



# Sunday after Ascension

## **A Short Reflective Service of Prayer for those at home**

From East and West, North and South  
as the whole people of God let us remember,  
Christ dwells among us and is one with us.

Let the strength of God move within us,  
faith and hope in God brings wholeness to our lives -  
endless possibilities and new beginnings.  
Praise to you Lord Jesus, risen, ascended and now glorified.  
Thanks be to God AMEN

### **A Reading from the New Testament**

So when they had come together, they asked him, 'Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?' He replied, 'It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.' When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.

While he was going and they were gazing up towards heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them.

They said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up towards heaven?

This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.'

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away.

*Acts 1 v 6-12*

Light your own Candle  
(please ensure this is done safely)

*Pause for a moment of quiet*

## **Pause for Thought**

In times of uncertainty, in times of despair, suffering or loss  
we often gain new insight, a fresh wisdom  
that helps us to see what is really important in this life.

I recently heard someone reflecting out aloud  
about the shortcomings of their life, they said -  
*'So often I have searched for what I want  
rather than what I need'*

Such understanding has much in common with our reading  
this week from the Book of Acts and the question posed  
by the disciples to Jesus just prior to his ascension into heaven.

*'Lord, are you going to restore the Kingdom to Israel?'*

What the disciples yearned for and sought from Jesus was the confirmation  
that Israel would once again be free of its overlords,  
Free from all they saw and experienced under the yoke of the Romans  
and their client rulers Herod Antipas and Archelaus.

They were just like many of us, they wanted what they really, really 'wanted'  
rather than sought what they actually needed.

Fortunately, Jesus knew what was better for them (and for us)  
even if they hadn't yet worked it out!

In the nicest possible way Jesus answered their question,  
He's trying to say, don't worry about things you have no control over.  
Sometimes, we get caught up in the detail,  
we can't always see the bigger picture or what is really important.

On this occasion, Jesus didn't have time to sit and explain  
all the things on their hearts but what he did have to say  
would impact their lives in ways they could not imagine.  
*'You will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit',*

How amazing, without the gift of the Spirit to every believer,  
Jesus would simply be a person of the past, a great name in history;  
instead, he lives in the hearts of all who believe in him.

Through the gift of HIS spirit he is alive in us,  
He lives in us to shape our being, fulfill our hopes and guide our destiny.

*'So often I have searched for what I want  
rather than what I need'*

*Pause for a moment of quiet*

May we journey onwards in peace  
finding hope in the One true God who is life.  
Bless your people O God,

and let the light of your love shine upon us always. AMEN

### **A Call to Prayer**

Let us pray for the world, the Church and each other

### **Prayers for the World**

Who will we pray for today? Let us name them.

*(Silently name those we pray for)*

Dear God, sometimes we find it hard to believe  
in the power of your life, your death,  
your rising and your ascension; forgive us  
and enter every part of our lives  
filling them with your grace and wisdom.

Make real your life among us, O Christ,  
stretch it out across the heavens like stars of light;  
warm our struggling world,  
where hearts lie cold in calculated self-interest.

Shower us with the sparks of your compassion,  
let the flame of your love burn brightly within us  
and empower us to take that love out into the world  
until it reaches to the ends of the earth.

O Lord, hear our prayer.

Have mercy on your people O God  
In this new and changed world that stands before us.  
Bring healing and wholeness to people and nations,  
and have pity on those suffering in their isolation.

Strengthen all who are fearful of disease and death,  
bring them to a new hope in Christ.

Hear the cry of those in pain, those who lament,  
grant them your peace and surround them with your presence.

Give rest to the departed  
and bring them, with your saints, to glory everlasting.

We commend the world to you for which Christ died,  
lead us in the pathways of truth and grant us your protection O God,  
Now and forever more, AMEN.

### **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father, who art in heaven  
Hallowed be thy name  
Thy kingdom come;  
Thy will be done;  
On earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses,  
As we forgive those  
who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation;  
But Deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
The power and the glory,  
For ever and ever. AMEN

## Closing Prayer

Pour love down like fruitful rain, O God,  
over the dry places of our lives,  
let the seed of your Holy Spirit  
break into our thoughts, our wants, our needs  
so that we may know and grow in your life giving love  
and transforming wisdom.

Christ has died, Christ is Risen, Christ will Come again.

Let us bless the Lord, thanks be to God. Amen!

