

**CHURCH**

**AT**

**HOME**

**WEEK 20**

**02/08/2020**



# Welcome

Welcome to our **Church at Home** thoughts and service on this Sunday morning. This week we begin a new series looking at the theme of: **Friendships**. Today is all about **Fair - Weather Friends**. All you will need for the service and to help you in you thinking can be found on these sheets.



We live in a society that likes to kick people when they're down. Don't be a fair-weather friend. Stick with people. They need you more in the tough times than they do in the good times.

Joel Osteen

# Call to Worship

## Psalm 150 v. 1-6 NLT

Praise the Lord!

Praise God in his heavenly dwelling;

Praise him in his mighty heaven!

Praise him for his mighty works;

Praise his unequalled greatness!

Praise him with a blast of the trumpet;

Praise him with the lyre and harp!

Praise him with the tambourine and dancing;

Praise him with stringed instruments and flutes!

Praise him with a clash of cymbals;

Praise him with loud clanging cymbals.

Let everything that lives sing praises to the Lord!

Praise the Lord!

## SONG SUGGESTIONS

Cornerstone

Build Your Kingdom Here

# Prayer

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden; cleanse the thoughts of our hearts this day we pray, by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, we pray.

**Amen**

## Our Giving To God



While we are unable to meet physically at church and are therefore not able to give of our finances to the work that goes on in the church, why not consider what you would normally put into the offering, and then put this aside until we meet again. We can then all give with a grateful heart and praise God for all that he has given to us.



# Bible Reading

Psalm 55 v. 1 - 23

New International Version (NIV)

**For the director of music. With stringed instruments. A *maskil* of David.**

- 1** Listen to my prayer, O God, do not ignore my plea;
- 2** hear me and answer me. My thoughts trouble me and I am distraught
- 3** because of what my enemy is saying, because of the threats of the wicked; for they bring down suffering on me and assail me in their anger.
- 4** My heart is in anguish within me; the terrors of death have fallen on me.
- 5** Fear and trembling have beset me; horror has overwhelmed me.
- 6** I said, "Oh, that I had the wings of a dove! I would fly away and be at rest.
- 7** I would flee far away and stay in the desert;
- 8** I would hurry to my place of shelter, far from the tempest and storm."
- 9** Lord, confuse the wicked, confound their words, for I see violence and strife in the city.
- 10** Day and night they prowl about on its walls; malice and abuse are within it.
- 11** Destructive forces are at work in the city; threats and lies never leave its streets.
- 12** If an enemy were insulting me, I could endure it; if a foe were rising

against me, I could hide.

**13** But it is you, a man like myself, my companion, my close friend,

**14** with whom I once enjoyed sweet fellowship at the house of God, as we walked about among

the worshippers.

**15** Let death take my enemies by surprise; let them go down alive to the realm of the dead, for evil finds lodging among them.

**16** As for me, I call to God, and the LORD saves me.

**17** Evening, morning and noon I cry out in distress, and he hears my voice.

**18** He rescues me unharmed from the battle waged against me, even though many oppose me.

**19** God, who is enthroned from of old, who does not change - he will hear them and humble them,

because they have no fear of God.

**20** My companion attacks his friends; he violates his covenant.

**21** His talk is smooth as butter, yet war is in his heart; his words are more soothing than oil, yet they are drawn swords.

**22** Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be shaken.

**23** But you, God, will bring down the wicked into the pit of decay; the bloodthirsty and deceitful will not live out half their days. But as for me, I trust in you.



# Church at Home Thought

The Green Bear wanted a friend, but he was rather choosy. He declined the offer of a girl Deer - well, boys don't want girls as friends - and so he set off to visit Master Pig who, he was told, might be able to help him.

Just when he was feeling hungry, an Owl flew by and dropped an apple for him to eat. **'What a kind, friendly thing to do,'** thought the Green Bear. The meeting with Master Pig was a disaster. Pig ran a business called **'Rent - A - Friend'** and offered the Green Bear ten minutes of his valuable time before going to meet some more important people. Feeling hurt and rejected, the Green Bear met the Owl once more.

He explained, **'I want a friend. Someone to play with,'** and was delighted with Owl's response: **'Can I be your friend?'** Perhaps with Owl as a friend the Green

Bear would learn that it is all right to have a girl Deer as a friend and the damage done by the Master Pig's rejection would be healed or repaired - we are not told.

## Warts and all

*The Green Bear* (a Scripture Union video) has helped generations of people to explore biblical principles and to identify issues that get in the way of true friendship. The issues include prejudices such as sexism and racism, fear of what others might think, ambition and a desire for status.

Like the Green Bear, however, most of us find Owls who do not want to be the fair - weather variety of friend. Even so, they and we are not perfect, and so we have to accept each other warts and all.

Behind some of the descriptions of Paul's journey (**Acts 18**) are issues of relationship and friendship.

**Read Acts 18 v. 6 – 11** and imagine that you were there. Feel the tensions. What were the issues that affected Paul's friendships in Corinth? The time came for him to leave. He travelled with friends (**Acts 18 v. 18**), rather than alone, before visiting several cities where he encouraged new friends who were believers. Encouragement of each other is a vital part of Christian friendship, and is something we can all do.

## When friends let us down

One of the most painful experiences in life must be when a close friend lets us down. To be let down by those we have trusted with our innermost secrets leaves us with a range of emotions that are hard to handle, similar to those of intense grief.

The Psalmist in **Psalm 55**, our passage for today, felt overwhelmed, worn out and abandoned (**Psalm 55 v. 1, 2**).

When he discovered the cause of his problem (**Psalm 55 v. 3**) he was crushed, terrified and could not control his body - it would not stop trembling (**Psalm 55 v. 5**). He wished that he could escape (**Psalm 55 v. 6, 7**) and then, perhaps, the problem would go away. But it would not. The Psalmist's reactions were typical of those who suffer the shock of betrayal (**Psalm 55 v. 12, 13**).

David, the Psalmist, called down judgement on his enemies, who had influenced his friend (**Psalm 55 v. 15**) and perhaps he remembered times when he too had let down those close to him (**Psalm 51; 2 Samuel 23 - 39**). Then he turned to a period of quieter prayer and told God what it was like having a close friend who gave mixed messages (**Psalm 55 v. 20, 21**). Although he continued to struggle with the pain of what had happened to him (**Psalm 55 v. 23**), he found some peace (**Psalm 55 v. 22**) when he decided to leave his troubles with the Lord.

In a sense he 'let go' of what had happened to him and set out into the future, still bearing some of the pain but able to move on. To get to

such a point often takes time, but the pattern for all of us who may feel betrayed will be similar.

First comes the raw emotions that we must own. We might talk, write, cry or work them out of our system through physical activity. Only then can we reconsider what happened, think more clearly and decide what the most constructive and creative actions might be. God is there to support us through the pain of it all.

Have you ever been let down seriously by a friend? The Bible is realistic about the fact that even between best friends (**and even between Christian friends**) there are going to be times of difficulty in the relationship.

As we have said **Psalm 55 v. 1 – 23** shows David crying out to God with brutal honesty about a friendship that has turned sour. What can we learn from the passage then about how to handle friendships?

## FRIENDSHIP UNDER PRESSURE

What is your reaction when a friendship seems to be breaking down?

### ILLUSTRATION

A safari expedition in Kenya went horribly wrong and left two friends running for dear life as a lion gained on them little by little. Suddenly one of them stopped, kicked off his boots, reached inside his rucksack for a pair of trainers and put them on.

'You're mad: shouted his companion. 'Not even a pair of running shoes will make you run faster than a lion.' 'I don't plan to run faster than the lion; panted the man as he caught up again. 'I just plan to run faster than you.'

Do you wish you could walk away from the situation and escape the hurt (**Psalm 55 v. 6 - 8**)? Do you find yourself working out how you could get even (**Psalm 55 v. 15**)? Do you poison your friend's reputation under the guise of '**Christian honesty**' (**Psalm 55 v. 21**)? Or is your reaction to take the whole problem to God with

straightforward trust (**Psalm 55 v. 22**)?

All these attitudes are found in extreme form in this Psalm, but it is the final one which has the last word (**Psalm 55 v. 23b**). When we pray to the Lord about the betrayal of a friendship, we are praying to One who has known and understands the very real pain that it involves (**John 13 v. 21**).

## FRIENDSHIP THAT ENDURES

Proverbs calls on us to cultivate friendship even when it is not easy to do so. For most of the world, one of the advantages of friendship is that one can immediately walk away from it when the going gets tough - unlike family or marriage ties. But the friendship of a Christian can stand out from that of others by demonstrating:

- That it is not dependent on getting something in return, so it can include the lonely or the poor (**Proverbs 19 v. 4, 6, 7**)
- That old arguments do not have to be dragged up again

and again (**Proverbs 17 v. 9**)

- That the gossip of other people cannot unpick it (**Proverbs 16 v. 28**)
- That it can survive storms as well as fair weather (**Proverbs 17 v. 17**)

## FRIENDSHIP WITHOUT PRETENDING

Christians need friends both inside and outside the church. Having friends who share our faith is a wonderful thing, because there is a shared foundation to the relationship. However, it is vital not to use our shared faith in Jesus as an excuse for treating friends in a way which presumes on their good nature.

For David, the fact that they used to worship together only served to increase the hurt of his spoilt friendship (**Psalm 55 v. 13, 14**).

And it is also important not to seek friendship outside the church with the sole intention of evangelising people, because the

lack of integrity in that damages their perception of Christian love (one of Job's laments was that the only interest his friends took in him was to get him back on what they saw to be **'the straight and narrow'**, Job 6 v. 14).

**Ecclesiastes 4 v. 10 - 12** reminds us of the great value of friends who, without ulterior motives, are there for each other faithfully through good times and bad!

# Questions to Ponder



- Who do I associate with the most in my church? Why do I associate with these people more than others?
- If God loves me enough to send Jesus to die for me, how can I learn from his example in the way I love others around me?
- What type of friend do I want to be?



# 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.

Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power  
and the glory, forever and ever.

*Amen*



## SONG SUGGESTIONS

You Alone Can Rescue

My Jesus My Saviour, Lord There Is None Like You

# Intercessions

Let's pray this week for:

Those who feel themselves forsaken or betrayed, and for people who, having worked or struggled, have nothing to show for it except the signs and penalties of failure.

The victims of injustice and prejudice, for all those who must and have endured the mockery and scorn of others.

The world in which we live, we pray for those who are hurting, those who are fearful, those who are grieving. Have mercy and compassion on them we pray dear Lord.

The communities that we are part of. Let us pray for local schools, places of work in the community, those who serve the community in areas such as health, police, fire service and social work.

The village/town or city that we are part of. We pray particularly for the mix of race and ages, and the unique character and traditions that these places offer. May they be places of compassion, justice and vision.

# COMMUNION

## AT HOME

Today is a Sunday that we would normally share communion together, if we were in the church building. This is a time when we would come together remembering the love and sacrifice that Jesus made on the Cross for our sins and forgiveness. As we still can't gather together physically as the body of Christ in order to share communion together, we are still able to gather spiritually as His church in our homes in order to share of the bread and the cup together.

We can do this by getting a small glass of red juice (*fruit juice, squash etc.*) and a small piece of bread and 'sharing these elements' at a time that is convenient to you.

*(Normally as a church we will do this during the service at about 11.30am.)*

Our normal practice would be to say these words:

For I received from the Lord what I pass on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, (*you might like to pray at this point*) he broke it and said, 'This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.' (*this is the time to eat the bread*). In



the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.' (*now is the time to drink the cup*). For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

1 Corinthians 11 v. 22 - 26

If you would like to do this today with us, then please do so, and may the Lord's richest blessings be with you today.

# TRUST in the LORD



## SONG SUGGESTIONS

[It Is Well With My Soul](#)



# Blessing

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work among us, to him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever!

**AMEN**



# News

## COVID-19 Update

The leadership team unfortunately have had to make a decision that the church building cannot at present open until at least September. They will review this decision towards the end of August.

The church building may be closed but we are not gone.

### At the moment, we are:

- **Sunday** - publishing 'Church at Home'. Our engaging Sunday services in an online format. Alongside of this we are sharing our Sunday Zoom meeting. This Zoom is specifically for prayer and a little bit of worship. Contact [minister@snbch.org.uk](mailto:minister@snbch.org.uk) for more details.
- **Monday** - sharing 'Monday Prayers'. 'Monday Prayers' are our collection of prayers and thoughts for you to start the week
- **Tuesday** - hosting a Zoom meeting every Tuesday. This is a fun way of staying connected with others at SNBC, with a chat, and quiz! Contact [minister@snbch.org.uk](mailto:minister@snbch.org.uk) for more details.
- **Once a month** - Creating our 'Monthly Prayer Diary' - Prayer is an important part of the life of our church, so why not join in praying with us over the course of a month?

Follow us on Facebook [@SalendineNookBaptistChurch](https://www.facebook.com/SalendineNookBaptistChurch), visit our website - [www.snbch.org.uk](http://www.snbch.org.uk) or use the contact sheet below to stay connected with us.

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