

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

(July 28th to August 2nd, 2008)

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Monday

Scripture:

- Genesis 30.25-36
- Psalm 65.8-13
- James 3.13-18

Reflection:

Oh, how I wish I were wise! Even if it were just a little bit wiser than I am right now.

From the outside, at least, wisdom looks really helpful. The people I would consider wise look to me to have it all together. They seem to take the world at more than its face value, finding wonder in everything. It looks like they take time before they make decisions – sometimes even before they speak. When they do speak, what they have to say often has layers of meaning, and a calming way.

Oh, how I wish I were wise!

I wonder, though, if that wish is like the wishes of the Tin Man, the Scarecrow, the Cowardly Lion, or Dorothy, in "The Wizard of Oz"?

Perhaps, as I live my life – trying to find wisdom – I'll find that it has been growing within me every day.

Oh, how I wish I were wise!

Prayer:

Holy One,
I celebrate all life today -
from the tiniest microbe
to the greatest Great Whale!
I celebrate the life of the children,
the teens,
and the adults,
whose lives touch my life.
Help me to see your Wisdom in them.
Help them to see your Wisdom in me.

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 30.37-43
- Psalm 65.8-13
- Ephesians 6.10-18

Reflection:

As I read the Ephesians passage, I realized that its author felt under siege – and that faith in God through Christ was what was needed to stand through the battle.

I've never been in a battle – well, nothing which caused me to fear for my life – so I'm not sure how well this image speaks to me: belt of truth, breastplate of righteousness, shoes of proclamation, shield of faith, helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit. Put it all on and be ready to do battle with the devil.

The evil that I've met isn't the kind of stuff that its easy to do open battle with. It tends to be hidden – but dangerous in its own way.

How do we stand in the face of apathy, greed, and disregard for life? What are the gifts of God that will give us the strength to say, "No! This is wrong! We can't allow this to happen?"

Prayer:

God of all things,
all people,
all places -
I ask you to give me what I need,
to recognize wrong,
and to respond to it.
Help me to mediate your peace.
Help me to bring your healing.
Help me to love your world.

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:

- Genesis 46.2-47.12
- Psalm 65.8-13
- Mark 4.30-34

Reflection:

This past week, we had some people come and clean out the garden at our house. It had been a beautiful garden at one time, but far bigger than our family could take care of.

Of course, you know what happened – the weeds took over.

Weeds are really interesting plants. They are tenacious. They grow (and grow – and grow), sometimes with little water. They tend to take over. Many times they have beautiful flowers and... well... sometimes not the nicest scents.

A friend of mine told me that, “Weeds are wonderful plants growing in places I don't want them to.”

Did you know, in Jesus' day, the mustard bush was considered a weed? “The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed...”

Prayer:

Open my eyes, God -
to the blessings of those things
I see as “weeds” in my life;
to the difficulties of those things
I see as “beautiful flowers.”

Open my eyes, God -
to the possibilities, pluses and minuses,
in all things.

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 14.1-2
- Psalm 17.1-7,13
- Philippians 4.10-15

Reflection:

One of the things I like about Paul is that he knows how to say, “Thank you!”

I'm not so good at it... and when I do remember, my thank you can come off sounding grudging, or at least too well planned.

I sometimes wonder how I could move into a place where my “thank you”'s came out of a place of joy and wonder of the gift that has been given.

I wonder if what I need to do is recognize that the gift given is not just what someone has done... but the gift is *them*.

A gift of God!

Prayer:

Generous One,
all that is, is yours.
Not only the sky, the earth, the water...
but we human beings, too.
Not only the tangibles -
but the intangibles, as well.
Help me to give thanks,
in ways that celebrate your Presence.

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:

- Isaiah 41.8-10
- Psalm 17.1-7,13
- Romans 9.6-13

Reflection:

Have you been keeping up with Jacob's story over this week? Quite an interesting person, with an interesting life.

He was also pretty good at manipulating the situation to get his way... once he realized what he wanted.

In fact, when I take a look at quite a few of God's people in scripture (and in life) I wonder what it is that made them God's chosen. It's not like they are paragons of virtue!

Then I remember... its not really about the people, is it?

Its about God.

God loves us, with all that we have been, all that we are, and all that we will become.

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 31.1-21
- Psalm 17.1-7,13
- Matthew 7.7-11

Reflection:

A couple of years ago, my then four-year-old, looking longingly at a stuffed snow leopard said, “Oh, Daddy, I know I don't need that snow leopard, but – oh – I want it!”

Every time I look longingly at a new gadget, or another book, I hear her words in my head. Sometimes I'll treat myself, knowing, though, that I'm giving myself a gift.

When I read the words of today's Gospel passage I find myself asking, “What do I really need?”

What do you really need?

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.

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.