

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*.

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ST. ANDREW'S HANEY UNITED CHURCH

Daily Scripture and Prayer Time

(April 28th to May 3rd, 2008)

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Monday

Scripture:

- Genesis 9.8-17
- Psalm 93
- Acts 27.39-44

Reflection:

A couple of weeks ago I looked out my window and saw something I had never seen before – a double rainbow. The colours were vibrant and stretched far enough that I could see chords in them. I stood there watching until it slowly disappeared... and I stood there, in wonder for many more minutes.

I had a similar "full of awe" moment when my brain wandered across Gen. 14-15: "When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh."

In the Noah story, the rainbow was meant to be a reminder of the covenant. But it wasn't necessarily a reminder for us!

There's something exciting for me that God needs reminders, too.

What are the covenants for which you need rainbows?

Prayer:

You are my God, I am your creation -
Alleluia!
You are my Source, I am your change -
Alleluia!
You are my Life, I am your love -
Alleluia!
Alleluia, Loving 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.

Tuesday

Scripture:

- Deuteronomy 5.22-33
- Psalm 93
- 1 Peter 3.8-12

Reflection:

I love my brother – dearly, but living with the guy was never easy. To be fair, I'm sure he'd say the same thing about me.

As teenagers, we would do quite a bit to put each other "in his place", which usually meant either one of those well-honed insults that could cut to the core, or one of those well placed elbows that could lead to a knock-down, drag-em-out, battle.

In our self-focused righteousness, each of us believed we were defending ourselves and doing the right thing. Sadly, that 'righteousness', along with a how we defended it, did a beautiful job of hiding how much we actually loved each other.

Even as adults who have worked to rebuild our relationship, there are times that one of us will fall back into the old pattern. Here's the thing – when the other doesn't engage in the old way... when he responds with a statement of love, rather than a jab, we remember again how important we are to each other.

How could 1 Peter 3.9 speak to your life?

Prayer:

Holy One,
help me to look at my relationships -
the long-term ones, the new ones...
and the ones yet to be born.
Help me to see where *my* words,
and *my* actions, and *my* responses,
have harmed.
And... please... help me to
"repay with a blessing".

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:

- Deuteronomy 31.1-13
- Psalm 93
- John 16.16-24

Reflection:

I have this picture in my head of the conversation that Jesus was trying to have with the disciples. They do everything they can, short of putting their fingers in their ears and singing, "lalalalaaa", to keep from hearing what he was saying.

"In a little while..."

"What does he mean by 'little while'?"

"I am going..."

"Going? Where is he going? We're going with him, right?"

"to not be with you anymore."

How often do we let our fears plug our ears to the possibilities of life?

Prayer:

God of many Names,
God of many Voices -
when I can't hear...
when I won't hear...
speak to me again, and again,
and again -
until I listen, and know,
and stop being afraid.

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:

- Acts 1.1-11
- Psalm 93
- Luke 24.44-53

Reflection:

Christ's Ascension – being bodily taken into the household of God – is the big theme of the day.

I wonder how the writers of the gospel of Luke and the book of Acts expected us to hear this story. I'm sure that they wanted us to get a sense of awe and wonder and holy mystery... but I get the feeling that there is something more. Something that the people who first heard it would have said, "Ahhhh! He ascended into heaven!!!"

In many religions traditions, going up has signified moving closer to the Divine. In some, like ancient Greece, there are stories of human beings being lifted up into godhood.

What do you hear in Christ's ascension?

Prayer:

To be loved by you, God,
is a kind of ascension.
To be part of creation,
loved into being by you,
is a joy.
As I open myself to your Story,
help me to open my eyes
to your living Story,
in the people I meet today.

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:

- 2 Kings 2.1-12
- Psalm 93
- Ephesians 2.1-7

Reflection:

For some odd reason, I've been thinking about my own mortality lately. It may be that I'm entering into my "mid-life." Perhaps it's because I see new possibilities lived out in my five year-old's explorations. Or, maybe, it's because so many of the daily readings this week and last have focused on death and whatever comes next!

Please note – I'm *not* saying that this time of reflection is a bad thing. In fact, it has reminded me to review some of the things in place around my upcoming death – you know – insurance, wills, a couple of letters.

How often do we think about our deaths? Can we do it in ways that help us to live, rather than paralyze us?

Does the belief that "...in life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us," help?

Prayer:

God...
wherever I am in my life -
hours, days, months or years away
from being a part of your household
in a way I've not experienced,
help me to remember
that you are always with me.
I am never alone...
and I don't – ever – have to be afraid.

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:

- 2 Kings 2.13-15
- Psalm 93
- John 8.21-30

Reflection:

Sometimes, when I'm reading scripture – especially the Gospels – I wonder to myself, "Why couldn't they get what Jesus was saying?"

When I hear myself asking that question, I take a good, long, hard look at myself. In my own way, I'm a pretty stubborn person. I like to think of myself open to God's presence changing me... but I also know that I'm pretty good at not wanting to be pushed from the path that I believe is where I should be heading.

Sometimes I'm as certain about my stance as the religious authorities of Jesus' day were about theirs.

Maybe I need to be less sure about what I know!

Prayer:

God of all times, and places,
and possibilities -
can I ask for your help?
Where I need to be sure and certain,
help me to be sure and certain.
Where I need to be open and flexible,
help me there, too.
Let me hear your voice,
in the voices of those around me.
Let me see the Ascended Christ,
in the faces of all the world.

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.