

Prayers during week commencing 5 July 2020

Invitation to rest.

Matthew 11:28-30:

'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'

Look at this image below and reflect on the 'yoke that fits"



Why would Jesus use this word 'Yoke'?

What does the image provoke in you as you read the passage?

Stop and pay attention to what you notice, both about the picture and the passage. You may want to write something down.

What do you want or need to say to God?

What does God want to say to you?

This prayer sheet was compiled by Fiona Fidgin with lectionary reflection by Bill Offer. Bible passages are quoted from New Revised Standard (Anglicised) Version

SHARING IN PRAYER FOR OUR DISTRICT AND OUR WORLD

"God, you are my God; I eagerly seek you. I thirst for you in a land that is dry, desolate, and without water."

Psalm 63:1

In what ways have you been seeking God while our church buildings have been closed? Have the closed buildings felt like a dry and desolate land or have you discovered something new about yourself, your church, your relationships, your community?

As some church buildings prepare to open for private prayer and small gatherings, perhaps we might want to remember those who are afraid to leave their homes, those who cannot access church, those who are anxious and who need to hear God's promise that all who are weary and heavy burdened will find rest for their souls.

Day	Psalm	For our District	For our Wider World
Sun 5 th July	Ps 145	Stockton Circuit	People opening up their businesses
Mon 6 th July	Ps 70	Castle Eden Circuit	Those going out for the first time in 3 months
Tues 7 th July	Ps 71: 1-16	Stokesley Circuit	Those who have been made unemployed or face redundancy
Wed 8 th July	Ps 71: 17-24	Cleveland and Danby Circuit	Parts of the world where the Covid19 death rate is still high
Thur 9 th July	Ps 72	Bishop Auckland and Shildon Circuit	Church buildings getting ready to re-open and those who will steward the building
Fri 10 th July	Ps 73: 1-14	Durham and Deerness Valley Circuit	Those who are worried about their finances and debt
Sat 11 July	Ps 73: 15-28	West Durham Circuit	Remember those who mourn

Finding a rhythm of prayer and reflection in lockdown

Praying with hymns: StF 783 [Ubi caritas](#)

Where there is charity and love, there God is.

Lectio divina during week beginning Sunday 5 July 2020

Lectionary Reading Matthew 11: 16-19, 25-30

'But to what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the market-places and calling to one another,
"We played the flute for you, and you did not dance;
we wailed, and you did not mourn."

For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, "He has a demon"; the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, "Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax-collectors and sinners!" Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.'

At that time Jesus said, 'I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. 'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'

Other Lectionary readings for 5 July

[Genesis 24: 34- 38, 42- 49, 58-67](#) [Psalm 45:10-17](#) [Romans 7: 15- 25a](#)

The Bible Month Gospel passage in week 4 is: [Mathew 22: 41-46](#)

LECTIO: READING

As you read the words again underline or highlight words which stand out for you.

MEDITATIO: MEDITATING

What does the passage mean for you today? Which words is Jesus speaking to you?

ORATIO: PRAYER

Respond sharing all you have noticed with God. Listen for God to respond to you.

CONTEMPLATIO: CONTEMPLATION

Be still before God. Invite God to be with you. Give time for the Holy Spirit to use the words read and the meaning you have found to inspire action in your own discipleship.

REFLECTION on the lectionary Gospel reading

John and Jesus were both part of God's same saving plan and purpose, but they lived very differing lifestyles, which deviated from the norm. John lived an ascetic life in the wilderness, Jesus was too engaged with folk round about for many 'religious' peoples' taste. It was easy for people to compare and contrast Jesus and John, reflecting their own preferences in favouring of one or the other. As we are presently very aware, we humans reflect our preferences very easily onto others, feeding our biases and prejudices. From the beginning we have brought this behaviour into our faith settings: see [1 Corinthians 1:12ff!](#)

Perhaps seeing a living example from which to make his point, Jesus pictured two groups of children playing. We can imagine them at either side of the market place, calling across the space in the middle! Some playing at weddings '*we played the flute for you*' others at funerals '*we wailed*': but neither side joining in the others' play: '*you did not dance*', '*you did not mourn*'. A reminder that we can become so intensely involved in our own thing, that we simply expect others to join us: both groups saying '*be like us*' (with the sub-text '*and stop being like you*').

The story also reminds us there's no pleasing some folk. Jesus comments that John's lifestyle led people to say that he was demon-possessed: while his own actions led him to be labelled '*a glutton and a drunkard*' and even worse '*a friend of tax collectors and sinners*'! Perceptions that could be used to reject both John and Jesus, to altogether disengage with their message, like those children deciding 'let's play farmers' or just going home. Because both John and Jesus, through their very different lifestyles were seriously challenging then and now in bringing God's Good News! Their apparent differences might offer an excuse to ignore both and so maintain the status quo: to say '*one's as bad as the other*', another trick we humans are good at.

John and Jesus had different life-styles. The children played differing games. How do we in our time and place cope with '*the other*'?