

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 4th to 9th, 2007)

WRITER FOR THIS WEEK:
Rev. Susan Ivany
Westminster United Church
Thunder Bay, ON

Monday

Scripture:

- Proverbs 7: 1-4
- Psalm 124
- Ephesians 4: 7-16

Reflection:

I can't help but react when I see yet another biblical reference to "loose women" and their wanton ways. The implication is that if it were not for the seductive ways of certain women, men would not behave badly.

Nonsense.

Life is about choices. Some choices are better than others, certainly, but we really need to move away from the idea that anyone else can be blamed for the personal choices we make.

God created each individual as a unique being. When we claim and own that reality, along with our personal responsibility for our life choices, everyone wins.

Prayer:

Gracious God,
you are the Source of life's goodness and,
by your grace,
I pray that this day will be one
in which I make positive choices for my life.
Help me to remember that you call us all
to a life of love and compassion,
and guide me as I move through this day.

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:

- Proverbs 8: 4-21
- Psalm 124
- Ephesians 5: 15-20

Reflection:

The difference between intelligence and wisdom is, in my view, a matter of the spirit. It is one thing to know a lot of "things" – a collection of facts. Even when that knowledge is exceedingly impressive in its scope, it may not necessarily be based on a foundation of wisdom. I believe that our relationship with God informs our understanding of the world, and therefore engages something deeper and more meaningful in all that learn about the world throughout our lives.

We are wise when we engage our whole selves in the activities of life.

Prayer:

God, teach me to wonder.
Guide me to a deeper exploration
of the important things in life –
relationships, beauty and sacredness.
Bless me with a spirit that is open
to the great wisdom of knowing
and loving
you.

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:

- Daniel 1: 1-21
- Psalm 124
- Luke 1: 46b-55

Reflection:

The prophet Daniel makes it clear – spiritual discipline nurtures wisdom. On the face of it, perhaps the disciplines of prayer, meditation, and even church attendance might seem to be time-consuming oddities to those not familiar with those practices. Whether we like it or not, we swim daily in a pond of secular consumerism where the stuff of the spirit is not necessarily valued. Perhaps our own spiritual example, like that of Daniel, can help the people around us to grow in wisdom and in faith.

Prayer:

Loving God,
most days I don't feel very wise,
nor would I claim to have
this faith journey figured out.
Even so,
when I spend time in prayer and reflection,
something within me shifts
ever so slightly.
Thank you God, for this day
and another opportunity to live
the faith I proclaim.

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:

- Exodus 29: 1-9
- Psalm 146
- Acts 22: 6-21

Reflection:

Change can be unsettling, exciting, thrilling, frightening, and even fun, depending of course on the circumstance. The Hebrew scripture for today gives us a glimpse into a pivotal moment of change for those being ordained to a life of service. Paul's conversion is one of the most profound and dramatic stories of transformation in our sacred scripture. It is important to remember that when our relationship with God shifts and grows, it is not necessarily accompanied by dramatic rituals or lights from above. Even the most subtle shift of the heart toward God's way of Love can make all the difference in the world.

Prayer:

Gracious One,
guide me through all of the changes
and chances of life.
Help me to recognize
the ways in which your Spirit
is leading me and transforming me
day by day.

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:

- Numbers 15: 17-26
- Psalm 146
- Acts 26: 1-11

Reflection:

When I was beginning my theological education, a young woman who had recently been ordained offered me these words of wisdom: "Always make sure that at the end of the day, you can come before God honestly and openly, knowing that you did your best. That is all God asks of you." I've never forgotten her wise counsel and it has helped me many times. With God, there is nothing to hide because we are known fully and loved unconditionally.

Prayer:

What a comfort it is, God,
to know that your love is given so freely
and so fully.
I try my best to live
as you have called each of us to live –
with a heart ready to love –
but I don't always get it right.
Thank you God
for loving me as I am.

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:

- Joshua 9: 1-27
- Psalm 146
- Matthew 9: 2-8

Reflection:

Mercy. It is one of those spiritual exercises that is tricky to articulate, but easily recognized when you're on the receiving end of it.

Mercy is easily woven into forgiveness and grace and love as something requiring a depth of humanity and compassion – the kind that leaves you speechless. Did Joshua show mercy after discovering the Gibeonites' deception, or was this just good leadership?

Perhaps mercy, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder.

Prayer:

God,
I know that you show me
mercy and forgiveness every day.
Do I offer the same mercy to others
whom I feel have wronged me?
Help me to be aware of opportunities
for mercy, compassion, kindness and caring
in your name.

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.