

Dorset and Southwest Methodist Circuit .  
Written service for 15<sup>th</sup> MAY 2022 .by Rev J.E.M. Barber

**Please use your own bible for the scripture readings**

Today's readings illustrate the importance of fellowship with other Christians. Let us start by praying for our friends and asking god to forgive us for when we have neglected them. Take time to name them before God.

Hymn (SF43)

Bind us together Lord, Bind us together with cords that can not be broken

Chorus...

Bind us together Lord, bind us together, Bind us together with love.

There is only one God, there is only one king  
There is only one body, that is why we sing "Bind us....

Made for the glory of God, purchased by his precious son,  
Born with the right to be clean For Jesus the victory has won. "Bind us....

You are the family of God, you are the promise divine;  
You are God's chosen desire ;  
You are the glorious new wine. "Bind us.... Amen.

**CONFESSION.**

Heavenly Father, I have often neglected family and friends ( take time to name some before god) and just gone my own way, I ask your forgiveness and that of those I have hurt and ask you to show me a better way of life. Amen.

Reading St. John ch.13 v 31 -35

Jesus and his disciples were together for the most sacred meal of the year in the Jewish calendar. They all wanted Jesus to take action against the Jewish authorities who were threatening him. They could not imagine life without him, but they did not know what to do. Judas decided to take action and so he went out to try and force Jesus's hand to take godly action against those who were threatening him. So he missed those last precious hours with Jesus.

I wonder what those other disciples were feeling ?  
What do we do when one of our group leaves us ? Do we try to win them back? Are we sure that we are going the right way ? A time for real prayer and seeking the will of God.

Hymn (HPs 68)

Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us o'er the world's tempestuous sea,  
Guard us, guide us, keep us, feed us, For we have no help but Thee  
Yet possessing every blessing If our God our Father be.

Saviour, breathe forgiveness o'er us, All our weakness thou dost know  
Thou didst tread this earth before us, Thou didst feel its keenest woe;  
Tempted taunted, yet undaunted, Through the desert thou didst go.

Spirit of our God descending, Fill our hearts with heavenly joy,  
Love with every passion blending, Pleasure that can never cloy;  
Thus provided, pardoned, guided, Nothing can our peace destroy.

Reading Acts 11 v 1-18

Further evidence of God expecting corporate not solo action.  
Caesarea sent a team to Peter at Joppa, then a team went with Peter from Joppa to Caesarea. Later Peter went to Jerusalem and reported all that had happened. Did any of those involved realise what a momentous change was taking place and that it would open the way for the conversion of the Gentiles and the establishment of the Christian Church.

What does God feel now as He looks at all the divisions in the church? Some groups refusing fellowship and sacraments to other groups. Others offering sacraments to some who have no Christian commitment or faith and who normally never meet in fellowship with Christians. Some denominations have introduced rules for which there is no basis in scripture and set them above what we read in scripture. To what extent should the contents of worship be governed by the personal likes of a few without regard for the feelings and beliefs of others.

What steps for the growth of the church is God asking us to take ?

Take an open time of prayer seeking God's will for united action for the growth of Christianity.

Hymn

We are one in the Spirit, We are one in the Lord  
We are one in the Spirit, We are one in the Lord,  
And we pray that our unity will one day be restored.

Chorus.

And they'll know we are Christians by our love,  
By our Love, yes they'll know we are Christians by our Love.

We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand,  
We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand,  
And together we'll spread the news that God is in our Land.

Chorus..

We will work with each other, we will work side by side,  
We will work with each other, we will work side by side,  
And we'll guard each man's dignity and crucify our pride.

Chorus...

All praise to the Father, from whom all things come;  
And all praise to Christ Jesus, Who is His only Son.  
And all praise to the Spirit who makes us one.

Chorus...

Blessing.

May God guide and bless you as you enjoy Christian fellowship and spread the Gospel in a way that will help the church to grow and so improve the character of all society. Amen.

For further meditation:-

Some thoughts expressed by Sydney Carter 1965.

When I needed a neighbour  
Were you there ....?

When I was hungry and thirsty  
Were you there.....

When I was cold and was naked  
Were you there.....

When I needed a shelter  
Were you there.....

When I needed a healer  
Were you there.....

Where ever you travel  
I'll be there.....

And the creed and the colour  
And the name won't matter  
I'll be there.

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Do we let Christ work through us ?