

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

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Monday

Scripture:

- 1 Kings 17.17-24
- Psalm 143
- Acts 2.18-37

Reflection:

Imagine the pain of the woman in the narrative, whose child is still in her arms but whose life is seemingly over. How can we really know what happened in that upstairs room, except that in the end, a dying (dead?) child is returned to his mother's arms.

It seems to me that, metaphorically speaking, we need a world full of Elijah's to revive a world full of suffering children. How wonderful it would be to see the expressions on the faces of mothers whose children are revived from the slow death of hunger, poverty, and disease.

It feels as if the 1 Kings story is a shortened version of God's greatest dream for all of us.

Prayer:

Gracious God,
the hunger and suffering
of your people around our globe
brings pain to my heart.
Hear my prayers this day
and turn all of my hope for a better world
into action that makes a difference.

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:

- 2 Kings 4.18-36
- Psalm 143
- Ephesians 2.1-10

Reflection:

The Psalmist has a way of remembering the good times even in the midst of heartache and pain. The words of the psalmists tend to make that remembering sound much easier than it actually is. In the dark shadows of personal tragedy, loss, or illness, it is hard to bring to mind the times when God's love and grace were so apparent in every part of life. Doing so is an important spiritual discipline. When times look very hard and God is known only by the sense of God's absence – turn to the Psalms. In these words of our ancestors lies the comfort we seek.

Prayer:

Compassionate God of Healing
and Grace,
when times are hard,
I lose track of where you are.
I look for you in the shadows of my heart,
and I search my memory for better times
when I felt your embrace enfolding me.
Hold me again God,
and help me to feel
the gift and power
of your presence.

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.

Wednesday

Scripture:

- Jeremiah 32.1-9, 36-41
- Psalm 143
- Matthew 22.23-33

Reflection:

Focus is a powerful and necessary spiritual discipline. It is so easy for us, especially in the church, to lose our sense of who and whose we really are. We become entangled in the real and imagined dramas of faith communities, or we focus on particular elements on our faith journey which we designate as having more priority over all else.

In the midst of it all, it is easy to lose sight of just how simple it all really is. We belong to God. We are planted in the land of God's faithfulness with all of God's heart and soul.

It's as simple and as complex as that.

Prayer:

God of compassion and presence,
it is so good to know
that you are with me,
that you are my God
and I am your child of creation.
When I lose track
of the primary call of faith – to love -
then I give thanks and praise
for your amazing ability
to bring me back to your heart.
Thank you God, for your power
and presence in every part of my life.

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.

Thursday

Scripture:

- 1 Samuel 16.11-13
- Psalm 31.9-16
- Philippians 1.1-11

Reflection:

So young David, the chosen one, the one who would lead the people to greatness and freedom, was handsome. I'm puzzled by the physical description in the story of David's anointing. His ruddy good looks and beautiful eyes only mean that George Clooney could play him in the movie version. The young man who would be king had so many important political, personal, and spiritual questions in his future, it seems almost laughable that his first important recognition is highlighted by focusing on his physical – as opposed to his spiritual – gifts. But we all know that the story changes dramatically. Soon David's spiritual relationship with God will be front and center.

Prayer:

God, you know me better
than I know myself.
You have created me as a person
who is beautiful in every way.
You also create my friends,
and neighbours
with that spiritual, physical, and
emotional beauty.
Thank you God that all of your children
carry the beautiful image of You
within them.
The beauty that you bring into my life
every day is enough
to take my breathe away for a moment
and then give thanks.

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.

Friday

Scripture:

- Job 13.13-19
- Psalm 31.9-16
- Philippians 1.21-20

Reflection:

The Psalmist says, "I have become like a broken vessel." There are times in every person's life in which these words read true. Human nature is such that even the most faithful will at times be brought low by circumstance or simply by a spiritual dry patch. The writer to the Philippian church has no doubt seen and experienced these human lows and has arrived at the conclusion that to soldier on and wait out better times is the answer. In faith, we move on and better times come.

What do you think?

Prayer:

Blessed One, when times are hard, we feel broken and somewhat rudder-less, like a boat without direction. On those days, I need to know that You will guide the way. I know that you love me as I am, even on the days that I feel confused, lost and broken. Such gracious, blessed love is almost beyond my imagination.

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.

Saturday

Scripture:

- Lamentations 3: 55-66
- Psalm 31.9-16
- Mark 10.32-34

Reflection:

The suffering of God's people and our need for God's presence in the muck and mire of the human condition is so clearly depicted in the first two readings today. The anguish here is close to being overwhelming. And then, to add to our sense of lament, Jesus calmly and patiently reminds the disciples that it will soon be time for him to meet his destiny. Just like the disciples so long ago, this is the time in our journey of faith that we need to remember and hold on to the promise of God – that through Jesus, God will make all things right.

As we enter the coming week, let's hold on to that promise.

Prayer:

Gracious God of Joy and Sorrow, be with me in this coming week. The story of Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem will stir in me the same measured excitement as it always does, because with the "hosannas" comes a cost almost more than my heart can bear. Hold me up in this week of contemplation, prayer and passion. Hold me and guide my steps, O God, and help me to remain faithful to your promise.

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.