

# **The Five Alive Praying Together on a Sunday**

## **Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2020 – Trinity Eight**

*You may like to light a candle as a visible symbol of Jesus  
being present with you.*

The Lord is with us.

Blessed are you, Lord God, creator of day and night:  
to you be praise and glory for ever.

As darkness falls you renew your promise  
to reveal among us the light of your presence.

By the light of Christ, your living Word,  
dispel the darkness of our hearts  
that we may walk as children of light  
and sing your praise throughout the world.

Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit:

Blessed be God for ever.

Amen.

That this evening may be holy, good and peaceful,  
let us pray with one heart and mind.

*Keep a moment of quiet*

As our evening prayer rises before you, O God,  
so may your mercy come down upon us to cleanse our hearts  
and set us free to sing your praise now and for ever.

Amen.

## **Reading: Romans 8: 26-39**

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written,

'For your sake we are being killed all day long;  
we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.'

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## Reflection

*From a reflection Sarah offered on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> July at Fladbury*

“What is prayer?”

You would think it was a fairly simple question to answer - wouldn't you? Yet, it can be surprisingly difficult to put into words, what we mean by prayer. Like many profound things – a definition is too constricting – words do not do justice to the vastness - the breadth nor depth of what we mean. And we would most likely want to draw some distinction between praying in a service like this – prayers of intercession offered on behalf of everyone present, prayer we might offer in a small group, and then, personal prayer. In this short reflection, I am thinking more of personal prayer – wherever and whenever that takes place.

And more than the “doing of prayer” – the “living” of prayer – “being prayerful” in all things.

Prayer is as much about listening to God, as talking to God. Indeed, prayer is a lot about consciously being present to God, and letting God be present to you. To truly be in the presence of another person, one needs to observe – to be attentive – even on the phone. Isn't it surprising how much we can pick up - even without seeing someone? And in being present with another, or in prayer with God – finding that ground where you both share the moment.

Trusting the moment, to share what is in your heart and on your mind. Bringing to the moment the joys of life and thanksgivings; the peace one finds in the blessings of life; the things for which one is sorry and for which one wants to be healed and restored; the worries and the concerns for others and for oneself which one knows God will care for; the fears, the hopes, and the things for which one asks God to shed His Light upon and to be one's Guide.

And if that sounds a lot, and very often it is all so jumbled up, we don't quite know how to begin, then let Paul's words in this passage of the letter to the Romans, offer encouragement:

*“The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.”*

Prayer to me can sometimes feel like bringing to God a knotty mass of threads – and asking God to help me watch Him as He unravels them – not straight away – over time – and asking God to grant me the patience of waiting while He does.

Right now lots of things can feel even more of a jumble than usual. In so many aspects of life – there are many things to think through afresh – it can feel like a maze of old and new – known and unknown.

Living prayerfully – trusting the moment to God in prayer – asking God to untie the knots to help us to see His ways, for they may not be our ways. Asking God to show us what is important and what is not important.

Asking God to show us the seeds He has planted. They may be tiny like a mustard seed – but it is God's seed – and if it is God's and by His grace we work with it, whatever it is in our life – we can trust Him for its growth.

Prayer helps us to see things in ourselves and around us, in a different light. We begin to see and hear with the eyes and ears of God. Living prayerfully helps others to see through us, things in God's light too. What we mean by His glory.

*Keep a moment of quiet to reflect before praying.*

## **Prayers**

*Prepared by Meredith Debenham*

We thank God for feeding us through Word and Sacrament and for His invitation to receive spiritual renewal through His gift of grace.

Heavenly Father, feed us with increased faith and bring renewal to your Church throughout the world.

We pray for all Bishops, clergy and lay ministers, particularly for Bishops John and Martin, for Archdeacons Robert and Nikki, for Sarah, Gary and Emma that they may be fed with the wisdom and vision to lead the church forward in this place.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for our government and for governments throughout the world as they make decisions to protect the health and livelihood of their people from the effects of the global pandemic. May they always put the well-being of their people before self-interest or ambition.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Our Lord fed the hungry. We pray for people throughout the world who do not have enough to eat: for those living with famine as a result of drought, flood, pestilence or war and for those who cannot afford to buy food and are forced to rely on Food Banks and the generosity of others. Make us ever mindful of the needs of others and of our Christian duty to care.

We pray for all who care: for doctors, nurses and all who work in our hospitals, hospices and care homes; for those who work in social care and for all who care for loved ones in their homes. Grant them, Lord, strength, skill, patience and compassion.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for all who are suffering from physical or mental illness, from anxiety or stress.

In a moment of silence let us name before God anyone known to us who especially needs our prayer today.....

May they know the comfort of God's presence to heal and support them.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for those who have died. For those known to us and loved by us but who we see no longer. We thank God for the times we spent with them and rejoice in the knowledge that they are in His eternal care.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Merciful Father,  
accept these prayers for the sake of your Son,  
our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen.

*(Pause).*

### **Collect for Trinity Eight**

Lord God,  
your Son left the riches of heaven  
and became poor for our sake:  
when we prosper save us from pride,  
when we are needy save us from despair,  
that we may trust in you alone;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever.  
Amen.

### **Hymn**

Dear Lord and Father of mankind,  
forgive our foolish ways!  
Re-clothe us in our rightful mind,  
in purer lives thy service find,  
in deeper rev'ence praise,  
in deeper rev'ence praise.

In simple trust like theirs who heard,  
beside the Syrian sea,  
the gracious calling of the Lord,  
let us, like them, without a word,  
rise up and follow thee,  
rise up and follow thee.

○ Sabbath rest by Galilee!  
○ calm of hills above,  
where Jesus knelt to share with thee  
the silence of eternity,  
interpreted by love!  
Interpreted by love!

Drop thy still dews of quietness,  
till all our strivings cease;  
take from our souls the strain and stress,  
and let our ordered lives confess  
the beauty of thy peace,  
the beauty of thy peace.

Breathe through the heats of our desire  
thy coolness and thy balm;  
let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;  
speak through the earthquake,  
wind and fire,  
○ still small voice of calm!  
○ still small voice of calm!

*John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892)*

Lord, you have brought us through this day  
to a time of reflection and rest.  
Calm us and give us your peace to refresh us.  
Keep us close to Christ  
that we may be closer to one another  
because of his perfect love.  
In his name we pray.  
Amen.