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## ORDINARY 18A

6th August 2023

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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

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For more information <https://theworshipcloud.com/terms/free-weekly-resource>

## Gathering prayer

*You might like to spend a few minutes clearing a space in your home or wherever you are today, tidying things up, removing distractions, and just being still for a moment. When you are ready – you might like to say this short opening prayer out loud.*

God of each moment,  
God of this time and this place,  
I am open to your Spirit this day.  
Change, inspire and uplift me, O God, to be attentive to how you are speaking to me today.  
In Jesus name, I bring myself to worship,  
Amen.<sup>1</sup>

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

**Reading:** Matthew 14:13-21 – [Click for reading](#)

### Responding to the reading:

Today's reflection comes from our friends and partners at All We Can – the international development charity.

Have you ever had unexpected guests at a meal time? Imagine having five thousand people turn up for Sunday lunch!

Perhaps with a bit more warning, the disciples might have put a financial plan in place; been saving a little bit each month and carefully preparing for this expenditure. But they didn't have any warning. Jesus knew that this large crowd were hungry and he wanted to meet their needs. It seemed a monumental ask. How could you feed all these people without enough money?

In this story, Jesus shows us how extraordinary things can happen. Jesus uses the ordinary gift of a simple lunch to do something extraordinary. Sometimes we can think of generosity as a calculation. It is a big act. It requires much from us. It will be costly. But the essence of this story is that all Jesus requires of us is our willingness to bring to him our ordinary offerings.

It is in Jesus Christ that the ordinary will be made extraordinary. This model of generosity is woven throughout the Bible. God takes ordinary people and uses them for extraordinary things. We, as ordinary as we are, are beckoned into relationship with the creator of the world. The one whose hands flung stars into space takes our hands and wants to walk with us.

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<sup>1</sup> Call to worship written by Tim Baker

Pause for a moment and think about your responses to these questions:

- Where in your life have you seen something extraordinary emerge from the ordinary?
- What are your hopes for your community or your local church: how can you see the extraordinary emerge from the ordinary things in your local area?

So, when we look at something as every day and ordinary, we can look at it through the lens of Jesus. This is the way All We Can works around the world – alongside and with the local communities they serve in parts of Africa. By listening to the local people and their needs, by using local resources and traditions, by working together and learning to listen, the ordinary can become extraordinary.

Change begins when we work together, and a simple, ordinary thing is being turned into something extraordinary.

To find out more about how All We Can is involved in this kind of work around the world, and how you can play your part, take a look at some of the stories on their website: [allwecan.org.uk](http://allwecan.org.uk)

### **Responding in music:**

Listen to and/or sing along to these hymns as you reflect on all that God is saying to you this week. What is your part in God's big story of justice?

706 STF – Longing for light, we wait in darkness - [YouTube](#)

713 STF – Show me how to stand for justice - [YouTube](#)

239 STF – Sent by the Lord am I - [YouTube](#)

### **Responding in prayer**

God of all grace,  
Come amongst us and show us how to be a people seeking justice,  
A people wanting the world to be a better place and recognizing that our role in that is to listen and learn as much as it is to act.  
Show us how the ordinary is becoming extraordinary.  
To the compassionate God  
Heal what is hurting and restore what has been broken.

With grateful hearts we thank our loving God,  
whose compassion never ceases,  
whose love for us never runs dry,  
whose fight against injustice never relents.

We bring these, and all our prayers in your name,  
Amen.

## **Blessing**

God of all grace,  
Guide me, as I seek to respond to your love to the whole world.

Help me to be a shining example of love in a world crying out in need.

May I be Christ's hands and feet, by the power of your Spirit.

Amen.

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## **Prayers and Prayer Pointers for the Week**

### **Monday 7<sup>th</sup> August**

- Stand or sit in your kitchen for a moment. Notice the foods you can see, or think about the foods just out of sight in your cupboards, fridge and freezer. Think about where they have come from, and the people involved in getting them to you.
- Say a prayer of gratitude for what you have received.

### **Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> August**

- Do you have a favourite poem or song? It doesn't have to be explicitly Christian. Consider the ways the good news of God is communicated through the words.

### **Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> August**

- Hold a moment of stillness.
- Listen to yourself breathing.
- Calm yourself for a moment and offer this time to God. What do you need today?

### **Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> August**

- Every time you go in or out of the door to your house today, try to write a short prayer of thanks for something you are grateful for. You might like to write it down, or just say the words in your head.

### **Friday 11<sup>th</sup> August**

- What does the good news of the Gospel feel like to you? Can you express it as a prayer of thanks in just a sentence or two?

### **Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> August**

- What does this summer hold for you? How has it been going so far? What do you need to offer to God?
- Spend a few minutes praying for the things that have been weighing you down or worrying you so far in this season. Offer your burdens to God.