

Some thoughts to start...

Engaging in the practice of faith is not always easy. For some people, sitting down and having an open, in-depth chat with God is not difficult. For many of us, however, it is.

What we're trying to do here is to give people a resource – to help them in their thinking about scripture, and in the practice of personal prayer.

Everything written here is simply a *suggestion*. If you find other practices more helpful, please use them!

Find a bible and head to a place you won't be disturbed. Take a few moments to sit quietly. In that quiet moment you might want to say to God, "What would you like me to hear today?"

Read each of the scriptures. Some people prefer to read silently, while others find it more helpful to read out loud. Take a few moments to reflect on what you've heard. (If you would like, the 'reflection' section is there to help start you off.)

Finally, take a few moments to talk with God. The printed prayer is there as a guide, but there may be other things you want to share. Chat, as openly and honestly as you can. Then, through the day, listen for God's response.

This resource was initiated by St. Andrew's Haney United Church, Maple Ridge, BC.

The suggested scripture readings are based on the Consultation on Common Text's *Daily Lectionary*.

If you'd like to share some thoughts about what you've read, head over to the 'chat space' at www.standrewsuc.com

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ST. ANDREW'S HANEY UNITED CHURCH

Daily Scripture and Prayer Time

(April 23rd to 28th, 2007)

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Monday

Scripture:

- Ezekiel 1:1-25
- Psalm 121
- Acts 9:19b-31

Reflection:

I am struck by the detailed imagery of these readings, especially in Ezekiel. My mind is captured by how bizarre and fantastic (as in fantasy) the images are.

Then they sink deeper.

What do we miss in our reading of scripture written by cultures and world-views so almost totally foreign to us? These images are, or can be if we let them, full of effort to capture something of the awe of God. And it is in that awe, that we may find ourselves most moved into relationship.

Prayer:

Holy One,
plant in me a deeper yearning
to cultivate awe.
Plant in me a deeper willingness
to let my smallness be welcomed and loved
in your awesome presence.
Perhaps then,
I will see others and all creation
with your eyes as well.

Today, I remember and pray for _____,
friends blessed by your love and compassion.

For your grace,
with your love,
and in Christ's name, I pray.

Tuesday

Scripture:

- Ezekiel 1:26-2:1
- Psalm 121
- Acts 26:1-18

Reflection:

The awe-filled visions continue in today's reading. With this awe comes the response: a conversion of heart and a strong sense of God's call. I can not help but reflect on such moments in my life: gazing into a sunset while perched on rocks above a awe-some ocean view, wandering the dry clay banks in Naramata, BC... even (dare I say this on paper?) occasionally in worship.

A sense of awe that melts my heart.

A sense of God's grandeur that lets me back out of my fear of lack of control and surrender to the Lover of my soul.

Prayer:

Glorious Creator,
I am daily in need of re-creation.
For I live in a culture
of insecurity and distraction.
Free me from my cling to control
and daily fill me
with your loving purpose, I pray.

Today, I remember and pray for _____,
friends blessed by your love and compassion.

For your grace,
with your love,
and in Christ's name, I pray.

Wednesday

Scripture:

- Isaiah 6:1-8
- Psalm 121
- Luke 5:1-11

Reflection:

Like the sting of an icy-cold hand being dipped into lukewarm water, so too can be our communion with the Holy.

Can we touch love so pure, purpose so self-giving, and not feel at least a little sting at the contrast between our often fickle lived being and the burning call to loving relationship God implants so deep in our hearts?

I fear the sting of this contrast too often drives me to only superficial relating to God. And yet the stories of our faith are unequivocal in their stance – God's forgiveness is infinite. God's only desire is to heal us into living the love from which we are made.

Prayer:

God most holy,
Thank you.
For your love.
For your forgiveness.
For your Christ embodying these
for all your world.

Today, I remember and pray for _____,
friends blessed by your love and
compassion.

For your grace, with your love,
and in Christ's name, I pray.

Thursday

Scripture:

- Ezekiel 11:1-25
- Psalm 23
- Revelation 5:1-10

Reflection:

Ezekiel and the exiles are promised a return to their land, to Jerusalem. With this homecoming they are promised that their hearts will also come home to God. This is God's gift, not because they have been worthy.

In Revelation, a similar story of unworthiness and grace unfolds. Who is worthy to open the scroll? No mighty warrior. No awesome cherubim. "A Lamb, standing as if it had been slaughtered."

The violence of our "civilization" met with the power of love. Love proved more powerful - even over death. Which do we notice more? Unworthiness or grace?

Prayer:

Gracious God,
help me to turn over to you
unworthiness in myself and others.
Heal me into the wholeness of your grace
poured out for all your people,
for all your creation,
in Christ.

Today, I remember and pray for _____,
friends blessed by your love and compassion.

For your grace,
with your love,
and in Christ's name, I pray.

Friday

Scripture:

- Ezekiel 20:39-49
- Psalm 23
- Revelation 6:1-7:4

Reflection:

John could see that bending and twisting our religion to serve empire (whether Roman or more contemporary) leads to death and destruction. I read Revelation as an acute critique of the Roman Empire and the tendency of Christians and others to falsely worship it rather than God.

When our vision of God is made to squeeze through a lens that supports empirical tyranny, there is a price we pay. God's grace (more apparent in other parts of these books!) is that we will never have to suffer through our own consequences alone.

Prayer:

God,
sometimes I don't like living
with the messes I make.
And I really get mad
at the messes that others make
that affect me!
Give me
the grace and compassion of Christ,
that I might sigh "Forgive them"
to both myself and others.

Today, I remember and pray for _____,
friends blessed by your love and compassion.

For your grace,
with your love,
and in Christ's name, I pray.

Saturday

Scripture:

- Ezekiel 28:25-26
- Psalm 23
- Luke 12:29-32

Reflection:

There is far more than enough grain and other food in the world to feed every person.

What would happen if we all actually did strive for the kingdom, where Christ fed, feeds, all without price?

What if Israel, after returning from exile and planting vineyards and eating their fruit then also turned and fed those who had been their captors?

What if we did the same - even just for one person?

Thankfully, God gives us signs that this can happen.

Even, sometimes, through me.

Prayer:

Jesus,
help me participate more
in God's kingdom
and less in the worries and distractions
of the culture around me.
And help me remember
that it's not all up to me,
but that you simply invite me
into the joy of working in you and you in me.

Today, I remember and pray for _____,
friends blessed by your love and compassion.

For your grace,
with your love,
and in Christ's name, I pray.