

Reading: Matthew 20:1-16 – 7pm

An evening activity:

Think back to a day where you've struggled to get started. It's the afternoon before you start your first daily task and you're feeling demotivated. How would the owner of the vineyard reward you?

Think of a day you purposefully kept yourself busy to avoid anxiety. You worked non-stop throughout the day but still can't seem to shake your worry about tomorrow. How would the owner of the vineyard reward you?

Compare the two days. How has today been?

Hymn [STF 147/HP 648](#): 'The day thou gavest Lord is ended' – 9pm

Global Prayer & The Lord's Prayer

As we get ready to sleep, part of the world rolls onwards into light. We pray for those waking about to undertake their daily routines. We bring forward the following global situations:

- **Belarus, Eastern Europe:** Protests to overthrow Europe's 'last dictator', Lukashenko, continue as police violence continues to be used against the Belarussian people.
- **Israel, Middle East:** A hard decision was made to impose a second national lockdown next week which means Jewish New Year celebrations will be cancelled.
- **Uganda and Tanzania, Africa:** A new oil pipeline deal means the creation of tens of thousands of jobs but will involve the displacement of many existing homes and families.
- **Peru, South America:** The ruling president for the last four years is being impeached for corruption as Peruvian living standards in the same period haven't improved.

Lord, we are tired and are too far removed to offer a helping hand. Therefore accept our prayer and bless your people around the world to do Your work. Finally, Father, my daily routine is complete, let me sleep well and rise ready to praise you once again in the morning.
Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Worship sheet this week created by Fraser Logue

**Darlington District Worship
Sunday 20th September 2020**



A Service for the Day

This service is designed to take place over the course of the day. Suggested times for each element are indicated but the worship may also take place in one block.

Opening words – 9am

God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

Genesis 1:5 NRSV

Hymn [STF 136/H&P 635](#): 'Morning has broken'

Prayer longing for regular Sunday Church – 11am

How can I praise Him?

Trapped here at home

If it weren't for lockdown

To Church I'd gladly roam

If the times were better

I'd sing this hymn with friends.

Yet how can I praise Him?

Praise Him how I can!

(Adapted from 5th Verse of 'In the Bleak Midwinter')

Father, we yearn to be back in Church, as a fellowship together in one room again! We pray for our members who feel disconnected at this time. We pray that you may inspire them to worship however they can.

Yet how can I praise Him?

Praise Him how I can!

However, Lord, too often we have used this as an excuse to become distant with you. We pine more for the seat we always sat in at Church. We miss the teas and coffees after the service more than we did your presence. Father, forgive us.

Yet how can I praise Him?

Praise Him how I can!

Reading: Jonah 3:10-4:10 - 1pm

A question to think about over lunch

Jonah is irate with God that he did not destroy the people of Nineveh, who had previously broken God's laws but had since repented. An interesting question is posed: ***'Is it right for you to be angry?'***

Given the current situation, many look to the heavens to point a finger. Is it right to express anger and frustration to God about how you and your friends lives have been impacted? (There's no right answer)

Reading: Exodus 16 – 3pm

Our Father, give us today our daily bread...why do we pray for our allotments of bread in days? Why not weeks, or years or hours? What I find fascinating is that all humans around the world regardless of culture adhere to some form of *daily* life. We start the day by getting up, we work, eat, have leisure time and go to sleep once again at the end of the day. This gives a much deeper meaning to the creation of the days in Genesis. Days are not just astronomical events but an intrinsic part of our biologies and dictate how we live.

I hope you've had a busy day! You were up singing at 9, praying mid-morning and you even had to work through your lunch! I've found during these strange times when group meetings have been cancelled and social interactions are limited, we struggle to know how to live our days. Some of us have given up on routines. *Why not spend the day in bed? Nothing else is happening!* Some of us have tried to make the best of the days at hand with a little spring cleaning. However, many of us find these strange days boring and anxiety inducing as we worry if life will be like this going forwards.

Consider the Israelites traversing the desert. In Egypt, they were slaves but at least they had routines to follow. Now every day feels the same – sand to my left and sand to my right. God's gift of quails and manna is more than mere food, it's a new daily routine. The Israelites are encouraged to gather only that which they need for the day 'for tomorrow will worry about itself' (Matthew 6:34 NIV). The days of gathering coupled with the day of rest form a robust week for God's people. The benefits of such a routine have been well studied:

better sleep, better memory, gaining of perspective, more efficient working and resting. The list goes on.

But what can we learn from this? Firstly, that the day and its routine is God-given. Therefore we should thank God daily for this gift! More importantly we should use it! Humans aren't designed to live outside of routines. So for those of us who have started indulging in a few extra lie-ins, let's break this habit. The science shows that we, like the Israelites, might find routines stop our grumbling!

For those of us who have been keeping busy, I have a word of warning. Have you been gathering more than your daily manna? By which I mean, does anxiety drive your work rather than a routine with a healthy workload? We can only do so much in 24 hours, therefore trust in God and take your rest.

And for those of us who feel they've been fairly balanced during this time, here's an additional challenge: call someone from your congregation who you feel isn't finding these times easy. Before calling, I want you to remember this important bit of advice: try and empathise with them rather than explaining that things are better than they seem. They will appreciate you a lot more if you're able to meet them in their emotional state. You might, quite literally, make their day!

Hymn [STF 526/H&P 552](#): 'Lord of all hopefulness', v3 especially 5pm

Evening Psalm – Psalm 55:16-19 (NRSV)

¹⁶ But I call upon God,
and the LORD will save me.

¹⁷ **Evening and morning and at noon
I utter my complaint and moan,
and he will hear my voice.**

¹⁸ He will redeem me unharmed
from the battle that I wage,
for many are arrayed against me.

¹⁹ **God, who is enthroned from of old
will hear, and will humble them—
because they do not change,
and do not fear God.**