

## 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

(July 14<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup>, 2008)

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## Monday

### Scripture:

- Micah 1.1-5
- Psalm 142
- I Thessalonians 4.1-8

### Reflection:

"God, what would you like me to hear today?" The thing for me is that when I get to scriptures like some of this week's prophetic voices speaking God's judgment and anger, my first inclination is to go and clean a cutlery drawer, wash the car, treat myself to a latte – or some other avoidance behavior! I find it hard to listen.

This morning I am actually sitting at a coffee shop, wondering if I really want to ask what God wants me to hear today. So this is what I bring to the conversation with God. As I sit and tell God about my reluctance to pray, my attention is drawn to one line of a song on the CD that is playing: "...lookin' in the eyes of love." Grammatically, it needs work, but spiritually it's what I need to hear right now!

### Prayer:

Holy One,  
grace me to "look in the eyes of your love" today – not avoiding anger but seeing and hearing it with eyes and ears attuned to your love.

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.

## Tuesday

### Scripture:

- Jeremiah 49.1-7
- Psalm 142
- Ephesians 4.17-5.2

### Reflection:

"Be angry but do not sin. Don't let the sun go down on your anger."

Growing up I understood God to be angry most of the time. That's the impression I got. And much of the anger I saw was not a good thing in my observation. It led to broken relationships, harm, fear. Yet I think there is an anger that is necessary, an anger that can be focused toward being part of a solution, an anger that gives courage to live for what is good and loving. Just don't let it fester, the writer of Ephesians says. Focus it quickly toward healthy and life-giving ways.

### Prayer:

Faithful One,  
help me to notice and respond when your love is directing my emotions in holy and life-giving ways – ways that increase health and freedom and vibrancy.

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.

## Wednesday

### Scripture:

- Obadiah 15-21
- Psalm 142
- Matthew 13. 10-17

### Reflection:

Prophets call people back to God's ways. They express anger and lament on behalf of the poor and oppressed. And they are prickly about it. They use the language of their culture – sometimes courtroom language where God is the plaintiff. Sometimes the language of retribution. Although I want to run from its tone, I have to say it is consistent. God is angry at broken covenant and at oppression no matter who does it. Though the language is itself oppressive here, the anger is real and calls for attention.

In the purpose of the parables text from Matthew, I wonder if Jesus is using another kind of prophetic language: the parable. A parable is a brief story that illustrates a lesson. Some will get it. Some won't. Be one who gets it! Tend the soil of your heart. Be one who listens with the heart, turns to God and is healed.

### Prayer:

Gracious God, teach me more of the art of heart and soul-tending with you – tending that leads to listening, hearing, responding, and acting in your ways.

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:

- Isaiah 44.1-5
- Psalm 139.1-12, 23-24
- Hebrews 2. 1-9

### Reflection:

The prophet Isaiah speaks of God's promise of water on a thirsty land. Streams on dry land. The thirst and dryness have come amidst a time of both soul dryness as a result of sin – and God's promise to do a new thing. Psalm 139 entreats God to search the heart, to bring light to any destructive way – and to lead us in the life-giving way. The writer of Hebrews calls us to pay attention to Jesus, our way.

Where is my soul longing for water, longing for healing, longing for God to do a new thing?

### Prayer:

Generous One, help me to see and welcome and celebrate the life-giving water and streams you give!

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:

- Ezekiel 39.21-29
- Psalm 139.1-12, 23-24
- Hebrews 6:13-20

### Reflection:

God makes and keeps promises. God sends into exile. God gathers back. God searches the heart. God gives hope and a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul in Jesus.

God has been the main actor in this drama all week – did you notice? This mystery we call God is agent in these readings: exiling, gathering, searching, knowing, promising. The Holy Presence is active – actively longing for us to come home. Actively drawing us to the heart of love at the center of everything. Where do I experience this love?

### Prayer:

Loving God, you inspire me to be aware of your creative, healing and corrective activity in life – to interact – and to respond. Thank-you.

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 14.9-25
- Psalm 139.1-12, 23-24
- Matthew 7.15-20

### Reflection:

God guided the people through a sea of trouble to freedom.

On a similar journey, the psalmist still knows the ever-present Spirit of God, leading into life-giving ways.

Matthew says you will know a tree - and a true prophet - by the fruit.

I am reminded of when Jesus spoke of himself as the vine and we, the branches. Abide in the vine and you will bear much fruit. In the midst of obstacles and troubles, freedom and good fruit can still be experienced when I tap into the ever-present Spirit, the true Vine.

### Prayer:

Loving God, you guide me through the trouble, not around it. Lead and nourish me to bear good fruit that will be a blessing.

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.