

## 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 and their minister, the Rev. Richard Bott.**

The suggested scripture readings are based on the Consultation on Common Text's *Daily Lectionary*.

ST. ANDREW'S HANEY  
UNITED CHURCH

## Daily Scripture and Prayer Time

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## Monday

### Scripture:

- Exodus 12.17-22
- Psalm 102.1-17
- Acts 7.17-40

### Reflection:

Yesterday was the beginning of the commemoration and celebration of Passover for our Jewish sisters and brothers. Families around the world gathered at table to remember, again, the story of God's bringing them out of slavery.

There are many things that are beautiful – and powerful – about this time. One that I find quite wonderful is that, when the story is told, it is told in such a way that brings the teller and listener right back to Egypt. This is not just about ancestors, but about the people who are telling the story and hearing it again.

When we think of our own commemorations and celebrations of God's presence... how often do we find ourselves "brought back" into the presence?

### Prayer:

Holy One,  
I celebrate your people Israel,  
I ask that your blessing  
continue to be with them,  
and with all who are a part  
of your great Story.  
Help all of us to find a just and loving  
peace,  
and hope for all our tomorrows.

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 3.5-12
- Psalm 102.1-17
- Acts 7.44-56

### Reflection:

The early church wasn't the easiest place to be. But then, speaking truth as one understands is isn't always easy... and can lead people into pain – or death.

Stephen believed he was speaking God's truth. The scriptures have him speaking his words with a great deal of certainty, and with no little amount of frustration. The people responded out of their own place of fear and anger – and Stephen died.

I wonder how often we speak truth as we understand it, but in ways that people around us can't hear? I wonder, how often do we respond in fear and anger when others' truths are shared with us?

How would our story be different if we responded out of God's love, rather than our fear.

### Prayer:

God of all truth,  
God of all love,  
God of all -  
Open my ears to your Presence  
in the words and actions  
of those around me.  
Open my heart to your Presence  
that I might speak your Love.  
Open my eyes to your Presence  
that I might see your truth,  
and your truths.

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:

- Proverbs 3.13-18
- Psalm 102.1-17
- John 8.31-38

### Reflection:

When I read the gospel according to John, I remind myself that the writer did not have a good relationship with the rest of the people of Israel... and that bias comes through pretty clearly.

In this gospel, whenever I see the words "the Jews", I find myself hearing, "the people"... because, when I look closely at how "the Jews" are responding, I see my own face staring right back.

Regular everyday people, with fears and hopes and dreams – some similar to ours, and some very different.

When I realize that, many of the people's reported words and actions make a lot more sense to me.

So – just between us – how much do you see yourself in these passages?

### Prayer:

Ground of my faith, source of my being,  
lover of my soul -

help me to see  
my presence in your Story.

Help me to see  
that their fears and my fears  
come from similar places.

Help me to see  
that your love, and my love,  
stands in the face of all fear.

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:

- Genesis 6.5-22
- Psalm 66.8-20
- Acts 27.1-12

### Reflection:

Forshadowing. That wonderful practice in storytelling of giving the listener clues that *something* is going to happen. I can almost hear the foreboding soundtrack being played, with winter clouds beginning to show on the horizon.

The people who put together the lectionary did a great job of leaving us in a "cliffhanger" moment in the book of Acts. What's going to happen next? Will the captain decide to put out to the winter sea? Will they find safe harbour? Will all hands go down with the ship?

Where is God in their decision?

How many "cliffhanger" moments have been – or are – in our lives?

Where do you see God in those times?

### Prayer:

God -  
there are moments,  
bits of time,  
when it feels like I'm hanging  
at the edge of a cliff,  
on a root  
that's about to come out of the ground.  
It doesn't feel safe,

and I'd like to know what's  
going to happen next.  
Remind me that you're with me...  
whatever happens next?

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:

- Genesis 7.1-24
- Psalm 66.8-20
- Acts 27.21-38

### Reflection:

Just before our daughter came to be part of our family, we were decorating her room. It was really interesting to see how many different versions of Noah's story abound, to be placed on nursery walls.

But only the end part – pairs of happy animals and happy people standing under a bright, colourful rainbow.

Which makes sense for a nursery – but doesn't really do justice to the story.

I often feel like I want to skip over the loss and grief of the death that came before the promise of new life, not just in Noah's story, but in day-to-day life.

But that wouldn't really be fair to the "story" of people's lives, would it?

### Prayer:

God -  
I know you are with me,  
in the wonderful, joyful, happy times.  
Help me to know you are with me,  
in the times of loss,  
and grief,  
and fear.

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:

- Genesis 8.13-19
- Psalm 66.8-20
- John 14.27-29

### Reflection:

"Do not let your hearts be troubled... neither let them be afraid." (Jn 14.27)

One of the things I've come to understand is that many people's lives – and often my own – are driven by fear. Sometimes the fear is out in the open, other times it is hidden in the guise of anger.

Jesus offered to his disciples "his peace."

I believe that the Christ offers to all that same peace.

What would we look like... what would I look like – if I accepted that gift?

### Prayer:

God of all love,  
God of all joy,  
God of all peace -  
fill me, I pray.  
Let me know,  
that in my fear, you are with me.  
Let me know,  
that I don't have to be afraid.  
Let me know...

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.