers in your life, and in prayer acknowledge the heroes of your faith.

### **How many days left?**

By Bill Pugh

It's a question we ponder as we are getting older.

As kids we wasted time believing we had plenty up our sleeves.

We looked forward to weekends, our own time to please ourselves.

And the holidays beckoned, free from school and homework.

As retirees we plan to take it easy playing golf or bowls.

But sooner or later we realise time is running out. Our bodies tell us this.

We need to take stock of our years. What have we contributed?

How can we make the most of the days left? Have we made a difference? What can we still do even though time is limited?

The Psalmist's advice is this: A prayer to our Heavenly Father. "So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom."

Much wisdom can come by studying the scriptures, considering the lives of the saints, and the faithful who spend every day in service to our Lord.

It's time well spent as we number every day.

### **Reflection**

Read and consider the wisdom of Psalm 97.

### **God provides what is required**

By Bill Pugh

I remember the milk coming by delivery, measured into a small receptacle at our front gate early in the morning.

Then came the bread a little later on, all delivered by horse-drawn carts.

My brother and I followed with a bucket and shovelled up the manure left on the road and sold it to our neighbours for their vegie gardens.

Ice was sold by a dairy and wood by a woodman.

Later, small shops sold milk, cream and eggs, a bakery produced fresh bread, and a local butcher sold us our meat.

Now everything needed for our home cupboard comes from a supermarket, and cooling is by our own refrigerator at home.

How blessed we are, but we take it all for granted.

We forget the role of the farmer and market gardener, sowing and nurturing our produce and those who prepare goods we select from the shelves for sale.

Really it all goes back to the story of creation in Genesis.

Each day God created the essentials of life for humankind in correct order and we have adapted his provision for our daily needs.

How grateful we should be to be involved in the chain of creation with the Creator at its source.

### **Reflection**

And God saw everything that He had made and behold it was very good.

Give thanks unto the Lord for He is good and his mercy endures forever.