

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

ST. ANDREW'S HANEY UNITED CHURCH

22165 Dewdney Trunk Road
Maple Ridge, BC V2X 3H7

Phone: 604.463.9611
Email: standrewshaneyuc@telus.net
Web: standrewsuc.com

ST. ANDREW'S HANEY UNITED CHURCH

Daily Scripture and Prayer Time

(June 11th to 16th, 2007)

WRITER FOR THIS WEEK:
Rev. Gord Waldie
Riverview United Church
Azikokan, Ontario

Monday

Scripture:

- Job 22.1-20
- Psalm 68.1-10, 19-20
- Galatians 2.1-10

Reflection:

Factions and divisions. They have been a part of the church since the beginning. And sometimes (even often) they make us ask why we can't all just get along. Well the truth is that sometimes we can. Sometimes we are able to see that God is acting through others in a different way than God is acting through us.

That is what Paul and the others found in Jerusalem. They found out that the same God worked through all of them. It is that same realization that led to the formation of the United Church of Canada. Sometimes we can see past our divisions and find God there. If only it were more often.

Prayer:

God too often I find it so easy to forget that people I disagree with are part of the same big family. It is hard to remember to look past our differences to what we all have in common. And yet the rewards of doing that are so big. Help me to share the hope and the promise of Jesus' prayer – that all may be one.

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:

- Job 24.9-25
- Psalm 68.1-10, 19-20
- Galatians 2.11-14

Reflection:

It is such a common accusation towards the church: "why should I go there, they're all hypocrites". And Paul shows us that it has always been so.

To be hypocritical is to be two-faced; it grows out of the challenge of trying to please so many different people. And of course we all fall prey to hypocrisy from time to time. It is so easy to "put on a good face" when the time asks. But in God we are called to try to only have one face. Luckily God knows that we sometimes slip in our attempt to avoid hypocrisy.

So it is really only half in jest that the response to that accusation is "There's always room for one more".

Prayer:

OK God, let's be honest. Some days I really don't know who I am expected to be. Sometimes it feels like I am constantly changing masks. And then I wonder if I am contradicting myself, if I am being a hypocrite. I guess I really want help to remember who I am and to live out the old advice "this above all, to thine own self be true".

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:

- Job 31.16-23
- Psalm 68.1-10, 19-20
- Luke 8.40-56

Reflection:

Just the fringe, that's all it took. This woman, pushed by circumstance to the fringe of society just wanted a taste of God's presence. And that little taste, that fringe of the cloak brought healing.

Rich and powerful or poor and powerless. The power of God cares not for who is seen as important but just for who seeks it out. A woman on the edge brushing against a cloak or a rich man seeking help for his beloved daughter, the healing of God is equally available and equally potent. How does that realization change our vision of the world?

Prayer:

God, I admit that sometimes I fall prey to the myth of importance. I hear the voices around me defining who or what should get my care and attention. In the midst of these voices I need to hear you talking about a different definition of importance. I need to be told over and over again that all are important in their own way, despite how the world may classify them.

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 Kings 20.1-22
- Psalm 5.1-8
- James 4.1-7

Reflection:

In the end it all comes down to priorities. At least I think that is what lies underneath these harsh words from James.

When our priorities focus on the wrong things then we are led to disputes and conflicts. When we make a priority of the wrong things then we become too friendly with "the world" and in conflict with "The Way". It seems that James wants us to rethink what we want and how we go about getting what we want. That sounds like good advice.

Prayer:

"Give ear to my cry, O God; give heed to my sighing". After all these ages I echo the psalmist's prayer. God hear me when I cry out of my despair and my conflicts. God hear me when I complain about what I don't have. But also God speak to me and ask what my priorities really are. And continue to challenge me on what they should be

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 Kings 20.23-34
- Psalm 5.1-8
- Romans 11.1-10

Reflection:

"The quality of mercy is not strained...it blesseth him that gives and him that takes." The king of Israel's response to Ben-Hadad reminds me of those words from Shakespeare.

Ben-Hadad expected death. That was the normal result of losing a battle in his world. But instead he was shown mercy and offered the chance to make a treaty of peace. Given the choice what would I do? When I have the chance to give mercy or seek vengeance what do I do?

The gift of forgiveness is that God chooses mercy over vengeance every time. And God urges us to do the same. We can choose mercy because we have been shown mercy. Indeed mercy is "twice blest".

Prayer:

Lord have mercy, so goes the ancient prayer. And I continue to give thanks that you are indeed merciful God. Help me to understand the blessings and the obligations of mercy. Remind me that I am forgiven even when I am sure I deserve severe punishment. Push me to offer forgiveness in turn when my soul cries out for vengeance.

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 Kings 20.35-43
- Psalm 5.1-8
- Matthew 9: 2-8

Reflection:

This week on Extreme Makeover: Jesus Edition, don't let silly things like structures get in your way. Need to find God in your life but someone is standing in the path? Go around them. Some silly roof blocking your access? Tear it up. Find the way to God and God will be there waiting.

There are so many things in life that can stand between us and God. Sometimes it is other people, sometimes it is cultural definitions of who or what is "right and respectable", sometimes it is the church. But we can learn from these friends. When it is really important to seek the healing presence of God we can in fact make new paths. We can break our way in despite what others think.

Prayer:

God of back routes and broken roofs, God who calls us to find the new paths, God who is waiting for us to find a way in, we are all seekers in our own time and way. As I continue to find my way to your healing love, help me to be aware of the different ways to find it. Help me be willing to tear down those things that get in the way.

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

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