

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

(August 4th to 9th, 2008)

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Monday

Scripture:

- Genesis 31.22-42
- Psalm 17.1-7,15
- Romans 1.8-15

Reflection:

The twists and turns in the story of Jacob's life are many and varied!

Here we have a chase scene worthy of a Wednesday evening television Show, followed by another deception, followed by a protestation of innocence. I keep waiting for a Crime Scene Investigator to show up and search for evidence!

If we read Jacob's story through, we realize that these twenty years have been filled with various schemes to get ahead – Laban's scheme to use Jacob's desire for Rachel to get him to work for many years (and to marry off both daughters), Jacob's scheme to build his flocks, Rachel's scheme to get back at her father by taking the household Gods...

What are we supposed to get from all of this?

Perhaps the reminder that scripture is filled with stories of God's people who are people. People with both greatness and very human desires.

People like us.

Prayer:

Holy One,
you know all that I am.
You know my story,
from its start, to this very moment.
With all of my goodness,
and all of my blemishes,
I am still yours!
Thank you, loving God!

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:

- Genesis 32.3-21
- Psalm 17.1-7,15
- Acts 2.37-47

Reflection:

I find the description of the early church to be quite wonderful.

The believers came together, pooled their resources, shared to fulfill need, each day spent time in prayer (together), ate what they had in celebration and in thanksgiving of those around them and of God.

How much different would our lives look if we put into place even one of these practices?

Prayer:

God of all things,
all people,
all places -
I am part of your community -
your people.
Help me to see what is needed,
in my life, and in our lives.
Help me to offer what I can.
Help me to accept what I need.
Help me to be
your people,
my God.

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:

- Isaiah 43.1-7
- Psalm 17.1-7,15
- Matthew 15.32-39

Reflection:

I'm not sure how Jesus fed all of those people. Was the solution a miracle... or did it come out of a more mundane response?

But, you know, whatever the origin of the solution, what I find even more interesting is Jesus' interest in taking care of the people's physical need. He wanted to make sure that they were fed, and would be safe on their journey home.

I often feel like the church has taught a kind of dualism - the spiritual is 'good', the body is 'bad'.

Isn't it wonderful that Jesus cared about both?

Prayer:

For all of life, thank you God!
For the breath in my lungs,
for the blood in my veins,
for the nourishment,
the sunshine,
and the rain,
thank you, God!

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:

- Genesis 35.22b-29
- Psalm 105.1-6,16-22,45b
- Acts 17.10-15

Reflection:

Whatever one thinks about Paul, they can't miss the fact that he made a pretty big splash wherever he went.

Communities of faith don't always react well to change, do they? Especially the kind of change that challenges the previous order.

Change often means our rhythms will be disrupted.

Change often means that we need to look at things that have been held sacred and ask, "Why?"

Change means that we're going to be different when we come out the other side.

How do you react to the change of God - like the folk of Thessalonica, or the folk of Berea?

Prayer:

God,
change is constant in my life.
Sometimes its exhilarating.
Sometimes its exhausting.
Sometimes I'm afraid
of what is going to happen
in the midst of the change,
and following it.

Help me to be open to the changes
you offer.

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:

- Genesis 36.1-8
- Psalm 105.1-6,16-22,45b
- Acts 18.24-28

Reflection:

There is a saying, "History is written by the victors."

I'm reminded of those words when I read the book of Acts. It is in this book that we begin to see the consolidation of the church.

Apollos - who had "only" been baptised by John - was preaching his understanding of God's truth. Priscilla and Aquila, hearing him, offered correction. Apollos, corrected, became an even greater evangelist.

We often like to think of the early church as united... but, when we read closely, we realize that there was as much difference of interpretation and belief as we see in the church today.

Prayer:

Loving God,
for all the times I try to box you in,
push my boundaries a little bit wider.
For all the times I forget,
that I was created in your image,
not the other way around,
shake me up
by showing me a different part
of who you are.

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:

- Genesis 37.5-11
- Psalm 105.1-6,16-22,45b
- Matthew 16.1-4

Reflection:

Was Joseph naive, or did he have a bit of a nasty streak?

To tell one's brothers, especially when one is already Dad's favourite, that they were going to be subordinate doesn't strike me as a way of building family relations.

How often do we - sometimes unwittingly, sometimes not - flaunt who we are, or what we've got?

How often are we surprised when the reaction is not one of awe... but one of anger?

Prayer:

Loving God...
today, I pray
for the needs of the world.
I pray for the places that are hurting.
I pray for the people that are hurting.
I pray that their needs,
and my needs,
will be filled.

Help me to see when I am sharing
the gifts you have given me.
Help me to see when I am flaunting
those gifts.

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.