

# Praying the Scripture - a few simple steps at home

Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2022

1. Start with stillness and quietening down; then gently read the passage, noticing any feelings and connections to your own experience.
2. Read the passage again and spend understand. *The notes in your Bible may be of help at this point.*
3. Read the passage a third time - wondering how you yourself might pray the text over the next few days.
4. Over the next week, set aside times to come back more than once to the passage. You could read it all or part of it again, slowly. Perhaps there is a special word for you in this passage of Scripture? Keep this word or phrase in your thoughts and gently repeat it, bringing it to mind and allowing God to speak to you in your heart.
5. Finally, come back to the text to conclude: What is God in this scripture asking of you this week? What is the one challenge, one little change you are asked to make or the thing you have been asked to do? Then say a prayer of thanksgiving for the good news in the passage. End in quiet prayer.



## THIS SUNDAY'S GOSPEL – John 13:31-35 “Love one another”

*When Judas had gone out, Jesus said, ‘Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, “Where I am going, you cannot come.” I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.*



## A Short Thought

According to the song, “the greatest thing you’ll ever learn is to love and be loved in return.” In our better moments, we all know this to be the truth about our human being. For believers, it is no surprise that the very thing we need most stands at the centre of the Christian faith: God is love. The match between our need and God’s disclosure is perfect. If we took that really to heart, many things would change: our practice of prayer, our relationships, our joy in believing, our way of sharing our faith, our living of discipleship. All we need is love. The astonishing servant love of God in Jesus is exactly we most need. What is our Christian goal as we travel with Jesus? Our desire is to love one another—to love the whole world finally, I suppose—as Jesus loved us. To do that, we need an infusion of a kind of love that does not arise naturally from the context of the world as we know it. So, as we lose ourselves in Jesus and in being his disciples, we find even our ordinary day-to-day activities infused with deep meaning as a love from another place fills our hearts. Because if sacredness happens to us at all, it happens among the pots and pans of the everyday and not just on Sundays when we feel particularly jolted by worship or on Tuesdays when we volunteer for some service project (*vital though those things are, too*). If we are to love as Jesus loved us, this becomes for us a daily reality that is possible if and only when the love of Christ fills us to the brim. Where do you experience that love? When do you BE that love?

## SOME POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. Judas leaves and Jesus announces that the moment has come for God’s power to be made manifest. This is unexpected at a moment of imminent betrayal. Have there been times for you when the power of God was made manifest in strange circumstances?
2. At this moment of betrayal, of Jesus’ anguish that one of his chosen companions has turned away from him, that we are given a ‘new commandment’. We might wonder about the tensions and the divisions within the

community of the fourth gospel. Why do they need to be told and reminded- repeatedly! - to 'love one another'?

3. The essence of God is love and God cannot but transmit love. This love is not a sentimental feeling. We witness to this love by who we are, what we do with our lives and how we treat others. I am invited to reflect and to open my heart to see how I am relating to those around me, with myself and with God?
4. 'I shall not be with you much longer.' Jesus announces a parting of the ways. There are places we have to go in life where others cannot come with us. There are places others have to go and we cannot accompany them. When have you experienced this going on alone as necessary for a fuller life for yourself, or for someone else?
5. Who are the individuals or communities whose love for one another and for others has been a witness to you?

## Prayer -

Loving Father, we behold your glory, in the love shown by your Son, lifted up on the cross and exalted on high. Increase our love for one another, that both in name and in truth we may be disciples of the risen Lord Jesus and so reflect in our lives the glory that is yours. We ask this through Jesus, who died and rose for love of us and who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen**

### Prayer in these uncertain times

*We pray for all those in our country and throughout the world suffering from the Corona Virus. May its victims and their families be strengthened by the support of our community of faith and restored soon to full health. We also pray for our leaders and medical personnel who deal with the virus. May we keep calm and may we join together in solidarity with care and compassion to tackle this emergency. This we ask in confidence through Christ Our Lord. Amen*

*We pray for Ukraine. For all of humanity distorted by war. For all the lives lost, homes seized, and peace broken. May the Spirit of comfort and compassion envelop all who dwell in fear. May peace prevail and justice reign. May love always be the guide and measure of our actions and responses. Amen*

