

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 5th to 10th, 2007)

WRITER FOR THIS WEEK:
Rev. Gord Waldie
Riverside United Church - Atikokan, Ontario

Monday

Scripture:

- 1 Chronicles 21:1-17
- Psalm 105:1-42
- Romans 4:1-12

Reflection:

History, the telling of the old stories, is it really important? After all, what value do those stories have other than for misty-eyed reminiscing about the "good old days"?

I say that these stories have far more than mere sentimental value. They have value because they remind us that we have taken a journey to get to this place. They remind us that we can learn from the mistakes and the triumphs of our ancestors. Our challenges will be different and may require different answers but still the past has things to teach us.

And really, isn't that a big part of why we read the Bible? To learn from the experience of other people seeking to understand where and how God is active in their lives?

Prayer:

God of past, present and future,
thank you for the gift of presence
in all of time.

For the lessons of the past,
the guidance in the present,
and the hope for the future I give thanks.
Help me to find the balance
between tradition and novelty,
to respect the experience
of those who have gone before
and pass on my experience
to those who will follow me.

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:

- Numbers 14:10b-24
- Psalm 105:1-42
- 2 Peter 2:4-21

Reflection:

Sometimes it is hard to find God worth worshipping. This reading from Numbers is one of those times for me. The God who is arguing with Moses here seems petty and spiteful. A parent who acted in this way, who threatened to withhold love, to punish or destroy people for whining, would be called abusive.

The hero here is Moses. It is Moses who stands up and calls God to account. It is Moses who insists that it is more God-like to forgive than to commit mass murder. It is Moses who reminds us that sometimes part of being faithful is to think critically about what others say. Even if the other is God.

Prayer:

Confusing God,
there are times when the stories
we tell about you leave unanswered questions.
Help me to remember
that it is always alright
to ask the hard questions.
When you seem angry and distant
may I be ready to reach out,
to be like Moses and Abraham –
ready to engage you in dialogue and debate.
Grant me an openness of heart and mind
so that I am able to explore all the ways
you are revealed

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 Chronicles 20:1-22
- Psalm 105:1-42
- Luke 13:22-31

Reflection:

Ahh yes, the devout faith of fear, those times when our anxiety and despair about what is coming leads us to anguished prayer and devotion. The reality of such times can not be doubted. A cynic would be tempted to question the sincerity of those prayers, tempted to suggest that we only seem to need God in the bad times.

Luckily God isn't a cynic. Over and over again in Scripture we see God rejoicing when the people turn back to God. Some, like Jehoshaphat and the people of Judah, see spectacular results. Some, like the Prodigal Son, see equally wonderful results on a personal rather than national scale. But the truth emerges, in good and in bad we can always say with confidence "We are not alone".

Prayer:

God, it's when times are tough that I really know that I can't do it by myself. When times are good then it is easier to forget how I need to be aware of your presence in my life. Help me to remember to look for You in the good times and the bad. Remind me of the great promise that we are indeed not alone. Remind me that I can always be wrapped in the embrace of Your love and protection.

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:

- Daniel 3:19-31
- Psalm 63:1-8
- Revelation 2:8-11

Reflection:

Sometimes we need a protector. Sometimes we need someone to wrap us in a big hug and keep the bad things away. Just like three men thrown into a furnace. Of course it doesn't always work that way, but sometimes the idea of an angel there to keep us from harm sounds ever so good.

But even if the protection is not as complete or visible as we would like. It is there. Not always keeping us from harm but there to help us deal with the harm that is done. In the shadow of God's wings we too can sing for joy.

Prayer:

Ok God, I admit it.
I get scared sometimes.
There is so much out there that is frightening.
When the fear starts to get overwhelming remind me that I am not alone.
Help me to remember that the reality may not actually be as frightening as the media tells me it is too.
Protect me from myself,
my overactive thoughts,
and from the culture of fear that surrounds me.

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:

- Daniel 12:1-4
- Psalm 63:1-8
- Revelation 3:1-6

Reflection:

Letters. The Christian Scriptures are full of them. Most are letters from people to other people but Revelation starts with letters from God to seven churches.

What would our letter say? If God were sending a letter to our churches or to our households what would it say?

What would be praised in our lives? What about reprimands? Where would we be challenged in our thoughts and actions? Where would we be encouraged?

Would we even recognize that the letter was from God?

Prayer:

What message do you have for me God?
If I were to go on-line tomorrow and find an e-mail from you what would you want me to know?
Sometimes it is hard to tune out the noise and busy-ness of the world around me to see or hear what you have to say.
Whether you speak in the still small voice, or in the thunderstorm,
or in the people I meet each day,
let me be aware that You have something I need to hear.

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:

- Isaiah 5:1-7
- Psalm 63:1-8
- Luke 6:43-45

Reflection:

"By their fruits you shall know them" or at least so it is said. Is it really that simple? There is something about the whole idea that we are locked in as good people or bad people that seems depressing somehow. Surely experience shows that good things can come from unexpected places?

But then I read again. The hope is that no bad tree produces good fruit. So maybe we need to be more open about how we classify good and bad trees. Yes truly, we are known by our fruits. It is by our actions, not our intentions or our promises or our appearances, that we will be judged.

Prayer:

Forgiving God,
I don't want to be put into a slot as "bad" or "good".
I want to be given the chance to grow fruit despite any thorns or bad branches that I may have had in the past or the present.
I pray that I would find the good growing conditions that are out there.
May my growth be pruned and directed to reveal the love-light of 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.