

Sunday 29 March 2020

At 9.45 or 11.25am

You might want to have your Bible and hymnbook to hand. I have not recommended hymns, but you may want to read, sing or listen to appropriate hymns, songs or music that are important for you.

What follows is in the familiar shape of morning worship.

Gathering into the Presence of God

Listening for God's Word

Reflecting on God's Word

Responding to God's Word and God's Spirit

A Meditation before we Go

A Blessing

Use it all at a sitting, or select what is helpful for the moment. Hold on to what will sustain you through the week.

Gathering into the Presence of God

You may want to light a candle, or put on music to settle you or uplift you.

Be still and know that I am God.

Be still and know that I am.

Be still and know.

Be still.

Be.

Say **The Lord's Prayer** into yourself slowly

Pray it again, lingering phrase by phrase.

Our Father.... gather other members of your family and church family before
Father God.

Thy Kingdom come.... pray God's healing for our afflicted world

Give us this day our daily bread.... more real for you and others than usual

Forgive us... as we forgive.... what does this pandemic expose that needs
forgiving?

Lead us not into temptation..... what temptations come for you with this
strange time?

Deliver us from evil..... imagine Jesus rebuking this virus as he did so often in
Galilee

For Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory.... lift up your hearts! God
has the last word!

Amen.... say it out loud.

Listening for God's Word

Take time to look up these Scriptures.

Write down any word or phrase that speaks to you at this time.

Listen to God addressing you.

A Psalm of Protection – Psalm 91

A Promise of Peace – John 14:27

A Prompt to Prayer – Philippians 4:4-9

Reflecting on God's Word (Philippians 4)

No need to rehearse the seriousness of this moment in our history. We know the medical, social, economic and political costs and challenges. We know the heroic efforts being marshalled at every level to provide health care, financial assistance, military-style reorganisation, and armies of volunteers, not least our own local networks of support. The word of the hour is “unprecedented”.

While so many work so hard to ensure that our physical and material needs are met, we need to ensure that our spiritual and emotional needs are given proper attention. This is a time of quiet worship allows us to shift the focus beyond what we can see, to the unseen, to be reminded of the Invisible God who is present with us, in the midst of it all.

Paul writes from his “lock down” prison with a little letter of joy, reminding us that *the Lord is near*, and encouraging us to rejoice always in Him. Smile often – even if it is just at yourself in the mirror. This is a serious time, but there is an ancient custom of the “Easter laugh”. Evil will not prevail.

When the worries press in on us, for ourselves, our families and our nation, pass them on to God – *in everything* we are to pray with thanksgiving. And the *peace that passes all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus*.

When we feel overwhelmed by the barrage of negative news, try this anti-dote to the assault on our mental wellbeing: *Whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable....think on these things*. There are so many examples emerging in this crisis. Good does triumph over evil. We live within the “force-field of resurrection.” (Richard Rohr)

Do these things, says Paul: *And the peace of God will be with you*.

Responding to God's Word and God's Spirit

A National Prayer for this Time

For all that is good in life, thank you,
For the love of family and friends, thank you,
For the kindness of good neighbour and Samaritan stranger, thank you.

May those who are vulnerable, hungry or homeless, experience support,
May those who are sick, know healing,
May those who are anxious or bereaved, sense comfort.

Bless and guide political leaders and decision-makers, with wisdom,
Bless and guide health workers and key workers, with strength and well-being,
Bless and guide each one of us, as we adapt to a new way of living.

And may the light shining from our windows,
across road and wynd, glen and ben, kyle and isle,
be reflected in our hearts and hands and hopes.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

A Meditation before we Go

This is another day, O Lord.
I know not what it might bring forth,
But make me ready, Lord, for whatever it may be.
If I am to stand up, help me to stand bravely.
If I am to sit still, help me to sit quietly.
If I am to lie low, help me to do it patiently.
And if I am to do nothing, let me do it gallantly.
Make these words more than words;
Give me the Spirit of Jesus.
Amen

Blessing

(Imagine holding hands with our invisible congregation)

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God the Father
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all,
evermore. AMEN