

## 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

(May 7<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup>, 2007)

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## Monday

### Scripture:

- 1 Samuel 20:1-23
- Psalm 133
- Acts 11:19-26

### Reflection:

One translation of the Bible says "It is truly wonderful when relatives live together in harmony."

At first glance, the other two passages seem to run screaming and yelling from the Psalmist's words. David and Jonathan are caught in a desperate situation. Is Saul plotting David's death at a palace banquet? Can David trust Jonathan with his life or is Jonathan his father's son? All they know is that they can and must trust one.

After the death of Stephen, the church community was fractured and scattered; but the Word was shared wherever those seeking refuge landed. People responded to the genuine article, and the church grew. Was Barnabas sent out to impose order on what was seen as chaos from the center in Jerusalem or was he like a long lost relative, welcomed in to a burgeoning family?

How can we find our way to live harmoniously in creation and with each other in these days?

### Prayer:

Holy God, in the living of these days in these challenging times, I am open to discover harmony in my life, with You, with those around, with all that is around me. I am ready to go with you, to find your gift of harmony on the way and at the journey's end.

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:

- 2 Samuel 1:4-27
- Psalm 133
- Acts 11:27-30

### Reflection:

Some years back, I remember watching the trucks carrying bales of hay to trains destined for Western Canadian farmers to feed their cattle threatened by that summer's drought. It was just what you do when a neighbour is in need, one farmer said.

In the 1930's Maritime fishers and fruit growers sent salt cod and apples to help an earlier generation of westerners facing another dust bowl.

Money was collected from across the United Church to help those affected by the 1998 Ice Storm in the part of the country I, then, lived in.

Our history tells us we can live out what was modeled for us by the disciples, in Canada and around the world.

What connection do you see, yourself, with "the Church" in other parts of Canada and around the world? How does that connection move you to help or receive help where you are?

### Prayer:

God of all, you invite me to discover that my caring and sharing has and does still make difference:  
I thank you for brothers and sisters across this land whose sharing has shaped me and sustained me,  
and I thank you that I too,  
can share and sustain others by my generosity.

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:

- Leviticus 19:9-18
- Psalm 133
- Luke 10:25-37

### Reflection:

Who is my neighbour? The Good Samaritan is one of the best known and loved stories in the Bible; but it has lost its edge. Anyone who was in Jesus' audience at that time, would have gasped when he held up the Samaritan as the one who was the true neighbour. Samaritans could not ever be considered a neighbour. They were unclean, outside the covenant between God and Israel. A Good Samaritan—was unthinkable!

These days we name those who offer rare and remarkable service as Good Samaritans; but Jesus and the writer of Leviticus tell us to go and do likewise in our daily living.

Do the practices laid out in Leviticus give you some practical ideas for living out your calling to be Good, like the Samaritans was?

### Prayer:

God, can I live as that amazing man in Jesus' story did or the people of the Covenant did, following the Law? Help me on this day, to live generously, justly and courageously, in the way of your Son.

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:

- Proverbs 2:1-5
- Psalm 67
- Acts 15:36-41

### Reflection:

Would it be fair to say that we've all found ourselves at one time or another in the same situation as Paul and Barnabas? "There was a sharp argument, and they separated."

It is not an easy or comfortable place to be. You and a friend or a spouse hold a point of view over which there is no compromise. We've witnessed this at work among our colleagues and even in our churches! So much for harmonious relations between people of faith and good will!

I have caught myself wondering what is really going on when the temperature and tempers rise in a situation. What is at stake? Is it a valid disagreement or is it a manipulation of the relationship or a power play?

In such times, I've concentrated on what is most important. For Paul and Silas, it was strengthening the church. In Proverbs, it is the quest for insight and wisdom. Can you keep yourself focused what is truly valuable, as a person of faith?

### Prayer:

God, who was not in the earthquake, wind or fire, but in the still small voice, speak to me this day. Cool the heat of the argument. Focus my attention on what is most valuable. Move me to seek it.

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:

- Proverbs 2:6-8
- Psalm 67
- Acts 16:1-8

### Reflection:

One verse, verse 4 caught my eye in the Acts passage. Paul, Silas joined by Timothy went through the towns and delivered to the believers the rules decided upon by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem.

As one who administers rules in my ministry, locally and in the courts of the church, I have to ask myself to what end am I doing, what I am doing. I certainly have not always agreed with my denomination or local congregations, and shared what I feel and think as appropriate; but behind a rule or standard I've usually been able to find the reason why: fairness, justice, equity, love.

I remember reading C. S. Lewis' comment that the cold indifference of a bureaucracy was the unique sin of the 20th century.

Today, in a new century, we might well ask how and if our rules are a mark of faithfulness or sin?

### Prayer:

Wise and wonderful God, I live in a world of rules and regulations, where one person's better idea is another person's downfall. Help me to see what is wheat and what is chaff in my daily dealings.

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:

- Proverbs 2:9-15
- Psalm 67
- Luke 19:1-10

### Reflection:

It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than it is for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, Jesus once said; and, then there is Zacchaeus, a fellow whose bank account is sized in inverse proportion to his physical height.

When Jesus announced he was going to stay with the most unpopular guy in town, the crowd murmured its disapproval.

What do you think you would have said? Who do you see in your mind when you hear Jesus say, "I have come to seek and save the lost"?

### Prayer:

Lord of all, rich and poor, I pray for insight to see you as you are—open and welcoming of all people. Your openness challenges me and my way of seeing the world. Let me see with your eyes and take in your vision of a world and humanity made new.

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.