

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

(March 26th to 31th, 2007)

WRITER FOR THIS WEEK:

Rev. Richard Bott

St. Andrew's Haney United Church

Maple Ridge, BC

Monday

Scripture:

- Exodus 40.1-15
- Psalm 20
- Hebrews 10.19-25

Reflection:

"And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds..."

Wow! That's a pretty un-United Church sentiment, isn't it? When I think "provoke", I think of the kind of things I used to do to my brother to get him to hit me, so that he'd be the one to get in trouble for fighting!

Hmmm... maybe that's not so far off. When Mary extravagantly anointed Jesus with her perfume, it certainly caused a reaction in those around her. As I think about it, I know that some of the things that I've done in my life – and in my ministry – have 'caused talk'!

I wonder if they've ever 'caused action'?

What can you do today or tomorrow that provokes another... not to anger – but to 'love and good deeds'?

Prayer:

Holy One...

Take my life and let it be consecrated all for thee.

Take my moments and my days.

let them flow in ceaseless praise...

and God... in those moments of 'provocation',

help those who see them,

to see You in them,

and to live love.

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 9.7-15
- Psalm 20
- 1 John 2.18-28

Reflection:

Part of my Lenten discipline has been to explore ideas that are outside of my usual way of thinking. So, for the past week, I've been reading books by many articulate and clear thinking atheists. They've given me a lot to think about.

How does my believe in God (and, more specifically, in God through Christ) make a difference in the world? How does it help? How does it harm?

Some of the things I've read suggest that I am less intelligent for my belief. Some of what I've read suggests that faith (of what ever shape or size) has done more damage to the world than any other single factor.

Unlike the writer of 1 John, I wouldn't call these writers 'Antichrists'. I may disagree with their worldview – as much as they disagree with mine – and yet, even in that disagreement, I have the sense of the presence of Christ.

What are the places of disagreement in your life? Can you see God in them? How?

Prayer:

Source of all that is,

Sometimes I don't agree with what is being said around me. Sometimes it feels like someone is trying to knock down everything that you've built up in me.

In those moments,
help me to gather together what has been knocked down...

and in the days to come,
help me to build something even more beautiful!

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:

- Habakkuk 3.2-15
- Psalm 20
- Luke 18.31-34

Reflection:

Have you ever been told something that is so astounding – so huge – so... awe-full – that your brain couldn't grasp it?

It's almost like our brains stick their fingers in their ears and sing, "la la la la la, I'm not listening"... believing that if we don't really hear it, it isn't true.

I wonder if that's what it was like for the disciples, when they heard Jesus saying that he was about to die and that his death would not be an easy one. We hear Jesus trying to tell them a number of times – with the result each time being either 'non-hearing' or disbelief.

It took his trial and crucifixion to get it through to them... and, even then, the disciples didn't really hear the "rise again" part.

What are the parts of your life in which the Christ is telling you something you don't particularly want to hear? Why not?

Prayer:

God of all love -
Open my eyes,
that I may see your truths in my life,
and in the lives of those around me.
Open my eyes,
especially in those places and times
where I squeeze them shut.
Be with me, in my joy and my fear, O God.

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:

- Isaiah 53.10-12
- Psalm 31.9-16
- Hebrews 2.1-9

Reflection:

As I read the readings for today, I found myself wrestling with a pretty big theological question, "Did God set Jesus up to be crucified?" It's a question that theologians have argued, pretty much for as long as there have been Christian theologians... so I don't expect to come up with an answer any time soon.

But, you know... a big part of me hopes that God had absolutely nothing to do with Jesus' crucifixion, except to watch it and mourn. A big part of me hopes that the God in whom I have put my trust wouldn't actively put someone into a place of torture – no matter the reason.

I don't believe God did, or does... but I wish I could know.

Prayer:

God of all time,
I know you as Greatest Compassion.
I know you as the Source of all love.
What did it do to you to watch
Jesus on that cross?
What does it do to you to watch
your children now...
killed by the violence in our lives?
Where are you in what has happened?
Where will you 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:

- Isaiah 54.9-10
- Psalm 31.9-16
- Hebrews 2.10-13

Reflection:

"For the mountains may depart, and the hills may be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you..."

I'm not sure about you, but I know that my life is in a place of constant change. Sometimes it has to do with work, sometimes it has to do with family... often it has to do with something deep down inside of me.

Everything changes, doesn't it? That's part of the reality of time. Things get broken down and built up. Life cycles on.

To hear that *no matter what*, God's love will never leave is very comforting to me. Actually, it's more than that – knowing that God's love is with us gives me the willingness to jump into the change and swim with it, rather than trying to fight its current.

What does God's promise of steadfast love mean to you?

Prayer:

Beloved,
in this moment, with you,
I remember the changes of my past.
In this moment, with you,
I look at the changes to come.
In this moment,
in the moments to come,
let your love carry me on.

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:

- Leviticus 23.1-8
- Psalm 31.9-16
- Luke 22.1-13

Reflection:

Ah, Judas... why did you do it?

For the past 2000 years we've wondered that. You've been painted as the worst kind of traitor – someone who would betray a friend. Others have argued that you simply wanted Jesus to take up his sword and start the revolution... and that pushing him into a corner would help. Still others have suggested that Jesus asked you to do this, and that you were sacrificing your honour at his request.

I wish you could tell me.

Because... in each of those three cases... I wonder if I would have done the same.

Prayer:

God of Peter,
God of Mary...
God of Judas...
my God...
help me to open my mind,
help me to open my heart,
help me to open my soul,
to you.
Help me to see my motives honestly,
help me to see my actions clearly,
help me to see the joys and sorrows,
that are their consequence

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.