

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

(October 13th to 18th, 2008)

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Monday

Scripture:

- Exodus 32.15-35
- Psalm 97
- Jude 17-25

Reflection:

There are often times in our lives in which we struggle – sometimes with health, sometimes with relationships... sometimes with faith.

Even in these times of "rebellion," we can see God's presence – God's glory – active in and around us. It is being open to God's Presence and to the changes an active God makes in this world, that our faith grows.

Prayer:

Loving God,
help me always be ready
and open to see Your glory.
May I remember to place my trust in you,
day after day after day.

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:

- Exodus 33.1-6
- Psalm 97
- Philemon 3.13 - 4.11

Reflection:

How many goals have you set in your life? Philemon challenges readers to press head "toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (v14).

Where does Christ fit into your goal setting? Is one of your goals to have a deeper, more meaningful relationship with God?

In church we work to discern God's will and vision for our collective life and our congregational ministry. We do this in a variety of ways – prayer, conversation, debate – but all of them focus on what God is calling us to, rather than what we think might be best.

What would it look like if each of us, as individuals, worked to do the same thing?

Prayer:

As I discern Your will for my life, Lord,
and as I set goals, help me, Holy One,
to achieve those goals.
I know I can do all things
supported by your strength.

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

For your grace, with your love, and in
Christ's name, I pray. Amen.

The "Daily Scripture and Prayer Brochure" will be taking a brief break during Advent this year. This is to support a project of the General Council to help people across Canada build the practice you've already been working on, with book entitled, "**Advent Awakenings.**" Please consider purchasing a copy (\$8.95) from the United Church Resource Distribution Centre at 1-800-288-7365, (or talk with your minister about how to get a copy!)

Wednesday

Scripture:

- 2 Kings 17.7-20
- Psalm 97
- John 6.25-35

Reflection:

Not many of us go through life without experiencing some hard times. When we are going through rough times it is important to remember that God is with us. As difficult as it may be to believe, at times, God loves us!

Our reading from John's Gospel is one of my favourites. After questioning by the people who are searching for the Messiah - Jesus tells them that the only task they have is to receive "the bread from heaven" is to believe in God and the one whom God has sent. Jesus says, "I am the Bread of Life" (v35).

This invitation to believe also invites us into a holy feast where we shall neither hunger or thirst.

Isn't that something to praise God about?

Prayer:

Thank you, Sacred One,
for the gift of bread
which sustains and fills me today.
As my body is nourished,
I ask that my soul might be filled,
by the flames of your Holy Spirit!

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

For your grace, with your love, and in
Christ's name, I pray. Amen

Thursday

Scripture:

- Exodus 33.7-11
- Psalm 99
- 3 John 9-12

Reflection:

Meeting God privately in prayer is an important part of my daily routine. Just as Moses did we are invited to come apart and talk with God. This practice of separating ourselves from those around us, and being with God – even if only for a moment or two – is an important part of being able to love one another. (Words my Grandmother taught me many years ago.)

This "coming apart" time isn't always easy to build into one's life. It takes time and dedication to build the habit of intentional time with the Divine. When are the times in your life you most need to step away from the on-going motion of life and focus on God's presence? Is it in the busy times or the slow ones? How difficult would it be to take 30 seconds, to breath deeply and to say (in your heart, or out loud), "Hello, God. Can we spend a moment together?"

For me, all three passages are filled with a spirit of awesome and abundant love. Can you sense the spirit of love flowing throughout these readings?

Prayer:

Help me remember to love
each and everyday, Lord.
In my moments "apart",
and in my moments "in the crowd",
may I feel the Spirit of Love
moving with 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

Friday

Scripture:

- Exodus 31.1-11
- Psalm 99
- 1 Peter 5.1-5

Reflection:

It is beneficial at times to be surrounded by aids to worship, but are they *really* important? We can worship and praise God without them.

Priestly robes are distinguishing items, but in we are all one. In God's eyes we are all equal.

Have you ever experienced worship in the great outdoors? There are no added aids there - only the earth and sky - parts of God's creation.

Prayer:

Loving God help me to remember the all forms of praise and worship are the best. Help us to remember, too, that things don't need to be elaborate, to be true worship of you.

May I be like the mystics and saints,
in years past and today,
who worship you wherever they are.

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

For your grace, with your love, and in
Christ's name, I pray. Amen

Saturday

Scripture:

- Exodus 39.32-43
- Psalm 99
- Matthew 14.1-12

Reflection:

In the Exodus reading we have the celebration of the community's work in having a special place for God to reside being completed.

In the Matthew reading a celebration of another kind. A celebration of the power of the world, with one ruler inviting many others to come and see his "worth".

Was it a celebration? Because of his need to look strong in front of the other rulers, he found himself doing something he had strongly resisted – killing the prophet, John the Baptizer.

We may feel that giving in to the request was not a display of good character, though it is difficult for us to understand the political, social and religious forces at play. But this story might help us to ask ourselves, "What face to we show the world?" Do our values and our actions align? Would people see God's values living through our lives?

Prayer:

May what I do each and every day
be an example of God's love
to those I meet.

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

For your grace, with your love, and in
Christ's name, I pray. Amen.