

NOVEMBER 2020



Dear faithful prayer supporters,

'But Ruth clung to (davaq) her' Ruth 1:14 'The LORD said... hold fast (davaq) to me.' Deut 10:20



Fresh in our minds at the moment is the beautiful Hebrew word *davaq* – not least because we have so many newly-weds in our church, and because we started to study Ruth last week at our termly ladies' gathering. We can imagine Ruth physically on the road alongside Naomi, with the *davaq* sense that separation is impossible! The strength of their union is obvious from other concrete examples in Scripture. Job speaks of the crocodile scales that are *davaq*, joined to each other to form impenetrable armour. 1 and 2 Samuel mention a warrior's hand is *davaq* to his sword as if fused together, whilst the soldiers of Saul *davaq* their enemies to zealously overtake and destroy them. It is a very strong and active union!

This year we have joyfully watched five young couples declaring their *davaq* marriage vows: the dedication of a bridegroom to his wife, united together as long as they both shall live with loving promises that must never be broken. Knowing *davaq* is what the Lord requires of his covenant people, we want to be those who never tire of 'holding fast' to Yahweh in this new academic year.

Thank you for all your prayers for Forte Torre. As we pray for your walk and witness, please continue to pray that we in Bologna would:

- Rejoice abundantly that God has designed his relationship with his people to reflect the intimacy of marriage.
- Want to press on to knowing Yahweh, staying glued to his blessings so as not to lose them, especially in the middle of COVID when some folk are fearful of meeting together.
- Understand that today in his grace, Jesus Christ has united himself to every believer with an indissoluble bond.
- Give great thanks to him – the friend who is closer than a brother, sharing with us all that is his.

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Hold fast when straying

Over the summer, a number of 'stray sheep' have found their way to Forte Torre. One or two are folk in whom the Lord has been working during the COVID lockdown and are hungry for the truth, praise the Lord! The majority are already believers who have come unstuck in their own churches outside Bologna and have sought a haven amongst us. This has demanded time to be peacemakers and sowers of truth

and grace. For the saints who have been disappointed by other believers – or discouraged by teaching and behaviour that doesn't exalt the name of Jesus – please pray they:

- Understand afresh the indestructible union of dawaq to the Lord Jesus.
- Heal and move on to be useful workers in the harvest field.
- Contribute, if appropriate, towards a potential church plant in central Modena, which God willing we will begin in January 2021.

Hold fast when the law changes

Since the Italian state does not recognise Forte Torre as a 'church', we are currently registered as a charitable organisation. In the past decade, many profitable organisations have 'registered' as charities in order to hide their income and avoid high taxation. What joy living in Italy! Therefore, the government recently has rightfully tightened up the law for this sector, in an effort to reduce tax evasion. However, this has resulted in a minefield for us as to how we can be legally recognised. Please pray for:

- Right legal counsel, especially from F and S, in how to proceed in registering afresh with the state.
- Establishing a future trust to help protect the assets long term of Forte Torre, with gospel priorities and faithful trustees.
- For GP to have the mental space to find a way forward through the countless forms, offices and contradictions of the law, giving great thanks for S, who gives wonderful secretarial help.
- A new church treasurer, giving great thanks for A who has now moved on from Bo.



Hold fast along with the saints

One of the joys of holding fast to Jesus is that we don't do it alone. When we see the perseverance of the saints, after many years of faithful service, it spurs us on to keep going. We were blessed to have Rich and Philly Simpkin to minister to Forte Torre at the beginning of September for a conference on 'Biblical perspectives of worship and the role of church music'. GP knows Rich from university days and it was so refreshing to have peers who are still running the race with zeal. Please pray:

- With thanks that Rich, with his valued material, could feed into the Applicazione resource of theological courses online (www.corsiapplicazione.it).
- That the Lord would prosper the work of Rich's hand, as he contends for biblical truth in the world of Christian music.
- FT's healthy group of musicians would live lives of consecrated worship to Jesus, expressed in writing scripture-rich songs with Italian tunes, instead of just translating English songs.
- For renewed fellowship with other Bologna churches – many were sadly absent from the conference which had always included them.



Sending our love, holding fast to him who has taken hold of you.
JP and Sue xx

Prayer points

- Praise God that Jesus has united himself to every believer with an indissoluble bond.
- Pray that all at FT would hold fast and press on especially in the middle of the pandemic.
- Pray for the mobilising of saints to start a new church plant in Modena centre.
- Pray for progress in establishing a trust for Forte Torre long term.
- Pray for the ministry of music both home and abroad, to faithfully sing God's praise.