

Dorset South & West Circuit Written Service 7th February 2021 prepared by Rev Ruth Lownsborough

Welcome to this act of worship. Take comfort that although you may be on your own, you are part of God's church, worshipping God together with others at this time.

Call to worship: Psalm 147: 1, 11. Praise the Lord! How good it is to sing praises to our God; for he is gracious and a song of praise is fitting.

The Lord takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his steadfast love.

Prayer of praise

Almighty, awesome God, revealed to us in Jesus Christ; You are maker of heaven and earth. You know the number of the stars and follow the wind on which the birds soar.

You know when there is thunder in the hills, when the valleys flood with rain, how the heavens stretch out like a tent to cover the breadth of our world.

You provide the means by which we can grow food to eat and resources which sustain our daily lives.

A season is a moment to you, and yet you know and call us, each one by name.

Not a single individual is forgotten or disregarded by you.

We offer you our grateful thanks,... it is good to sing your praise. **Amen.**

Hymn StF 116 Sing for God's glory (tune: Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of Creation)

1.Sing for God's glory that colours the dawn of creation,
Racing across the sky, trailing bright clouds of elation;
Sun of delight
succeeds the velvet of night,
warming the earth's exultation.

2.Sing for God's power that shatters the chains that would bind us,
Searing the darkness of fear and despair that could blind us,
Touching our shame
With love that will not lay blame,
Reaching out gently to find us.

3.Sing for God's justice disturbing each easy illusion,
Tearing down tyrants and putting our pride to confusion;
Lifeblood of right, resisting evil and slight,
Offering freedom's transfusion.

4.Sing for God's saints who have travelled faith's journey before us,
Who in our weariness give us their hope to restore us;
In them we see
The new creation to be,
Spirit of love made flesh for us.

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Prayer of confession The Lord takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his steadfast love. But there are many times when we lose sight of God's purposes, we make mistakes and hurt others

Let us bring to God those things that we know we have got wrong this past week, or before, asking for forgiveness and mercy. *Silence*

How good it is to sing praises to our God, for he is gracious; he gathers the outcasts. The Lord lifts up the downtrodden; he heals the broken-hearted, and binds up their wounds.

Thank you God that in Jesus, you give us the chance to make a new start. Help us to reflect your love more clearly. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Reading: Mark 1: 29-39 As soon as they left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

That evening, at sunset, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. And the whole city was gathered around the door. And he cured many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. And Simon and his companions hunted for him. When they found him, they said to him, "Everyone is searching for you." He answered, "Let us go on to the neighbouring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do." And he went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.

Reflection I wonder if, like me, you sometimes make a list of the things you want to get done in the day or the coming week? I call it my 'TO DO' list, always in capitals because it makes the list look important. As an 'aide memoire' it is important but I also enjoy the sense of achievement that comes when I can firmly cross off an item! It shows me how busy I think I've been, although often there are items which I'm reluctant to tackle, which get left til last and then are just transferred to the next list! I don't think God is fooled by such actions.

In the reading from Mark's gospel, by anyone's calculations, Jesus had had a busy day: teaching in the synagogue, casting out a demon, healing Simon's mother-in-law, and then at the end of the day healing countless people in the crowds who had gathered at the house.

Mark paints a very intense, urgent picture of Jesus' ministry, beginning with the work of healing and restoration to wholeness in all kinds of ways.

Jesus didn't have a 'TO DO' list like we might, Jesus had a mission. He came to proclaim the presence of God's kingdom, to embody God's authority, responding to peoples' needs as he encountered them in places of worship, in people's homes, in local communities. Jesus' power and authority was active anywhere, anytime and still is!

Next morning, before light, Jesus went off alone to pray. Jesus knew his need not only for physical rest but for spiritual refreshment & renewal. Even though his ministry was only just beginning he recognised the overwhelming need of the people & what he himself needed in order to serve them.

Jesus does what is most important at that time....spends time in prayer with God.

‘Those who wait on the Lord will renew their strength, they shall rise up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint’ (Isaiah 40: 31)

Jesus shows us what we must do too..... If the Son of God needed to spend time in prayer to be guided & strengthened, then we as God’s children need to as well.

How many times do we struggle along in our own strength, not spending time with God each day?

God loves us and when you love someone, you want to spend time with them.

God wants us to intentionally spend time in his presence, however we find we can do that most easily. There’s not just one way to pray but many.....what matters is that we actually do it....we seek God and spend time in his company.

The Covenant prayer, which you may have prayed recently, puts everything about our lives under God’s direction....daily prayer/time with God helps us to keep doing that.

The needs we hear about, especially in our current situation, may feel overwhelming, we might experience a sense of helplessness, weakness, inability to make any difference to the situation of others. Sometimes we can feel overwhelmed by our own personal situations/circumstances.

Perhaps you see yourself as one of the crowd who come to Jesus for healing?

Maybe you’re finding it difficult to be alongside someone else in their need

Maybe there is something else weighing you down

When we spend time with God, bringing our worries, concerns and hopes to God, we will find support, strength and comfort.

‘What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and grief to bear!

What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer!

O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear,
all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.

Have we trials and temptations, is there trouble anywhere?

We should never be discouraged: take it to the Lord in prayer.

Can we find a friend so faithful who will all our sorrows share?

Jesus knows our every weakness: take it to the Lord in prayer.

Are we weak and heavy laden, cumbered with a load of care?

Precious Saviour, still our refuge – take it to the Lord in prayer!

Do your friends despise, forsake you? Take it to the Lord in prayer;

In his arms he’ll take and shield you, you will find a solace there.

Prayers of intercession:

Heavenly Father, we wait on your healing power.

Heal those who are sick. Restore those who are struggling.

Comfort those who are distressed.

As we wait: **Lord, renew our strength.**

Heavenly Father, we wait on your cleansing power.

Forgive us our sins. Change our bad habits. Transform our attitudes.

As we wait: **Lord, renew our strength.**

Heavenly Father, we wait on the power of your good news.

Open the eyes of those who are searching. Bring your light into places of darkness.

Give your hope to those who are despairing.

As we wait: **Lord, renew our strength.**

Heavenly Father, we wait on the power of your Spirit.

Give courage and strength to those who serve. Refresh those who are weary.

Give a new vision to those who dream.

As we wait: **Lord, renew our strength. Amen**

Hymn StF 495 Dear Lord and Father of mankind

Dear Lord and Father of mankind, forgive our foolish ways: reclothe us in our rightful mind;
in purer lives thy service find, in deeper reverence praise, in deeper reverence praise.

In simple trust like theirs who heard, beside the Syrian sea, the gracious calling of the Lord
let us, like them, without a word: 'Rise up and follow thee, rise up and follow thee!'

O Sabbath rest by Galilee! O calm of hills above, where Jesus knelt to share with thee
the silence of eternity interpreted by love, interpreted by love!

With that deep hush subduing all our words and works that drown the tender whisper of
thy call, as noiseless let thy blessing fall as fell thy manna down, as fell thy manna down.

Drop thy still dews of quietness, till all our strivings cease; take from our souls the strain
and stress, and let our ordered lives confess the beauty of thy peace, the beauty of thy
peace.

Breathe through the heats of our desire thy coolness and thy balm;

Let sense be dumb, let flesh retire, speak through the earthquake, wind and fire,

O still, small voice of calm, O still, small voice of calm.

Blessing & sending: Thank you Lord, that you have met with me in praise, worship and
prayer. Help me to come to you, to seek your presence every day. Amen

May the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit remain with you always. Amen