

## 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:

- Exodus 40.34-38
- Psalm 62.1-8
- Revelation 18.1-10,19-20

### Reflection:

It is not always easy to discern when to move on. In the Exodus passage, it seems so easy for Israel. When the cloud rested on the tabernacle, the people stayed put. When the cloud lifted, it was time to move on.

I wish it had been that easy for me when I was weighing whether to stay or move in my ministry assignments. There were reasons pro and con – gray areas – and I had to choose between equally convincing arguments.

In the end there came a sense that God was calling. Not exactly a moving cloud, but the confirmation of a struggle resolved and the leading of the Spirit.

Does God play a role in your decisions? In your moving on? In your staying put?

### Prayer:

Lead kindly Light, reveal the path that I must walk today, into the years ahead. When it is time to stay a while, help me to see your sign. When you nudge me to move on, give me the courage needed.

Today I pray for all stuck in places and situations where gifts turn to straw, hopes are transformed to ashes, and promises become dust. I remember especially \_\_\_\_\_.

I pray trusting in your mother-love saying:  
Our Father, who art in heaven....

## Tuesday

### Scripture:

- Numbers 12.1-9
- Psalm 62.1-8
- Revelation 18.21-24

### Reflection:

This Psalm is one person's outpouring of trust in God. People around the Psalmist assail this person. We don't know what is causing this destructive behaviour.

We are easily led to think of Jesus experiencing the verbal abuse of those who put him on the cross. We think of many courageous people whose self-giving is disdained and dishonoured. They could write a Psalm like 62. Could you?

The kind of faith and trust revealed here comes from deep within and far beyond. It is not the ego operating here. When my ego is assaulted, the "natural" inclination is to react in kind. But when we are grounded in God, then we are given the love that allows us to transcend the desire for revenge – hard as that can be.

Our relationship with God calls from me more than I would naturally be inclined to offer!

### Prayer:

Let not my heart be troubled, I pray. Let me stay close to you, your way, your truth, your boundless love. Teach me how to love as you love. As I am transformed, the world will change! I pray for those whose living is driving by bitterness, hate, competition, and fear, that they may be freed. I remember especially \_\_\_\_\_.

May your holy peace bless the earth and all its peoples.

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, through a book entitled, "**Advent Awakenings.**" Please consider purchasing a copy (\$8.95+ GST) 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:

- Numbers 13.1-2,17 - 14.9
- Psalm 62.1-8
- Matthew 17.22-27

### Reflection:

The Gospel reading gives us a slice of political life in Jesus' day. Upfront religious leaders see in Jesus a rebel, someone who is undermining their authority over the people. They need the temple tax to maintain the religious institution and their power.

Jesus chafes at the limited vision of rulers and authorities. They take money not from their own – people to whom they are beholden by kinship, class, or influence. But the others are beyond those kind of loyalties and favours. They must pay. And Jesus is one of them.

But with God, all the children are “free” to give or not. They are not compelled to contribute. But in a relationship of love they are grateful. So they give generously. And what they give is always known to come as a gift from God.

### Prayer:

We make such a fuss about paying taxes, God. But you bring us into community – the town or city we live in, the church we are, the work team, the family. And in all those communities we know that giving, sharing, “paying” is a privilege and a joyful bond of our relationships.

We remember those of us who live in poverty's stresses. In our community we remember \_\_\_\_\_.

Temper our wants that we may have freedom to increase our sharing in the Way of Jesus.

Amen.

## Thursday

### Scripture:

- Deuteronomy 31.14-22
- Psalm 90.1-6,13-17
- Titus 1.2-16

### Reflection:

Moses is getting old and his time for dying is near (only 3 chapters away in Deuteronomy). God is concerned. It was hard enough to keep this unruly people in line with Moses around. When Moses, that great leader, is removed from the scene, what will become of the people.

A new leader, Joshua, is a good start. But something more is required. A song! When people know a song “by heart,” then that song influences their way of being and doing.

Moses! Write a song and teach it to the entire people. It will be your legacy work. The song will recount my faithfulness through the generations. It won't mask the people's unfaithfulness, but remind them of my persistent (if somewhat impatient) grace. That will be a song to inspire and challenge them and keep them close to my heart.

What is the song that moves you closer to God?

### Prayer:

Thank you, great Singer, for the heart tune that diminishes fear, that awakens hope, that fills us with joy, that restores our peace, that binds our wounds.

We bless you for all companions who share in the singing. We remember those who have lost the tune or never learned the words. Awaken in them the gift of music to bless their heart.

(Read the Psalm passage.)

## Friday

### Scripture:

- Deuteronomy 32.1-14,18
- Psalm 90.1-6,13-17
- Titus 2.7-8, 11-15

### Reflection:

“So teach us to count our days that we may gain a wise heart.” Words in a Psalm attributed to Moses. (90:12)

Moses had a pretty rocky relationship with God. There were moments of inspiration and depression. Times when God had to be “reasoned” with. And others when God was furious and Moses knew it. Remember the time when Moses had to blackmail God – “what will those other nations say if you destroy Israel here in the desert?”

Perhaps it is better to say “a robust and frank relationship.” There was give and take. There was anger and disappointment. There were moments of distance and times of communion. And through it all an underlying deep respect – God for Moses, Moses for God. It was real and in the relating wisdom grew.

Our relationship with God will shrivel if God is only the stern judge or if God is only “warm fuzzy.” Can you rage at God? Can you confess on bended knee? Can you sing “Hallelujah” and mean it? May that relating be blessed with the gift of wisdom!

### Prayer:

Holy One, Suffering One,  
Merciful, Compassionate One,  
Blessing One,  
Grow in us that deep wisdom that knows we are fully ourselves when we remain close to you – the Source & Giver of all life.

I pray today for those who are sick or dying, especially \_\_\_\_\_.

Keep them in your care now and always. I pray in Christ. Amen

## Saturday

### Scripture:

- Deuteronomy 32.44-47
- Psalm 90.1-6,13-17
- John 5.39-47

### Reflection:

“No trifling matter,” says Moses (Deuteronomy 32:47) to the people he is leaving behind. He is dying. But as legacy, he has reminded the people that their whole existence and purpose in living is rooted in their relationship with God. This God is the One who has delivered them from bondage and has led them to the threshold of the Promised Land – the land of milk and honey - abundance.

It's hard to sit on church committees and remember that the stakes are this high. So often our experience in the faith community is to deal with matters that, relatively speaking, are trifling. But the overall mission of God is a matter of very high stakes indeed. God is seeking not just the redemption and wholeness of a tribe of people, but of the entire universe and of the earth as part of it.

We are asked to be part of that mission: by remembering what God does; by learning what we need to equip ourselves for participating; by acting with heart, soul, and brain to make it happen. “It” you ask? The reign of God made real in all dimension of my life, our community, the nation, the human family, and all creation. No trifling matter, indeed!

### Prayer:

Thank you, God, for trusting me enough to invite me in to your mission. Awaken in me all the gifts that will enable me to participate fully in your great enterprise. Keep me on Christ's way.

I pray for leaders of the church, of our nation, of the world community, especially \_\_\_\_\_.