

## 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](http://www.standrewsuc.com)

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### ST. ANDREW'S HANEY UNITED CHURCH

## Daily Scripture and Prayer Time

(April 9<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup>, 2007)

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## Monday

### Scripture:

- Joshua 10.16-27
- Psalm 118.1-2,14-24
- 1 Corinthians 5.6b-8

### Reflection:

Well, we certainly come down to earth with a bang after the joy of Easter celebrations. Five dead kings and a reminder that no yeast is better than bad yeast. But there is no good yeast during the Passover celebrations. Nowadays, in the time leading up to Passover the entire house is deep cleaned to make sure no yeasty crumbs lurk in corners.

What if we make Easter a time to make sure that the corners of our souls are examined to get rid of sinful crumbs left lying around? What things could you find to sweep away? And what qualities or actions would you like to replace them with?

As for the poor five kings, the only good thing I can find in that story is that at least Joshua was a general who recognized the contributions of all who fought with him and didn't take all the glory for himself. Let's be a little gentler in cleansing our own lives.

### Prayer:

Bakerwoman God,  
be the yeast in us.  
Whatever is vain glory, greed,  
selfishness or covetousness –  
cleanse us of it.  
Whatever is good, honourable, kind,  
compassionate and merciful –  
may it grow in us.

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:

- Judges 4.17-23, 5.24-31a
- Psalm 118.1-2, 14-24
- Revelations 12.1-12

### Reflection:

I need to remember that these are stories about the defeat of evil by good (God), not just tales of war and murder, and that for many the resurrection means that death, despair and sin in general have been defeated once and for all. I do not necessarily see that these things have been defeated in the world I live in, especially sin.

But in these stories, the underdog (Jael and yesterday's story of Joshua) defeats the one more likely to succeed. The woman clothed with the sun has the help of Michael and his angels. Maybe we can take these stories to remind us that the battle against evil is not yet over. We are still part of it and sometimes we need help.

Where do you see evil that you are fighting? Multinational corporations? Wasteful consumption? A society that cares more for the rich and powerful than for the poor and voiceless? Sin is not just individual and sometimes we need an army to help us fight it.

### Prayer:

Show us your saving power, O God,  
that your realm may come.

Where we see  
the forces of evil at work in our world,  
give us wisdom and strength to destroy them,  
that the heavens may rejoice  
and all those who live on earth be free at last..

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:

- 2 Samuel 6.1-15
- Psalm 118.1-2,14-24
- Luke 24.1-12

### Reflection:

David responded to the presence of God with joyful abandon, the disciples with stunned incredulity. And I've heard it said that the reason Uzzah was struck down was not so much because he touched the ark as because he thought he was responsible for it. God can take care of GodSelf. And it's when we are willing to not be in control sometimes that amazing things can happen. Of course, I am a planner so I want to add that sometimes amazing things don't happen too. Sometimes you just get a mess.

Are there things in your life you need to let go of? Are you accepting responsibility for things that are beyond your control?

As adoptive parents we were told emphatically that we would have little to do with how our daughter turned out: it's mostly genetic. There's truth to that for all parents, though. And I think there's a certain freedom in that. The burden of perfection is lifted from my shoulders. Maybe I can share that with other parts of my life.

### Prayer:

God of joyful abandon  
and stunned incredulity,  
there is room for both of these  
in my life and in my faith.  
Help me to accept both  
and to learn from both;  
help me to be free from  
the responsibility of perfection,  
without losing the responsibility for myself.

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:

- 1 Samuel 17.1-23
- Psalm 150
- Acts 5.12-16

### Reflection:

I sense here a certain foreshadowing. (An old Bloom County comic strip contained the immortal words: "Foreshadowing, your sign of a quality comic".) There are a lot of comings and goings. David going back and forth to the sheep and to the battlefields. The Apostles going around Jerusalem, being recognized, respected and asked for miracles. Something is going to happen. Just not today.

For all that there is to be done in life, for all the things we may be called to do, sometimes it is time to await what comes next. Sometimes the time is ripe not for action, but for listening, gathering information, praying, discerning. Maybe now is such a time.

Sometimes, for now, our call is to just be doing what we are doing. And what is to come next will reveal itself in the fullness of time.

### Prayer:

God of now and of eternity,  
in all my doings,  
make me mindful of your presence,  
knowing that what I am doing  
may be what you are calling me to do.

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:

- 1 Samuel 17.19-32
- Psalm 150
- Acts 5.17-26

### Reflection:

The time of foreshadowing is over and action is upon us. The image of David versus Goliath is a time-honoured way of describing a struggle between the mighty and the seemingly insignificant. A quick google of "David & Goliath" gives articles about music, foreign policy, business, television shows, software companies. And a few about the Bible, as well. Usually, the phrase is used when the seemingly insignificant party does surprisingly well.

I wonder what it was like to be Goliath: ridiculously huge and admired only for your ability to crack skulls. I am reminded of the Simpsons episode where Bart is David and after a much more complicated series of events than the Biblical narrative eventually kills Goliath II, only to be jailed because Goliath was a good king who built roads, libraries and hospitals.

Perhaps it's a reminder not to assume that all the Goliaths are bad and all the underdogs are good.

### Prayer:

God of truth,  
challenge my assumptions.  
May I look for good where others see evil  
and truth where obfuscation is offered.

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:

- 1 Samuel 17.32-51
- Psalm 150
- Luke 24.36-40

### Reflection:

I suppose the connection between these two stories – one about death; the other about resurrection and new life – is the power of God who makes these things happen.

Certainly, I admire David's faith and confidence. To go up against a well-armed gigantic warrior with only your wits and a slingshot would seem almost foolhardy, if not for David's complete certainty that God will make it all work out for him. And it's a bit different from the disciples – startled and terrified – when Jesus appeared in their midst. They had already heard about the resurrection: where was their faith?

I would like to have the faith that David did. But when I tell myself that "all things work together for good for those who love God" I am aware that there is always the option that my idea of good may not be a deciding factor in how things work out. And I am glad to be able to recall that even the disciples were startled and terrified when the Risen Christ appeared in their midst.

### Prayer:

God of confidence and terror,  
in all I do,  
in all I am,  
and wherever I go,  
may I know the confidence  
of your presence with me.  
That I may be strengthened and comforted,  
challenged and kept safe.

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.