

Pastoral Prayer

July 2007

Boronia Church of Christ

Boronia, Victoria, Australia

by David Allen

Eternal God, our guide, our strength and our Sustainer,

We thank you for the opportunities of Sundays -- for these regular road-side stops on this trip of a lifetime, where we can service our hearts and minds with a simple communion feast,

fine-tune our attitudes, check the travel-guide and map of our journey in your scriptures,

and share our experiences with our fellow-travelers. Remind us, God, that this time is not a pit-stop in a frantic high-speed race, but an opportunity to connect with *you*, our designer, our trip organizer, our tour guide on this journey of life.

We thank you for the company of the seasoned travelers on this journey -- those vintage and veteran Christians whose life-trip has been long and wide-ranging, whose experiences are inspirational, and whose advice is so much valued. We thank you for the company of the

L-plate\* and P-plate\* travellers in this family of believers, whose trip with you is just beginning -- who are enthusiastic, optimistic, taking one day at a time, and taking in the wonders and sights of their trip *without* rigid plans or preconceptions -- just with faith. We especially thank you for those on this road through life, with little children in tow, for Jesus himself valued the children highest of all, and so must we, for *they* are the precious future of your kingdom on Earth.

God, you know only too *well* that some of us are not good travellers.

We can lose our way.

We can become sidetracked.

We can be fooled by some awful, "tacky" attractions along the way, and we can take bad advice without thinking of the consequences.

We sometimes *miss* the signs that matter, and we are often *too* stubborn to ask for help when we are so *obviously* lost. We forget that *your* road-side service is available day and night.

Lord God, when we sometimes *think* we know the road ahead, we are forgetting that this lifetime trip can be dangerous, or puzzling, or frustrating. It can be shrouded in the fog of sadness, or battered by the storms of relationships turned sour.

Forgive us our burst of road-rage towards fellow-travellers. Sometimes we think that we *alone* are the perfect ones on our journey -- the *only* ones with a complete understanding of the rules and the skills necessary to reach the destination. Help us instead to be considerate, kind and courteous. Teach us humility.

Forgive us our u-turns -- those times when we get discouraged and tired, and are tempted to turn back. And protect us from people who are travelling the wrong way. Forgive us those moments when we are stuck in life's roundabouts, going in circles and getting nowhere. Keep us patient and calm in the traffic-jams of our journey, we pray.

And Lord, *teach* us compassion! Encourage us not to be in such a hurry that we can't pull over and help fellow-travellers who have broken down, or who have run out of fuel.

*Don't let us* speed past those on limited resources -- the hitchhikers or backpackers on Faith Road. Don't allow us to miss an opportunity to give them a lift on *their* life-journey.

And remind us, Lord, to take time out to appreciate the scenery -- the sights and sounds, the beautiful scents and aromas of this magnificent world through which we are travelling. Inspire us to turn out of the fast-lane, *off* the freeways and tollways, and to appreciate the lovely places and people on the quieter, *meandering* roads that *still* lead to life's destination. Lead us beside the still waters -- the placid lakes and the gentle streams.

God, help us to feel your Spirit when the life-road gets rough, and especially when it descends suddenly into the deep shadowy valleys of despair, depression or death. And when the view from the mountain-tops of life is *so beautiful* that it makes our hearts sing, or takes our *breath* away, we want to recognize that *you* are the source of this creation, the beginning *and* the end of our journey, the God of grace, compassion and love.

So guide us *still*, great Jehovah, through the coming week of this trip of a lifetime. We *want* your Spirit to be our constant *travel* companion, directing our paths.

We pray in the name of Jesus, who paid in advance -- *and in full!* -- the cost of our journey, and who waits for us with you at journey's end. Amen

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- \*L-Plate = learner drivers, age 16-18, displaying an “L” plate on their vehicle to warn other drivers.
  - \*P-Plate = provisional drivers, age 19-21, displaying a “P” plate on their vehicle to warn other drivers.

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Ana & Tod Gobledale