

• *Daniel - a faithful employee of Darius and a faithful servant of God*

1. Daniel is a model of faithful, dedicated prayerfulness

• *A special place for prayer*

• *Special times for prayer*

• *Ready to let his praying be publicly known*

• *He adopted a humble posture in prayer*

2. Inflexible commitment to God whatever the cost

• *Members of the opposition used legislation to attack Daniel*

Daniel is a faithful employee of Darius and a faithful servant of God. It does not lead to an easy life for Daniel. He faces much jealousy and soon his life is in danger. His enemies manipulate law-and-order for their own purposes. They even manipulate the king. Daniel is very different. He will not use the methods that his enemies use. He knows about their flattery of the king, their manipulations and their scheming to get him into trouble. But he will not become like them. His way is to stay as faithful and as upright as ever. He was known for his praying towards Jerusalem.

1. **Daniel is a model of faithful, dedicated prayerfulness.** He had faith in what God would one day do in Jerusalem. He knew that the promises of God all revolved around faraway Jerusalem. Although he was in exile and Jerusalem was in a weak and desperate state, he still had faith in the promises of God.

He had a **special place for prayer** (a roof chamber with windows facing Jerusalem). It is good and useful to be regular in prayer, and it may well help us if we have prayer-places. Jesus, we remember, liked to use the Garden of Gethsemane as a place for prayer.

Daniel had **special times for prayer**. He prayed three times a day. There is no strict law about this but it makes sense. It is natural to pray as soon as we can in the morning. It is natural to pray before the day comes to an end. It is natural to turn to God in the middle of the day. Daniel made a point of finding three times a day when he could specially give himself to prayer.

Daniel was, when necessary, **ready to let his praying be publicly known**. Generally speaking it is good not to advertise our prayerfulness! Jesus told us when we pray to go into a private room, shut the door and pray to our Father in secret^{☞1}. He was only using picture language. The vast majority of the human race do not have a 'private room'. But generally we are to find ways of being private. Jesus would go 'to a lonely place'^{☞2} or into the hills^{☞3} or would pray at night when others were asleep. Yet there might be times when we can boldly let others know that we pray! When Daniel learned that a decree had been published which would endanger his life unless he stopped praying, he decided that this was the time to let everyone know that he had no intention of ceasing to pray to Yahweh, the God of Israel! At his home he had an upstairs room. He would pray by the window facing Jerusalem. This was not the time to be hiding his prayerfulness. This was a time to give to God the things that belong to God. He carried on doing what he had always done.

We notice **he adopted a humble posture in prayer**. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done many times before. Daniel prays as openly and as boldly. His enemies expected it; it was just what they wanted.

2. **Daniel is a model of inflexible commitment to God regardless of what it might cost him.** He knows his faith will get him into trouble, but that is not going to make him back down from public commitment to the God of Israel.

Daniel's enemies come together to observe Daniel's praying^{☞1} and then they go to the king^{☞2}. Did he not sign a law forbidding what Daniel is doing? It is to be noticed that the members of the opposition have used legislation to get their scheming fulfilled. Men and women often think that law is a tool for upholding righteousness, but in the wrong hands legislation can be a tool for upholding wickedness. 'We have a law and by that law he ought to die',

☞1 Matt 6:6

☞2 Mark 1:35

☞3 Mark 6:46

☞1 6:11

☞2 6:12-13

said the enemies of Jesus. Character is more important than legislation, and law-making in the wrong hands can be cruelly oppressive. The king himself is distressed at the situation^{¶3}. His own ruling has been used against Daniel. He would like to deliver Daniel^{¶4} but his officials press their demands against Daniel^{¶5}. All the king can do is hope Daniel's faith will help him. 'May your God rescue you!' he says^{¶6}.

¶3 6:14
 ¶4 6:14b
 ¶5 6:15
 ¶6 6:16

• *God had shut the mouths of the lions and vindicated Daniel's faithfulness to God*

Daniel is ready to die if need be, but there is another possibility. God is able to rescue us even from death when necessary. A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den of lions. It reminds us of Jesus being put in the tomb. The doorway over the pit of lions is sealed^{¶1}. The king has a restless, hungry night^{¶2}. He cannot wait for it to be daytime. At the first light of dawn, he hurried to the lions' den^{¶3} and calls for Daniel^{¶4}. Daniel calls back^{¶5}. God had shut the mouths of the lions and vindicated Daniel's faithfulness to God ('innocent in God's sight') and to his country ('nor ... before you, O king'). The king is delighted and Daniel's accusers are executed^{¶6}.

¶1 6:17
 ¶2 6:18
 ¶3 6:19
 ¶4 6:20
 ¶5 6:21-22
 ¶6 6:23-24

• *Another decree to honour the God of Israel*

It results in another decree being written. The God of Israel is to be honoured^{¶1}. The king knows God is 'the living God', the One who 'endures for ever'. He has an indestructible kingdom^{¶2}. He rescues his servants^{¶3}. He performs signs and wonders^{¶4}. It is a time of great success for Daniel. Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius, that is, during the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

¶1 6:25-26a
 ¶2 6:26b
 ¶3 6:27
 ¶4 6:28

• *Lessons about living in pagan empires alongside pagan rulers*

By this stage of the Book of Daniel we have learned some lessons about living in pagan empires alongside pagan rulers. Bold faith combined with faithful patriotism is a real possibility (Daniel chapter 1). A knowledge that God's kingdom will triumph is needed (chapter 2). In a conflict of loyalty God enables us to stand firm (chapter 3). We **might** (chapter 4) but we might **not** (chapter 5) be able to help the ruler to come to faith. The great aim is that we win freedom for faith in the God of Israel. It is precisely this partial 'freedom of religion' that was won by Daniel with God's mighty and powerful help – in the time of 'Daniel and the lions'.

How to prosper in adversity – Loyalty to God & loyalty to the ruler – but never submission to the pagan ruler's demands

The last line of Daniel 6 is immensely encouraging. Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius, that is, during the reign of Cyrus the Persian. One might think this would be entirely impossible. How can a believer survive and even prosper in such adverse circumstances? Daniel has shown us the way. By faith. By loyalty to God and the ruler. By a firm sense of priority in which God is put first and the ruler is put second. By willingness to face fiery furnaces and dens of lions rather than yield our worship to those who have no claim upon our worship. Loyalty to the ruler? Yes. Submission to the ruler's pagan demands? Never.



slices.org.uk

Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His *Preaching Through The Bible (PTTB)* books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.



These specially reformatted chapters "Slices of Bread" produced by Sovereign World Trust are available in three categories as set out below

Slices for the Nations	Slices for Sponsors	Slices for Everyone / Slice of the Week
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For pastors, libraries and colleges in those parts of the world where resources are scarce and unaffordable In the fullness of time the whole series will be made available free of charge Weekly emailings of 3 - 4 Slices or available to download from the Slices web site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For those in more prosperous circumstances who can afford to contribute to the development of this material and its distribution with a small monthly donation The same material as Slices for the Nations Weekly emailings of 3 - 4 Slices or by download from the Slices web site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For those who wish to sample the material or dip into it from time to time, a proportion of the PTTB series is available free of charge Slices for Everyone (as a download) or Slice of the Week (attached to a weekly email) The remainder of the PTTB material is available to Sponsors and those eligible to receive Slices for the Nations
<p>To subscribe please contact: slicesofbread@sovereignworldtrust.org.uk stating which category fits your situation. Further details are at www.slices.org.uk Details of the availability of <i>Preaching Through The Bible</i> books and how they may be purchased can be found on www.ibtr.org.uk</p>		