

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

(February 25th
to March 1st, 2008)

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Monday

Scripture:

- Genesis 24: 1-27
- Psalm 81
- 2 John 1-13

Reflection:

The servant of Abraham is sent out to do no small task. He is to find a wife for Isaac. Not just any wife, but one who will be willing to leave her home for a man she has not seen.

It is an enormous task, and one of immense importance. The servant seems to have had no worries about it, however. He knows that this is important and he knows he is not alone in carrying it out.

We read many times in scripture of someone who has a job to do inquiring of God if this is the right thing to do, or the right person to approach. I wonder how often we find ourselves in a similar place - wanting God to write in the sky in letters of fire, what we should do in a situation. In my experience, it doesn't work quite like that, but the answer is there if we look for it.

I have asked God to have someone come and tell me, using exact words what I should do in a given situation. I've never had the kind of reply that the ancients seemed to have. I have had replies in the spirit of what I have asked. I've had a reply that answers my question, but not in the words I hoped to hear.

Are you searching right now? Do you have questions that you want to inquire of God about? Are you open to hearing God's answer in a different form from what you expect?

Prayer:

God of wisdom, we have so many questions that we want to have answered. Like the servant of Abraham, we often set out on a quest and like him we want to know we are doing what you would have us do. Help us to hear your voice as you speak to us through others, through events, and through our hearts.

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:

- Genesis 29: 1-14
- Psalm 95
- 1 Corinthians 10: 1-4

Reflection:

We read today of another man who went out in search of a wife. This time it is Jacob, and he goes himself. He has a vision in which God confirms him in his quest. Then we read of the first meeting of Jacob and Rachel. It is the beginning of a love story that will face challenges, but will continue to rely on God.

What happens in your heart when you face a challenge? Do you want to overcome it? Do you see God's hand at work in it? Do you rely on God's love and strength to carry you?

Sometimes it seems just too hard to carry on. Sometimes the challenges that we face seem too big to get over. Sometimes we doubt that we are going in the right direction. All of these feelings and many others are part of life for all of us. And that is when, it seems to me, it is most important to seek for God's voice. When we hear the voice of God, it is a reminder of the love story that is going on between God and each one of us.

Prayer:

Loving God many of us are facing challenges that seem too much to bear. When we read of the Ancients who faced challenges it is so easy for us to think that you do not speak in the present day as you did in the past. Help us to overcome those feelings and to turn to you. Remind us of the love story that is going on between us and you. Speak, that we may hear your voice.

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Wednesday

Scripture:

- Jeremiah 2.4-13
- Psalm 95
- John 7.14-31, 37-39

Reflection:

A recurring theme of water is running through our Scripture this week. So many things happen around water. The flocks of the ancients are watered and against that background and we hear a story. Jeremiah accuses the people of rejecting God as the fountain of living water, and Jesus offers living water to the people.

As we move through the season of Lent, we are reminded of the call to repentance. To turn away from life draining ways and towards life giving ways. To listen for the voice of God and to not only hear it, but to respond to it.

Is God speaking to you in ways that you do not hear? Are you being called into a different way of being a follower of Jesus Christ? Are you being confirmed in the path you have chosen? Is there something you need to turn away from in order to turn towards Jesus?

Prayer:

God, the fountain of living water, come to our parched hearts with your life giving healing water. Help us to recognize our need for it in our hearts as we recognize our need for food and shelter for our bodies. May this living water flow out from us like rivers.

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Thursday

Scripture:

- 1 Samuel 15:10-21
- Psalm 23
- Ephesians 4: 25-32

Reflection:

The writer of the letter to the church at Ephesus continues the theme of repentance, of putting away the thoughts and feelings that would challenge us. It is OK to feel these things, he seems to be saying, but it is not OK to allow them to hold us in unloving ways of relating to one another.

So what do we do when someone hurts, or angers us? My suggestion is that when we have worked out exactly why we are feeling as we do, that we sit down and pray for the situation. Pray for us to hear God's voice regarding our part in the issue. Pray for help for us to choose a Godly response. Pray for the person with whom we have the issue.

Are you in a situation of conflict that isn't resolved? I pray for the healing that God can give to surround you, and bless you.

Prayer:

God of Love and peace, I pray for those unique precious persons who right this minute are facing situations of conflict or of hurt. Where words have been said and heard that do not honour our call to love one another. Where relationships are broken and in need of help. May the words of the Psalmist echo in the hearts of all people. "The Lord is my shepherd, I'll not want." May your love overcome the hurt that people are experiencing here and now.

May the repentance of Lent last the whole year through.

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Friday

Scripture:

- 1 Samuel 15: 22-31
- Psalm 23
- Ephesians 5:1-9

Reflection:

King Saul's repentance came too late. God had already decided that Saul had disobeyed and would have to pay the price. The letter to the church at Ephesus stresses the importance of rejecting pagan practices. We view scripture through the lens of Jesus life, death and resurrection, and I ask the question is it too late for us?

Too late to ask forgiveness for our unloving ways?

As I look at the way of Christ through the lens of two thousand years, my heart cries out, "No, No, No! It is not too late." This is not a result of my natural optimism and sunny disposition – ask my family about those qualities! – it is the result of feeling myself to be a precious child of God, and feeling *all* people to be precious children of God. It is a result of the sacrifice that was the call on the life of Jesus the Christ.

Do you feel your uniqueness? Do you feel your preciousness? Are you walking in that relationship of love and trust that God desires for each one of us?

Prayer:

God of all, as each one of us takes this journey with you, we sometimes lose sight of our uniqueness and preciousness. We sometimes forget how loved we are. sometimes we get lazy, and coast along without too much reflection on where our path lies. In these times we thank you for those who help us to remember. Thank you for the people of scripture whose stories can be an inspiration to us. Thank you that if we forget you, you never forget us.

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Saturday

Scripture:

- 1 Samuel 15: 32-34
- Psalm 23
- John 1:1-9

Reflection:

Although Saul had repented, there was still the outstanding question of what God required. I don't think of the prophets as people of violence. I think of them as thoughtful, prayerful people who are close to God. And I think of God as all-loving for all people. But here we have Samuel taking over Saul's role and he "hewed Agog to pieces before the Lord."

It doesn't sit comfortably with me. As I reflect on it however, it seems to me that Samuel became God's instrument. I wonder if he had some sleepless nights after his attack on Agog?

Just as I am different characters to different people – I'm a wife, a mother, a sister, a friend, a minister, - there are different aspects to God, and we relate differently depending on our need. God comes to us as Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer, to name a few of the attributes of God. At different times we relate differently to God.

How do you need God to relate to you today?

Prayer:

God of relationships, I come to you today, full of your love. Of all the ways that you come to me, today I need you to come as _____, and I need to come to you as _____. I rest in this relationship, feeling myself loved and precious in your sight.

Today, I remember and pray for _____, friends blessed by your love and compassion.

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In Christ's name I pray.