

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

(September 15th to 20th, 2008)

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Monday

Scripture:

- Joshua 3.1-17
- Psalm 77
- Hebrews 11.23-29

Reflection:

God parts the waters of the Jordan, as Joshua leads the Israelites on their journey into a new land. We see again this powerful symbol of God's presence amongst his people. And when they are across, the Jordan closes behind them, separating them from the past. Further, the place is marked with a stone for each of the twelve tribes to remind future generations of God's faithfulness.

God works unseen. We cannot see God but God is watching over us. It is up to us to have faith and to stay the course. Just as faith saved the Israelites, faith can work miracles for us. If we look back at our own lives, we too should be able to identify occasions where God has been present to us, though we may not have realized it at the time. By bookmarking these events in our memories we can be sustained in times of difficulty knowing that God works his miracles for his people.

Prayer:

God, help me to remember that you are always with me, even when I am tempted to wander.

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.

Amen

Tuesday

Scripture:

- Nehemiah 9.9-15
- Psalm 77
- Romans 14.13-15.2

Reflection:

Paul tells us that it is not up to us to judge one another, because in so doing we usurp the role of God. Doing right for the sake of doing right is not enough, for if in doing right we injure someone else, we have wronged them.

If we are strong in our faith, we must recognize the failings of those who do not have our faith without criticizing or denouncing them but instead lead by example. We should build them up by recognizing the good and commending the good in them.

Acting from faith requires clear convictions, free from lingering doubts and feelings.

Prayer:

God, help me to recognize when I am being hypocritical and steer me right. Help me to recognize the good in others and to avoid feeling righteous when I see others fail.

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.

Amen

Wednesday

Scripture:

- 2 Kings 2.1-18
- Psalm 77
- Mark 11.20-25

Reflection:

Reading the Psalm for the third time and then the passage from Mark triggers something for me. I think of times when I too felt frustrated or despaired because my prayers did not seem to be answered. And I think too, of how shallow some of those prayers were. How me centred they were.

The Psalmist wonders if God has abandoned him; if God has no compassion. God doesn't seem to answer his prayers. But he remembers God's unseen hand working to lead the Israelites out of bondage; His parting the waters and destroying their pursuers. He takes faith from these remembrances and knows that God works in unseen ways, caring for all his people.

Mark's gospel reminds us that it is not sufficient to simply pray for what we want. I am reminded of the words of the Lord's Prayer, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."

Prayer:

God, forgive me for my trespasses and when I am hurt by others, be in my heart that I may forgive them.

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.

Amen

Thursday

Scripture:

- Exodus 15.22-27
- Psalm 105.1-6, 37-45
- 2 Corinthians 13.1-4

Reflection:

"O give thanks to the Lord, call on his name, make known His deeds among the peoples."

Is this a rallying cry for us as disciples? You bet it is. The Psalmist tells us to rejoice in the Lord, sing praises to His name, seek His presence, and remember His works. He delivered the people and gave them wealth, land, food and water for He remembered his promise to them.

Through Moses, God set a test for His people. He promised, "If you will listen carefully to the voice of the Lord your God, and do what is right in His sight, and give heed to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will not bring upon you any of the diseases that I brought upon the Egyptians?"

Our test, in these turbulent and increasingly secular times is live as disciples of Jesus, showing by example that His message of love for one another is still valid.

Prayer:

God, help me to be a disciple for your son, Jesus, by living a life that reflects his teachings.

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.

Amen

Friday

Scripture:

- Exodus 16.1-21
- Psalm 105.1-6, 37-45
- 2 Corinthians 13.5-10

Reflection:

"Keep the faith Baby!" This watchword of the 70s came to mind as I read today's scriptures.

Time and again lost faith, and complained of the hardships they faced as they journeyed from Egypt. They wondered if they were not even worse off as they followed Moses in the wilderness. And yet God delivered the Israelites. He gave them water and food, land and wealth as he had promised.

We too, when events don't seem to be going our way often get discouraged and are tempted to seek the easy way out even when we know in our hearts that it is not the right way.

Paul calls on us to test ourselves; to remember Jesus Christ is within us; and to have confidence to do what is right. Are we living in the faith true to the teachings of Jesus?

Prayer:

God, help me to live my faith. Walk with me so that I am not tempted to take the easy way, but to meet the test.?

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.

Amen

Saturday

Scripture:

- Exodus 16.22-30
- Psalm 105.1-6, 37-45
- Matthew 19.23-30

Reflection:

Surely Jesus isn't saying that just because you are wealthy, you cannot get into heaven? Most of us can think of some wealthy person who is committed to putting their wealth to use in making this world a better place for those who are disadvantaged. Maybe it is about their attitude to their wealth and what they do with it? Maybe it is about what they worship? If money is your God, it is easy to see why you will be excluded from heaven. But if money is valued for what it can do to make this world a better place, then perhaps it is not so bad.

Certainly the original disciples were not rich men and it can probably be argued that it is easier for a poor man to give up what he has to live a better, more spiritual life than a wealthy individual. But at best these are generalisations. Perhaps the bottom line is that salvation isn't dependent on material resources but on accepting the gift of eternal life promised by the teachings of Jesus.

Prayer:

God, help me to remember that all I have comes from you so that I might focus on loving your world and your people.

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.

Amen