



Pastor's Page

"Hope in the New Year "

It was New Years Eve, and I hadn't been invited to a party! I knew that my brother's family didn't celebrate this event and I knew that my dear parents would be tucked up in bed long before 2008 arrived so I decided to try my sister. However, a short phone told me that she was still suffering with flu and so there was to be no party at their place! Starting to panic slightly thinking I may have to celebrate with Jools Holland and friends (!) I took decisive action. I bought a bottle of fermented grape juice, put on my best cagoule and headed off to my cousin's house (they always have a big New Year's party there) They were in, but were on their way out to a party at their son's girlfriend's house! So with 2007 fading fast I headed off to the local Baptist church for a 'watch-night' service. On arriving I knew that this was the right place to be and I was thankful to the Lord for leading me (through the lack of party options!) to 'His House' for the dawn of a new year.

A new year always causes me to take stock of my life and my relationship with Jesus. So at the beginning of 2008 let's together consider again God's calling on our lives as his people and 'partners in the Gospel'. Paul in Philippians 1:1-11 addresses the church at Philippi and refers to their "Partnership in the Gospel". (v5) This relationship is one with a history. Paul had planted this church 11 or 12 years earlier and had a great affection for these brother and sisters in Christ praying for them regularly (v3,7) We too have a 'partnership with a past'. For over 7 years I have been the pastor here and we have been serving God together in the Selly Park area. We have seen many new people coming into the church, quite a few leave, and others going out into specific Christian service. We have also witnessed people coming to faith in Jesus. So as we look back we have a lot of things for which to thank the Lord. But a new year is also a time to look forward and this year should be a season of great opportunity. With the national initiative "Hope 08" focussing on 'impacting individuals and communities with the Gospel through words and actions' there could be a great movement of God in our Land. So what is God calling us to do here at Selly Park Baptist church? Our 24 hour prayer chain which ended this morning has been a time for us to listen to Him as we seek the way forward. He wants to use us with our gifts and personalities to impact people's lives with the good news of Jesus, and the Lord himself will equip us for this task. Hudson Taylor said "God's work done in God's way, will never lack God's supply".

Paul promises ***"He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus"*** (Philippians 1:6)

There's an old song that says;

*He didn't bring us this far just to leave us: He didn't teach us to swim to let us drown
He didn't build his home in us to move away: He didn't lift us up, to let us down.*

Let's be thankful for the past, faithful in the present and hopeful about the future.
(Happy New Year)

6th January 2008