

## 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

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## Monday

### Scripture:

- Exodus 1.1-7
- Psalm 8
- Romans 2.1-11

### Reflection:

Where do humans fit into the Divine Order? Are we the pinnacle of creation or merely another equal part of it? The creation story in Genesis 1 and this Psalm suggest that Humanity is the crowning achievement of creation. With that status comes responsibility.

We are told to have dominion over the earth, but the Psalm reminds us that this dominion is under the oversight of the Sovereign, Creating One. How does that shape our dominion-ship?

But I find it more helpful to think of us as equal partners with the rest of creation. Dominion language makes us think that we are in control and that our wants take precedence over every other part. But in the end, the Scripture is clear, we have a responsibility to care for creation, whether we have dominion or are just a small part of it.

### Prayer:

God who has created and is constantly creating and re-creating. Even as I wonder at the marvels of the world around me I am humbled by much of it. As I try to live responsibly within this creation open my eyes to what responsible living might mean. Open my heart to be a partner with my neighbours, both human and non-human.

Today I remember and pray for \_\_\_\_\_, blessed by your love.

For your grace, with your love, and in Christ's name, I pray. Amen.

## Tuesday

### Scripture:

- Exodus 2.11-15a
- Psalm 8
- Romans 11.33-36

### Reflection:

Who can comprehend the full magnitude of God? Who can claim that they have a complete picture of who/what God is?

Over and over again we are reminded in Scripture that the answer is no one. God is bigger than our comprehension, God is bigger than our metaphors. In fact that is why we have to use metaphors to describe God. Because we have no language to do so adequately.

And if God is beyond our language, beyond our description, how dare any of us claim that our picture of God is the only one?

### Prayer:

God in whom we live and move and have our being, continually I try to understand how you are present in my life. Help me avoid the trap of believing that my concept of You is the only way to experience your presence. Remind me always that fully comprehending You is beyond any one of us and so we need to share with each other what we know and experience.

Today I remember and pray for \_\_\_\_\_, friends, family, community, creation - blessed by your love.

For your grace, with your love, and in Christ's name, I pray. Amen.

## Wednesday

### Scripture:

- Exodus 2.15b-22
- Psalm 8
- Matthew 26.6-13

### Reflection:

Wastefulness or generosity? When I read this story a large part of my psyche has to agree with the disciples. And the same argument can be made about many of the choices we make in the world, and in the church. Why do we waste our resources on gaudy displays instead of concrete actions of helping?

But in the story Jesus calls the disciples back. He says this was a good and generous thing. And when you read about the building of the grand churches over the years, when you ask why people give to new curtains or stained glass or the pipe organ, you realize that these are acts of worship – not gaudy displays of wealth.

So maybe the wastefulness or generosity question isn't so black and white after all.

### Prayer:

Gracious God, there are so many ways I can offer myself, my treasures and my life in your service. Sometimes I do that through concrete actions that benefit others, that improve their lives. Sometimes I share by giving gifts that have no apparent purpose except to glorify and praise. Help me to remember that both are gifts of love. Help me remember that gift-giving feeds more than the empty belly, it also feeds the empty soul.

Today I remember and pray for \_\_\_\_\_, friends, family, community, creation - blessed by your love.

For your grace, with your love, and in Christ's name, I pray.

## Thursday

### Scripture:

- Exodus 2.23-24
- Psalm 105.1-6,16-22,45b
- Ephesians 5.1-6

### Reflection:

In the midst of their suffering, in the life of slavery the people cry out. And, quite possibly to their surprise, God hears them. God hears their cry and the story of exodus, of release from bondage is begun.

In the world today there are many who cry out. In my part of the country we rely on forestry to build the economy. And that industry is falling to its knees. If we cry to God (and I am not at all sure people are crying to God just now) what will our release look like? In this world there are always people who struggle. There are always people who need release.

Where will our salvation come? Is there another Moses waiting to free us from our enslavement? If so, will we follow that leader?

### Prayer:

God of freedom, God of justice, so many people in this world need relief from their suffering. We are enslaved by many different things. We struggle to meet the demands of new Pharaohs. Bring us freedom, bring us justice. And help us to be ready to follow the path to those things even when it forces us to embrace change.

Today I remember and pray for \_\_\_\_\_, friends, family, community, creation - blessed by your love.

For your grace, with your love, and in Christ's name, I pray.

## Friday

### Scripture:

- Exodus 3.16-25
- Psalm 105.1-6,16-22,45b
- 2 Thessalonians 2.7-12

### Reflection:

Telling the story, remembering the past. These are important things to do. As people of faith we tell the stories of how God has acted in the past to help us remember that God is acting in the present. As people with a history we tell the stories of the past in the hope that the remembering will help us understand the present and look forward to the future.

The goal of history is not to try and relive the past. The goal of history is not to romanticize the "good old days". History is part of who we are, part of how we got here. But we don't want to live there. We live in the here and now, we look forward to what will come, but we also remember where we have been – giving thanks for the blessings and remembering the hardships.

### Prayer:

Today I remember and pray for \_\_\_\_\_, friends, family, community, creation - blessed by your love.

For your grace, with your love, and in Christ's name, I pray.

## Saturday

### Scripture:

- Exodus 4.1-9
- Psalm 105.1-6,16-22,45b
- Matthew 8.14-17

### Reflection:

I always struggle with the healing stories in the Gospels. My cynical, practical, semi-scientific mind recoils at the supernaturalism in them. Knowing that not all those who pray for healing are "cured" makes me wonder what that says about an all-loving God.

But the stories are there. They are there and so we need to decide what we do with them. What do they tell us about Jesus and about God? Maybe they are yet another reminder that we don't deal with any of life's dis-ease alone. Maybe they are a reminder that, as Shakespeare's Hamlet said: "There are more things in heaven and earth Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

### Prayer:

God of healing, in the midst of life's diseases I need your comforting presence. I pray for healing in a troubled world. Healing not only of broken bodies but also tortured souls and crushed spirits. And knowing the healing may not mean cure, I ask for the calm of living with a bit of dis-ease when needed.

Today I remember and pray for \_\_\_\_\_, friends, family, community, creation - blessed by your love.

For your grace, with your love, and in Christ's name, I pray.