

## 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

(March 24<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup>, 2008)

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## Monday

### Scripture:

- Exodus 14.10-31
- Psalm 118.1-2, 14-24
- Colossians 3.5-11

### Reflection:

The celebration of God's great triumphant work in the Resurrection is followed up by the recounting of God's last great triumphant work: the crossing of the Red Sea. If Easter is situated in the context of Passover, the two events are intimately connected. In both instances, what seemed like a hopeless situation is transformed through the power of God. To this day, when things seem desperate, we find hope in the idea that God has reversed things before.

The Colossians passage, on the other hand, is not about God, but about us. What should we do in response to these great acts of God's? We should live holy, blameless lives (or a reasonable facsimile thereof). Is this how we convince God to intercede for us? Or is it what we do in response to a God of such power?

### Prayer:

Powerful God of powerful love,  
I am in awe of what you have done  
and amazed that I am a part of it.  
May I follow your way,  
and continue to believe myself  
a child of yours.

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:

- Exodus 15.1-18
- Psalm 118.1-2, 14-24
- Colossians 3.12-17

### Reflection:

Here are two songs of praise for what God has done and another set of instructions. This time the instructions are prescriptive (things to do) rather than proscriptive (things not to do). Are they any easier to follow? Well, they do say that when you're trying to encourage your children to behave, it works better to say "Speak quietly" than "don't yell".

I note with interest that the note in my bible for verse 15 says that "rule" means "be umpire". So that the peace of Christ is to be the umpire in our hearts. So the peace of Christ will tell us when our efforts have gone foul or we are striking out; and it will also tell us when we are home safe. But it is up to us to know the rules and play the game fairly and give it (as we used to say in hockey) 110%.

### Prayer:

Holy Umpire,  
be in my heart that I may live in your way:  
seeking out what is fair, what is  
appropriate  
and what is best for all.  
I will try to give you my best efforts  
and thank you for your guidance.

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:

- Joshua 3.1-17
- Psalm 118.1-2,14-24
- Matthew 28.1-10

### Reflection:

...and we enter into the promised land – whether it is the promised land of milk and honey in Canaan or the promised land of life beyond the fear of death. Actually, this is just the beginning of that entry. The people cross the River Jordan and the disciples (some of them anyways) realize that the tomb is empty and their teacher gone - but not what the resurrection is all about.

Have we arrived at the promised land yet? Or does death still have dominion? How will we know when we get there? Or might we be there already and not even have noticed?

I tend to think that we're not there yet. As long as some of those things mentioned in Colossians 3:5-11 are still with us (abusive relationships, greed, materialism, idolatry) and the ones mentioned in Colossians 4:12-17 are not (honesty, love, kindness, compassion), we are not there yet. But the promise is there and the journey is begun, even if we're not sure what all the good news is really about.

### Prayer:

Good News God, lead me on.  
Lead me in kindness and compassion,  
in love, honesty and hope.  
Lead me away from greed  
and selfishness,  
from idolatry and abusive behaviours.  
Lead me in your Way  
and towards your Kin-dom.

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:

- Song of Solomon 2.8-15
- Psalm 16
- Colossians 4.2-6

### Reflection:

Lovers speak to each other and we speak to God. There are parallels there, but I think we do the Song of Songs (Song of Solomon) a disservice if we consider it simply an allegorical love song between Christ and the Church or God and the people of Israel. It is also a love song between two people who love each other and yearn for each other. It is full of innuendo and physical descriptions that emphasize that the lovers delight in each other in many ways.

That said, this passage and this context remind us that our conversation with God in prayer can also be considered a love song. And in this passage, the lover visits the beloved in the springtime. At Easter, which is more or less in the springtime, God visits us with love. Andrew Greeley often refers to God as a lover who yearns for her beloved. Sally McFague has too.

What about you? Can you imagine God as the One who yearns for you?

### Prayer:

Beloved,  
I yearn for your presence  
as you delight in mine.  
In this time we spend together,  
our love grows.  
Because I know you love me,  
the warmth of spring grows in my heart.

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:

- Song of Solomon 5.9-6.3
- Psalm 16
- 1 Corinthians 15.1-11

### Reflection:

I'm sure that the juxtaposition of the Song of Songs and 1 Corinthians passages is meant to emphasize that Christ is the beautiful ruddy love who pastures his flock among the lilies. The Church (the other lover) praised her lover for all he has done and all he is. And all those who have seen him (including Paul) count themselves fortunate to have beheld him.

As the lover considers herself fortunate to be her beloved's lover and friend, we may consider ourselves fortunate to be loved and befriended by the Christ. But so, too, may be rejoice in our human relationships: lovers, friends – all of them. For all love is part of God's love.

So take a moment today, to reflect on the ways that your love is a reflection of God's and the people in your life might bear the light of Christ for you.

### Prayer:

God of all love,  
thank you for....  
and the ways they show me your love.  
In these and all my relationships,  
may I bear the Christ light for them  
so that I may show them your love  
as they show it to me.

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:

- Song of Solomon 8.6-7
- Psalm 16
- John 20.11-20

### Reflection:

Mary weeps for the beloved but many waters cannot quench love. Love triumphs over death as it triumphs over so many things. It's the happy ending to end all happy endings. Such a love as this is beyond belief and beyond comprehension.

But the last verse of the Song of Solomon reading reminds us: "If one offers for love all the wealth of [their] house, it would be utterly scorned." So, getting back to Monday and Tuesday's readings, all that good behaviour is not going to get God's love for us. It's just there: a miracle as tremendous as the triumph of life over death and hope over despair.

Hallelujah! Christ is risen!

### Prayer:

God of hope and love,  
thank you for all that you have done  
and for all that you continue to do.  
Your love endures forever.  
You seal my heart and I am in yours.  
Thank you.

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.