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ORDINARY 23A

10th September 2023

A short act of worship and daily devotions

A Free resource funded by donations from Individuals, churches and **twelvebaskets**.

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Opening Prayers

Take time to find something in your home that you hold as precious and important.

It may be a photograph, a flower or personal item. Whatever you choose, bring it into a space of prayer and quiet, and consider:

- What is it that makes it important to you?
- What memories does it hold?
- How do you feel about it and what would happen if you lost it?

Now imagine that God is holding you as precious and important:

- Loving and caring for you and your unique character
- Following your journey of faith
- Wanting never to lose you

When you feel able put down your object and pick up again these written words

Come then to worship, knowing that whatever you offer in this moment is precious and important.

Amen.

You may now wish to say the Lord's Prayer in a version or translation with which you are most familiar.

Musical worship:

You might like to listen to and/or sing along with one or more of these videos as you worship today.

152 STF – This is the day, that the Lord has made - [YouTube](#)

36 STF – There's a quiet understanding - [YouTube](#)

28 STF – Jesus calls us here to meet him - [YouTube](#)

547 STF – Beyond these walls of worship - [YouTube](#)

Readings: Matthew 18:15-20 – [Click for reading](#)

Responding to the readings

To help with this exercise you might like to visualise or draw a series of concentric circles, with the smallest one representing your immediate community, very closest

friends, people you see or speak to most days. Pause for a moment, and imagine your own personal community.

Who is in this closest circle for you?

Then another, slightly larger circle representing good friends, extended family members, closest colleagues, people you see or speak to often, but probably not every day. Or people you don't get to see that often, but who when you do see them it's immediately 'like the old days'. Who are you thinking of?

Then, beyond that, another couple of circles – the first with occasional friends and acquaintances, the sorts of people you only see once or twice a year, or don't have a particularly deep and meaningful relationship with.

Our community is important, and that is part of the reason the church exists today – as a place where we can learn more about God, worship, pray, practice our faith in action – but not do so in isolation. As the founder of the Methodist movement, John Wesley, once said: 'there is no holiness but social holiness'. We can't learn more about what it means to follow Jesus, without the connection with other human beings.

In Matthew 18, we read:

"Truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."

That is the essence of Christian community – when we gather, we are able to recognise the Christ present in each other, to support each other, to worship, learn and grow together. What does that look like for you? How can you practice community in your worshiping, learning, discipling life?

Blessing

Go from here,
As one of the Gospel-people,
A people who bring good news into our homes, our families, our communities, our whole world.

Loving God,
Show me how to join in with what you are doing, O God.

Amen.

Prayers and Prayer Pointers for the Week

Monday 11th September

- Think about the fruits of the spirit.
- Pick one of them that you don't feel you are very good at, or that needs some intentional work.
- Spend some time praying about this, and then practice it for a whole day in all you do.

Tuesday 12th September

- What spiritual practices are you using to help you connect with the divine? How are you praying, reflecting, meditating, taking time out/alone to encounter God? Perhaps you might like to have a think and pray today about a practice or discipline that might help you.

Wednesday 13th September

- Today, let us pray for our planet, for all of us as we seek to make adjustments to our lifestyle so we limit our negative impact on the world, and for leaders and those in power as they face the vital decisions that need to be made to limit and mitigate against climate disasters.

Thursday 14th September

- God of all grace, I take a moment to pray for all the stories in the news today. Holding before you leaders, nations, conflicts, disasters, and those working for a better world.
Come, Prince of Peace, come Lord of Light,
Amen.

Friday 15th September

- Write a note or a message to a friend with a Bible verse in it that you think might be relevant to your life.
- Tell them you're thinking of them, and pray about them as they receive it.

Saturday 16th September

- Holy God, today I am thankful. I come in prayer, recognising and remembering this day that all I have received is grace, all is gift. I have received so much, and so often I take it for granted. Today, I come with a thankful heart, knowing how richly blessed I am, and seeking to offer gratitude.
- You might like to list the things you are grateful for – go on as long as you possibly can!
- Thank you God. Amen.