

# Sunday Worship at Home

Sunday 26th April 2020

Holy Habits Theme: Fellowship is all about Love

## Preparation

Take a moment to sit and be still. Breathe slowly and deeply. Allow God's presence to be felt as you bring yourself closer to him.

Remember all those who will be worshipping and praying in their own homes and know that we are together in spirit.

## Opening Prayer

**As I come before you Jesus, open my eyes that I might truly see you as my shepherd, comforter, and redeemer. I want to be with others worshipping you but this is not possible, yet I know that I am being prayed for as part of the community of faith. Thank you for this time where I remember you are with me. Amen.**

## Prayer for the Day

Risen Christ,  
you filled your disciples with boldness and fresh hope:  
strengthen us to proclaim your risen life and fill us with your peace,  
to the glory of God the Father. Amen

## Saying Sorry

In a moment of quiet, hold up to God the thoughts, words and actions that you need ask forgiveness for.

**Heavenly Father, we come to you to ask forgiveness of our sins and to give thanks that you love us so much that you give it. Amen.**

## Reading John 15:1-17

The Vine and the Branches

**15** "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. **2** He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. **3** You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.

**4** Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

**5** "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. **6** If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. **7** If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. **8** This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

**9** "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. **10** If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. **11** I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. **12** My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. **13** Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. **14** You are my friends if you do what I command. **15** I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. **16** You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. **17** This is my command: Love each other.

(Please turn audio on for hymn and reflection)

Hymn:

**O give thanks to the Lord**

**All you his people.**

**O give thanks to the Lord for he is good.**

**Let us praise,**

**Let us thank, Let us celebrate and dance,**

**O give thanks to the Lord for he is good.**

## Short Reflection

"From a distance," no not my God.

Another Holy Habit comes to an end, actually this one began and will never end along time ago - when Jesus first called people together to follow him, we might have had two months reflecting on fellowship in very difficult and trying times, but in fellowship we will continue.

All our best laid plans for Easter services, schools work, holiday clubs were put to one side as we experienced Church and fellowship very differently. I have missed that face to face contact with people, ( Sue will be pleased less meetings and coffee meetings at Costa ) the number of people outside the household I have seen is still under ten. From a distance the Postman, the paper delivery boy, The Amazon/UPD/DPS delivery drivers and the neighbours on a Thursday evening as we clap and bang our saucepans in support of our Health Service.

I have had fellowship with my family and enjoyed my own little patch of bluebells, in the garden.

This Sunday's reading from John reminds us to be in the vine, be fruitful and love one another. I feel part of something bigger (the vine) every time I join in prayer, worship or have a meeting with others via my laptop, phone or TV. I am grateful for the morning service, Songs of Praise on the BBC, which we can all access as well as other resources online. I have noticed we have loved each other by ringing/ texting each other, staying in contact via the internet. Helping by shopping and dropping round little gifts. It has been harder but worthwhile.

We are learning to be fruitful in different ways; to rest in God and be in his presence. This allows the fruit to grow, artistic skills are being drawn out, photographs are being shared as well as theological insights and thoughts. We are adding not subtracting to our fruitfulness.

It might feel like the song " From a distance" God is watching over us as the song says

As we do these things but I don't believe in the poor theology reflected in Nanci Griffith's song sung memorably by Bette Midler.

I believe God is right in the midst of all this in the way we have loved and supported each other, in the way we worship differently with others and remain in the vine. Each of our Holy Habits has been a building block that add to each other in this difficult time. May our habits be our resource to see us through to a time when we can meet face to face in fellowship again.

## Intercessory Prayer

You could use either the Five Finger Method or the Finger Labyrinth (both produced as a page at the end of this service) or follow a preferred model of prayer for yourself.

## Lord's Prayer

**Our Father in heaven,  
Hallowed be your name,  
Your kingdom come,  
Your will be done  
On earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread  
Forgive us our sins  
As we forgive those who sin against us  
Lead us not into temptation  
But deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
And the glory are yours  
Now and for ever.  
Amen.**

## Closing Prayer for this time we live in

**We are not people of fear: we are people of courage.  
We are not people who protect our own safety:  
we are people who protect our neighbours' safety.  
We are not people of greed: we are people of generosity.  
We are your people God, giving and loving,  
wherever we are, whatever it costs  
For as long as it takes wherever you call us.**

## A prayer of St Benedict

**O gracious and holy Father, give us wisdom to perceive you, diligence to seek you, patience to wait for you, eyes to behold you, a heart to meditate upon you, a life to proclaim you, through the power of the spirit of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

# Suggestions for Intercessory Prayer

## Finger Labyrinth

A Labyrinth is different from a maze. There is only one path. You cannot get lost.

As you travel inwards,

- think about your life journey up until this point.
- Think of all the highs and lows. All the turning points. All the times when you have noticed God at work.
- Notice how the path turns back on itself and you pass close by to events in the past.
- How have things in your life been connected?
- Offer all of these to God.
- When you get to the centre, rest a while in God's presence. Just be still and attentive.
- When you are ready, slowly trace your finger back out of the labyrinth.
- Imagine you are walking outwards, back into the world, knowing God's presence with you.
- Listen to what new things God may be calling you to now.



You could use the labyrinth to focus your prayers on the situation in the world at the moment. Start by praying for the wider world, bringing it to your own home when arriving in the centre, then moving back out to the whole world.

## Five Finger Method

Hold each finger in turn to pray for specific things

Focus on each area – use the past week for looking back and the coming week for looking forward



Take a moment of silence between each prayer to listen – you may hear the sounds of nature if you are outside, or the hum of electrical appliances inside. Breathe quietly and slowly to focus on listening to what God might be saying to you.

## *For Children*

Use the labyrinth and five finger method for yourself. Pray for your friends, your family and for yourself.

- You could draw around your hand and write some prayers in the fingers and use them during the week.
- You might be able to draw your own labyrinth in chalk in the garden and walk around that, saying prayers as you change direction on the drawn path.
- Remember, if you are worried or sad about anything, tell a grown up.
- God loves you very much.