

## ORDER OF SERVICE – Worship at Home 16<sup>th</sup> August 2020

A short act of worship for use in people's homes, provided by Erica Gassor.

### Call to Worship Psalm 67: 1 + 2

May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine on us - so that your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations.

### Hymn - [To join in click here](#)

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| <p>1 There's a wideness in God's mercy,<br/>like the wideness of the sea;<br/>there's a kindness in his justice<br/>which is more than liberty.<br/>There is no place where earth's sorrows<br/>are more felt than up in heaven:<br/>there is no place where earth's failings<br/>have such kindly judgement given.</p> <p>2 For the love of God is broader<br/>than the measures of our mind;<br/>and the heart of the Eternal<br/>is most wonderfully kind.<br/>But we make his love too narrow<br/>by false limits of our own:<br/>And we magnify his strictness<br/>with a zeal he will not own.</p> | <p>3 There is plentiful redemption<br/>in the blood that has been shed;<br/>there is joy for all the members<br/>in the sorrows of the Head.<br/>There is grace enough for thousands<br/>of new worlds as great as this;<br/>there is room for fresh creations<br/>in that upper home of bliss.</p> <p>4 If our love were but more simple<br/>we should take him at his word;<br/>and our lives would be all gladness<br/>in the joy of Christ our Lord.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Frederick William Faber (1814-1863)</p> |
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### A prayer of confession

Lord, sometimes I look as though I am listening to others,  
I may even make all the right noises,  
but I confess that my attention is often anywhere but where it is supposed to be.

#### **Forgive me Lord for missing opportunities**

Sometimes I am too distracted by my own concerns,  
I care only for myself  
and listen only to those who say what I want to hear.

#### **Forgive me Lord for missed opportunities**

Sometimes I don't listen to people because I don't like them  
or because they are different from me  
sometimes I have bad or unhelpful thoughts.

#### **Forgive me Lord for missed opportunities**

Sometimes I don't listen to you Lord because I am too busy  
or a bit frightened about what you might say.

#### **Forgive me Lord for missed opportunities. Amen**

## **A prayer of thanksgiving**

Living Lord I praise you that you are a God who loves.

You have given us a marvellous world to live in and to share with all your people.

You God love everyone equally and I thank you that we are all unique.

I thank you that each one of us has so much to give and to receive from each other.

Thank you for each new experience that you give. **Amen**

## **Bible Readings <sup>1</sup>**

**Isaiah 56: 1 and 6-8** [To listen click here from the start to 0:16 and from 1:04 to 1:49](#)

Here is what the Lord says: "Maintain justice and do what is right, for my salvation is close at hand and my righteousness will soon be revealed.

And foreigners who bind themselves to the Lord to minister to him, to love the name of the Lord, and to be his servants, all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to my covenant - these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer.

Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations."

The Sovereign Lord declares - he who gathers the exiles of Israel: "I will gather still others to them besides those already gathered."

**Romans 11:1-2a and 29-32** [To listen click here from the start to 0:22 and from 4:44 to 5:11](#)

I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew.

...for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable. Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you. For God has bound everyone over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.

**Matthew 15: 21-28** [To listen click here from 2:24 to 3:26](#)

Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is demon-possessed and suffering terribly."

Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, "Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us. He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel. The woman came and knelt before him. "Lord, help me!" she said. He replied, "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs. "Yes it is, Lord," she said. "Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table.

Then Jesus said to her, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." And her daughter was healed at that moment.

## Reflection

The three Bible readings we heard today deal in different ways with who belongs in God's people.

There are so many different types of people in this world and the way some live may seem a little strange to us. We all have different traits and habits and anything which is different to the way we personally live or believe can seem odd.

Over the years, life has taught me that everyone is a child of God - no matter how peculiar their ways may seem - no matter how different they are - God loves *each* and *every one* of us.

Many years ago I worked with a girl who would frequently tell me that she couldn't possibly become a Christian because she was not good enough and the things she had done in her life were too bad to ever be forgiven. She would never open up about what had happened in her life and why she felt so bad about herself and I spent a lot of time trying to explain to her how God's love and forgiveness is for *everyone*. But she taught me a valuable lesson, that there are so many people in this world who feel isolated, alone, unacceptable and do not have any self-worth. It also taught me to accept people as they are, never pry into their background unless they want to tell you and to always look for the good and the kind and the best in each person. As it says in Genesis 1: 27, 'So God created humankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them'.

Stop for a moment and think which group of people or which individual you find it hardest to accept. Think of the reasons why you find it so difficult and then ask God to guide you and help you to overcome these prejudices and to open your heart and mind to each and every individual.

As many of you know I spent my childhood living in a small caravan with my parents and sister travelling with my father's work and the washing facilities were very limited. As soon as I moved into lodgings with a bath I became obsessed with being clean and developed a strong objection to anyone who didn't look freshly scrubbed! But God has taught me over the years not to judge by appearances and that some of the nicest most genuine people I have ever met do not give a good impression when you first see them. My mother used to have a saying that I'm sure a lot of you have heard before 'don't judge the jam by the label on the jar' - how true! Jesus taught us to love our neighbour as ourselves and not to judge by race, creed or colour and his love is total and he could see into a person's heart and way beyond the outer facade.

The next time that we meet someone who doesn't quite fit the criteria of acceptability in our eyes and seems very different, meet them with an open mind, meet them with an open heart – meet them as Jesus would've met them..... looking into them to see the goodness that is there in each and every one of God's children - no matter how they differ from ourselves.

## Prayers of intercession

The Canaanite woman sought Jesus's help, she loved her daughter so much, she was so desperately in need that she would not give up 'til she had her answer.

Father God help me to have that strength, commitment and determination to do what is right in life for everyone around.

**I pray in faith, hear and answer my cry, blessed Lord.**

Lord may I learn from this woman to wait on you expectantly, patiently, persistently, doggedly.  
Grant the courage of my convictions when I truly believe I am doing your will.

**I pray in faith, hear and answer my cry, blessed Lord.**

I pray today for those who feel excluded, whatever the situation, whatever the reason. For prisoners, for refugees, for the homeless, for the sick, for mentally unwell, for anyone who feels they are outsiders. Show me how to love all your children.

**I pray in faith, hear and answer my cry, blessed Lord.**

I pray for myself, when my faith is weak and when I feel I don't belong.

**I pray in faith, hear and answer my cry, blessed Lord. Amen.**

**Now say the Lord's Prayer slowly and thoughtfully.**

**Hymn – STF 451 [To join in click here](#)**

Open the eyes of my heart, Lord,  
Open the eyes of my heart;  
I want to see You,  
I want to see You.

Open the eyes of my heart, Lord,  
Open the eyes of my heart;  
I want to see You,  
I want to see You.  
To see You high and lifted up,  
Shining in the light of Your glory,  
Pour out Your power and love,  
As we sing holy, holy, holy. (Repeat)

Holy, holy, holy, I want to see you.

### **The Blessing**

May I go out today renewed and strengthened in faith, ready to serve you Lord and find you in the people I meet. I go out to follow you. Lead me good Lord. **Amen**

### **Acknowledgements**

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