



PRAYER SERVICE

Theme: **GOD IS WITH US**

Opening Prayer

Gracious God,
Thank you for the gift of today.
Refresh me. Invite me to discover your presence In each person that I meet
And every event that I encounter.
Teach me when to speak and when to listen; When to ponder and when to share
In moments of challenge and decision attune my heart to the whisperings of your Wisdom.
As I undertake ordinary and unnoticed tasks, gift me with simple joy.
When my day goes well, may I rejoice.
When it grows difficult, surprise me with new possibilities.
When life is overwhelming, call me to Sabbath moments
To restore your Peace and Harmony.
May my living today reveal your Goodness. Amen.

Each day awakens in me a deep sense of the giftedness of my life

Each moment as it comes, is freshly minted, from the hand of an infinitely loving God. I have no right to it, no hold on it, no resources in myself that can guarantee the next newly given moment. Each moment is a gift.

We often mention that life is fragile and precious. This is true but we so often take life for granted when everything is going well. The current economic challenge has caused us to look at life again, to re think our values and priorities. We can adapt to living with less and think of the people who are in a disadvantaged position. A big help in our re think of values and priorities, is to see each moment of every day as precious and sacred. It puts us in a much better position to adapt to the world we live in. Each moment is lent to us, to use and maximise. Equally we can also waste or ignore them. It is so much easier to use and maximise them, if we see them as given to us from the hand of an infinitely loving God.

Doing the best at this moment puts us in the best place for the next moment.

The strings of a guitar on their own are important. They are separate, different and unique. When they choose to come together they can make great sounds. It is the same with moments. Each day is made up of many moments and the vast majority of them are good and positive. God calls us to do our best with each moment that comes our way. This puts us in the best place for the next moment. As we look back on the past month of September, it has been a collection of many moments. It is always good to look back and reflect at the end of any month. How was September for you? What did not go well? More importantly what went well for you this month? We let go of those moments that were negative, unhelpful and best forgotten and we treasure those that were filled with love and blessings. We thank the Lord for the month just gone and we look forward to new beginnings tomorrow.

Choose to see things as God does

“Contemplation leads us to see things, events as God sees them” – Nicolas Barre

‘Often the first sign of friendship is that we are delighted to discover the world in a similar way. We find ourselves laughing at the same jokes, enjoying the same novels, sharing other friends. We treasure the same things. Similarly we are God's friends not by thinking things about God but seeing things with God, through God's eyes as it were.’ -T.Radcliffe

Good and faithful friends are such treasures. We would simply be lost without them. Life would indeed be difficult, lonely and frustrating if we didn't have the company of friends. There is a world of a difference between a friend and an acquaintance. An acquaintance is someone we know through work or someone who lives in the same area. We may know many acquaintances but our real and true friends can often be counted in one hand. It would be nice to think of God as a friend rather than an acquaintance. As a friend God is in touch with our every need. Rather than someone aloof, distant and separate, God is someone who is close and near. A friend stays with us through thick and thin. As a friend God journeys with us through all that is good but is also with us through the mess and struggles of our lives as well. We thank God for our friends and we can include God on that list too.

Prioritise quality time

Progress in our modern world has been hectic and frantic. The pace of change can be described as wonderful or frightening. There is no denying that we have made great progress in terms of technology, quality of living and more opportunities. But have we sacrificed quality for quantity? Have we let go of important values? Do we prioritise time for each other, time to listen, time to nourish what's important and time to be there for each other. Or are we too busy caught up in the world of quantity instead of quality. God always encourages us to make quality time and especially to prioritise those quiet down to earth ordinary moments where God is often present. God isn't into deadlines, quotas or time constraints. I don't have to be a slave to quantity and trying to get everything done. Today and during the week I can prioritise quality time.

I have the power to choose to see things as they really are. I can choose to see things as God does, with the eyes of love. Since it is the nature of God to be present everywhere, I know that all there really is in this entire universe is the love of God. The love of God surrounds me, dwells within me, goes before me and soothes the way for me. I am a beloved child of the universe and the universe lovingly takes care of me now and forevermore. When I need something, I can always turn to God who created me. I can ask for what I need and I know God listens to my prayer. I need to give thanks even before receiving, knowing that it will come to me in His time, space and sequence.

There is a mysterious unity and diversity within you and me

We are special and unique. There is really no one quite like you or me. No one has our looks, our fingerprint, our personality, our gifts and talents, our likes and dislikes or our way of doing things. There are a few in our lives who know us well and one or two who may know us intimately and really well. But even here they will never know us fully. Every person is complex and fragile. There are boundaries and fences within, that not even we can cross. In that sense we are a mystery which always needs to be respected.

A puzzle can be solved but a mystery will always have bits of the unknown. Once we respect these, our relationship with others will always be healthy and wholesome. It will be sensitive to allow others have a bad day, to be there for them and sometimes to respect that they may need some time or space. It also recognises that we don't need to have all the answers. Just to be there for someone and journey or walk with them is our greatest gift to them.

10 commandments to get along with people

- (1) Say less than you think. Cultivate a calm voice, how you say it often means the most.
- (2) Make promises sparingly, keep them faithfully.
- (3) Never lose opportunities to say a kind word to or about somebody. Praise work well done. Affirm others
- (4) Be genuinely interested in others. Let everyone you meet feel that you regard them as if they are the only person that matters in the world.
- (5) Be cheerful as best you can.
- (6) Keep an open mind on all debateable questions. There's a big difference between discussing something and arguing something.
- (7) Don't give in to gossip. It is so destructive.
- (8) Respect the feelings of others. Listen more and speak less.
- (9) Pay no attention to those who think less of you. There are always knockers in this world but know that there are many more people willing to uplift and encourage.
- (10) It won't cost you anything, smile!! Can you add anything to this list?

God is for us

There is a lovely line in one of Paul's letter to the Romans when he says: "If God is for us, who can be against us". It is comforting to know that we are not on our own. There are times in our lives when it feels like an uphill struggle. Some people it seems are against us, time is against us, circumstances outside of our control are against us, life is against us and even sometimes it seems God is against us. Pages, books and libraries can be filled with things written about God, but there is one absolute certainty, God is not against us. God is never out to get us, never out to make life difficult, never out to trip us up. God is with us through everything and that includes the days when nothing goes right and those days when it feels the world is against us. Today is a day to appreciate that in God's eyes we are indeed special, loved and always included. The word 'against' does not exist in God's vocabulary.

The Paradox of life

Paradox is everywhere. Sometimes the things you think will make you happy end up saddening you and sometimes the very thing that breaks your heart is also the thing that opens it to warmth and gratitude.

Life can never be described as predictable and boring. So much can happen in a week, a day, even in a few minutes. There are many twists and turns in life. If we are happy with our lot and with what we are doing then we should be grateful. It too can change. It is comforting to know that sadness too has a turning point. We know that God is very much in touch with all our life experiences. Scripture reminds us that sadness does have a turning point. Sometimes we have to wait patiently to know when the tide has turned. When we hear of personal tragedies and utter sadness it's hard to believe that there will be a turning point. But through our faith we are gently reminded, assured and even promised that the tide does turn and will turn.



Closing Prayer

Every day, I need you Lord, but today especially I need some extra strength to face whatever is to come. This day, more than any other day, I need to feel you near me to strengthen my courage and to overcome my fear. By myself I cannot meet the challenge of the hour. We are frail human creatures and we need you to sustain us in all that life may bring. And so dear Lord, hold my fearful hand. Be with me Lord, this day to give me the strength and courage I need. May your love be upon me as I place all my hope in you. Amen