

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

(September 8th to 13th, 2008)

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Monday

Scripture:

- Exodus 12.14-28
- Psalm 121
- 1 Peter 2. 11-17

Reflection:

Passover - a story of a time when people began to use actions as a way of remembering the movement of God in their lives. It is a powerful reminder which to this day forms part of the home life of many of our Jewish cousins. It is one of the ways that love of God can be shown.

This summer has been one of many such remembrances for me. There have been too many bereavements where I have known the person who died, and have been asked to preside at the funeral. It is my honour and privilege to do this. As part of my preparation, I look at what I know or can learn of the person's life, and I look for the ways in which God's love has been present. And it makes me stop and think about the ways that God's love can be seen in my life. What will people say about God's love reflected in my life when I am gone? It has caused me to think carefully about how I live my life. What about you?

Prayer:

God of our memories and of our actions, help us to look at our lives and to see the ways we have reflected your love for others. As we remember the times we have been held in your love by others, may that inform our desire to do likewise. May we be faithful in our prayers lives and loving in our actions.

Today we pray for..... Friends blessed by your love.

Amen

Tuesday

Scripture:

- Exodus 12. 29-43
- Psalm 121
- Romans 13.1-7

Reflection:

So it happens. The night that God prepared the people for. The night when they could finally leave Egypt and take responsibility for themselves. They eat the unleavened bread. They are out of Egypt. The Egyptians right then were as pleased to see the Israelites go as the Israelites were to leave. It sounds just great for everyone concerned.

As we read more of the story we discover that it was not all sweetness and light. There were moments of anger and frustration, and turning away from God. But for now, everything is just great.

I wonder if the Israelites would still have gone if they had known what lay ahead. Would we? I wonder if we would take those steps of freedom if we knew what lay ahead for us.

I am glad that the future is a mystery, and I have past experience of God's presence in times of difficulty to give me hope for the future. Have you?

Prayer:

God, I do not know what lies ahead of me in life. I do not know when trouble may strike. I do not know when my careful plans for my life may fall apart. But I believe that you are with me, and I rest in your presence.

Today, we pray for..... Friends blessed by your love.

Amen

Wednesday

Scripture:

- Exodus 13.1-10
- Psalm 121
- Matthew 21.18-22

Reflection:

As a young woman, I lived through what I now refer to as my "heathen period." I didn't care about God. I didn't much care for anyone else either. It was all about me, and I thought that I didn't need anything else. I didn't even notice how out of control my life had become. I was lost and straying further every day. Then, out of the blue, I thought, God came to find me. I had an experience of God that has changed my life.

As I read verse 8 of the exodus reading, "I do this, because of what the LORD did for me when I came out of Egypt," I am reminded of my response to God. I love God, because God loved me first.

What has God done for you? What is your response to it?

Prayer:

God of history, I thank you for the Scriptures which give stories of your action in the lives of our faith ancestors. The more I read them, the more I realize that they were people just like me. They had their doubts and their certainties, and you loved them just the same. May I pass on your love in my work and my play.

Today we pray for..... Friends blessed by your love.

Amen

Thursday

Scripture:

- Exodus 13.17-22
- Psalm 114
- 1 John 3.11-16

Reflection:

The Israelites were out of Egypt. They were approaching the desert. The route that God had them take was longer than it need have been, but the shorter route may have led them to war. I think of the times in my life when I've gone the longer route to get where I feel called to be. Often, I've not been aware of choosing to go the long way, but it is only after I get where I am going that someone says, "Why didn't you go this way?"

I never have an answer to that question. Usually, I never knew of the other route's existence. It doesn't trouble me to go the long way, only that I get where I am supposed to be.

Are there times in your life when the way has seemed longer and harder than it need be? Do you feel God's guidance?

Prayer:

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Our Father, we pray these words often without really listening to them. Open us we pray to hear and see your leadership as you guide us in our walk with you.

Today we pray for..... Friends blessed by your love.

Amen

Friday

Scripture:

- Exodus 14.1-8
- Psalm 114
- Acts 7. 9-16

Reflection:

God was leading the Israelites. They could see a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night. But now they were turned around and were almost heading back towards Egypt. Maybe they were just so glad to be out of Egypt that they didn't care which way they went. Maybe they were still overwhelmed by all that had happened. Maybe the writer just didn't record their reaction. For whatever reason, the Israelites seemed unfazed by this change in direction. They did as they were told, and turned around. What faith they showed. I wonder if faced with a similar situation, our faith would stand up as did that of the Israelites.

Prayer:

Glorious God, sometimes we don't understand where you are leading us, or why. Sometimes in the circumstances of our lives, we feel abandoned because it doesn't make sense to us. In times like these, help us we pray to remember our faith in you. Help us to remember your love for us. Help us to trust in your way.

Today we pray for..... Friends blessed by your love.

Amen

Saturday

Scripture:

- Exodus 15.19-21
- Psalm 114
- Matthew 6.7-15

Reflection:

This week we have been on a journey with the Israelites. The journey for them is far from over. They will face many challenges before they finally come to the Promised Land. But that is in the future. Today, they have come safely across the sea and their pursuers have been dealt with. One stage of their traveling has been completed. So they gather and they have music and singing to celebrate. They have a party.

As I think of the church year, I remember those times of celebration which we all share, days such as Easter and Christmas. I think too of the celebrations that are particular to the church family which I serve. There are celebrations that are particular to my family and friends too.

They all have this in common. When we gather to give thanks to God, we are joining in a long line of our faith ancestors stretching back as far as memory can go. And I am grateful.

Prayer:

Generous God, for the good things of life, we thank you:

- for your presence in our lives;
 - for the love you shower upon us;
 - for the peace that passes our capacity to understand it;
 - for the gradual dawning of your will for us, and your leading us,
- We thank you, and we praise your holy name.

Today we thank you and pray for..... Friends blessed by your love.
Amen