

## 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

(March 12<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup>, 2007)

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## Monday

### Scripture:

- Jeremiah 11.1-17
- Psalm 39
- Romans 2.1-11

### Reflection:

Paul's admonishment against judging is one of those that gets debated... well... sometimes gets thrown around in church debates.

One of the 'core values' of The United Church of Canada, at least within my life time, has been the ethic of inclusivity. Having just read Reg Bibby's new book *The Boomer Factor*, it is easy to see how this has reflected changes in Canadian worldview over the past four decades.

As much as I believe in that ethic, there's always been a question that tugs at me... is it possible to define who we are – as *this part* of God's household... without being exclusive?

What is the path of understanding who I am... who we are... without judging others who believe or act differently from me?

What are the places in our lives where an individual can judge another?

### Prayer:

Holy God, in the hours to come,  
help me to be open to your love.  
I ask you to give me eyes that see...  
    eyes that really see -  
those around me.  
Help me to see 'Christ within them,  
the hope of glory to come.'  
Help me to see who they are:  
    your people -  
called into being by your grace.

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 17.1-10
- Psalm 39
- Romans 2.12-16

### Reflection:

In the past I've said that I'm not a huge fan of Paul. But, as I've worked through this daily practice of pondering scripture, I've found a number of the words in the epistles saying a *lot* to me.

So, it really shouldn't surprise me when I hear Paul saying that even those who are not part of his covenantal relationship with God might live "what the law requires is written on their hearts".

Sometimes we forget that much of Paul's "known world" was pluralist in its worldview. To the Romans, as long as you were willing to bow to the Caesar's authority, it didn't really matter to which god you paid homage.

What does it mean for us to be followers of the Christ and people of God, in today's "here and now"?

### Prayer:

God of all life,  
let your law... and your love...  
be "written on my heart".  
Let my actions be reflections  
    of your great love.  
Let my eyes see  
    the reflections of your love,  
    echoing in those around me...  
of whatever faith -  
of whatever face -  
of whatever life.

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:

- Numbers 13.17-27
- Psalm 39
- Luke 13.18-21

### Reflection:

What is the kingdom of God like? Well, folks, its like... its like that mustard weed over there. From what I've been told, the mustard tree that Jesus talked about is one of those plants that has the habit of moving into whatever space is available around it. Once planted, grows... and grows... and grows... with or without help.

I've listened to gardeners talk, with some frustration, about similar kinds of plants. They have to keep a constant eye on them – and find themselves ripping up, or cutting back, sometimes doing whatever is necessary to keep the plant where they want it to stay.

Isn't that an image?

The household of God... God's reign... the kingdom of God it grows, giving shelter for the smallest of God's creatures... no matter what we do.

### Prayer:

God,  
when I pray, 'thy kingdom come'...  
I'm not sure I understand  
what that means.  
The picture of your household  
being a place of safety  
is beautiful.  
But... there are parts of  
'thy kingdom come'  
that frighten me.  
Help me... please...  
to understand – and to live – your reign.

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:

- Joshua 4.1-13
- Psalm 32
- 2 Corinthians 4.16-5.5

### Reflection:

I love this passage from Joshua. Its one I love to explore with congregations when they are celebrating their anniversary. (I realize that doesn't happen in all part of Canada... but taking time to remember how we came together and where God is leading us now can be a wonderful and exciting time.)

"When your children ask you what these stones mean, tell them..."

When our children ask us, "Why the church? What does it mean? Why do you care?" are we ready to tell the story of what God has done? My experience, growing up in the UCCan, is that we're actually quite afraid that someone is going to ask us that question... because we aren't sure we can answer it. We may have a certainty of God's presence and action in our lives, but we're often afraid that we don't have the words to explain it adequately.

What would it take to find the words to *begin* to express your faith, your church, and its place in your life?

### Prayer:

Sometimes, God,  
I have the sense that people I love,  
want to ask about how you fit into my life.  
Sometimes, God,  
I want to let them hear my story -  
not as a way of telling them how to live -  
but letting them know how important  
you are to me.  
When it happens... give me the words...  
and the wisdom to speak 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.

## Friday

### Scripture:

- Joshua 4.1-24
- Psalm 32
- 2 Corinthians 5.6-15

### Reflection:

Have anyone ever told you that you're 'over the top' about your faith?

I've had the experience of wanting to tell a couple of people that... that their exuberance in describing their relationship with God – and their desire that I have a similar relationship... and their sense that if I don't have a similar relationship then my relationship is somehow incomplete.

And its been frustrating. Fortunately, in a couple of those experiences, I've had a relationship with the people that's allowed me to say, "woah!"... without doing damage to our friendship.

I wonder if that's part of what keeps many of us UCCan types from sharing the 'faith' parts of our stories... even with people who trust us and who we trust.

How can we talk about God – about Jesus the Christ – about the Spirit... in ways that lift up, rather than do damage, to the relationships we in?

### Prayer:

God... as I work to live your love -  
help me to speak that love, too.  
Not in ways that say, "you should",  
but in ways that say, "this is why I am here".  
May the words of my mouth,  
as well as the meditations of my heart,  
and the actions of my life,  
be acceptable in your sight -  
today, and all the days to come.

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:

- Exodus 32.7-24
- Psalm 32
- Luke 15.1-10

### Reflection:

"Eternal, unchanging, God only wise." I remember singing that hymn when I was growing up. A few times, I've listened to people argue about whether God changes, or whether its just our perspective on God's actions that change. Most days, I'm pretty much in the first group.

There's something deeply wonderful and comforting to me about a God who is learning new things through relationship with the creation. The Exodus story tells of God being pretty fed up with the actions of the people of Israel – to the point where complete destruction is assured. As Moses listens to God, he argues against God's decision.

God listens.

God agrees.

The people of Israel continue on their journey... with the possibility of rebuilding their relationship with God still available.

### Prayer:

God...  
I know there are things you have to say  
that are important to me.  
Are there really things that I say  
that are important to 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.