

## Saturday 16th January



*The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt - a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, "Know the LORD," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.*

[Jeremiah 31: 31–34]

Many churches have their annual covenant service at the start of the New Year. As I minister to several churches, these tend to cover several weeks in January. I personally like the Covenant service – though I often don't find it easy. Jeremiah speaks of God writing the covenant not on stone but on our hearts, so that we know it within our very being. I find the covenant service a little like this – an imprinting of our promises to God in our hearts.

Instead of writing a prayer for you, I think it would be good for us all to focus and reflect on the words of the covenant prayer:

*I am no longer my own but yours.  
Put me to what you will,  
rank me with whom you will;  
put me to doing,  
put me to suffering;  
let me be employed for you,  
or laid aside for you,  
exalted for you,  
or brought low for you;  
let me be full,  
let me be empty,  
let me have all things,  
let me have nothing:  
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things to your pleasure and disposal.  
And now, glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
you are mine and I am yours.  
And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven.  
Amen.*