

# **Mears Ashby and Hardwick and Sywell with Overstone**



**Prayers and Reflections  
for use at home**

**Sunday 19 September 2021**

**Trinity 16**

Welcome to this week's Prayers and Reflections. This week we learn about the importance of serving others as Jesus serves us. Jesus is the Servant King, whose love for the disciples was shown when he washed the disciples' feet at the Last Supper. He encouraged them to commit themselves to being servants to others.

We too, share this commitment to serve others. In this way, we are able to share and spread the love that Jesus so selflessly offered to us by his death on the cross. May you be encouraged and comforted by the love of our Servant King in the week ahead.

With prayers,

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This is our God, the Servant King,  
he calls us now to follow him,  
to bring our lives as a daily offering  
of worship to the Servant King.

*Graham Kendrick b. 1950*

**Prayers and Reflections**  
**for use at home for Trinity 16**  
**Serving Others**

**PREPARING OURSELVES**

*Take a moment to be still in God's presence, and feel his love.*

*If you are indoors, you may wish to light a candle as a sign of God's love, here, in your room. You may also wish to have a cross in your palm, or on the table, and a bowl of water ready for the time of confession.*

Lord, as I sit and wait in silence,  
I place my hopes and dreams,  
my fears and concerns,  
into your safe and loving hands.  
Enfold me with your love,  
make my heart beat in time with yours;  
in Jesus' name,  
I pray. **Amen.**

**LETTING GO**

*If you come to this time of prayer and reflection with any regrets, with things that you wish you had not said, done or been, offer them to God in the silence of your heart. And then, reflect on the opening words of this hymn.*

Just as I am, without one plea  
but that thy blood was shed for me,  
and that thou bidst me come to thee,  
O Lamb of God, I come.

*If you wish, dip your finger into a bowl of water and make the sign of the cross on your palm.*



*As you offer your regrets to God, feel his love and forgiveness. Set free by his gracious love, go and live life inspired by love. May all that you say and all that you do speak of your love for God and for everyone.*

## **PRAYING TODAY'S PRAYER** **(The Collect)**

*Across our villages and the worldwide Church, this prayer is being said today. Add your voice to this earthly circle of prayer to our loving Father.*

O Lord, we beseech you mercifully to hear the prayers  
of your people who call upon you;  
and grant that they may both perceive and know,  
what things we ought to do,  
and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil them;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

*Sometimes, we may not be sure what God wants us to do in terms of serving others. If we have an idea of what he wants from us, we may not be sure how we can do this. God is always ready to listen to us and to point us in the right direction. We just need to ask for guidance, in Jesus' name.*



Help us to help each other Lord,  
each other's cross to bear;  
let each helping hand afford,  
and feel each other's care.

*Charles Wesley (1707-88)*

*You may like to use these words as a prayer. Take a little time to reflect on the words and imagine God listening to you.*

# LISTENING TO GOD'S WORD

## Our calling to serve

They went on from there and passed through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know it; for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, 'The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again.' But they did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him.

Then they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, 'What were you arguing about on the way?' But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest. He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, 'Whoever wants to be the first must be last of all and servant of all.' Then he took a little child and taking it in his arms, he said to them, 'Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me.'

*Mark 9:30-37*

## Setting the scene

*Shortly before this scene, Peter, James and John had accompanied Jesus up a mountain, where they witnessed Jesus' transfiguration as the Son of God, with Elijah and Moses either side of him. All three disciples are astounded by what they have witnessed and they are quite frightened, too. After this momentous event, they descend the mountain and re-join the other nine disciples.*

*In the first part of this week's Gospel reading, Jesus tries to explain to the disciples that he will be killed, but will rise again from the dead. However, the disciples are frightened by his words and do not really understand what he is telling them. Perhaps they are too busy arguing about who is the greatest amongst them?*

*When they reach Capernaum, Jesus wants to know what they have been arguing about. Maybe the disciples started arguing because only three of them were invited to accompany Jesus up the mountain? Perhaps they felt that they had not been treated equally; they may have felt left out or unimportant? Jesus points out to them that anyone who wants to be first, must be prepared to be last of all and be servant to all. What could he mean?*

### **Our call to follow his example**

*Being or feeling more important than others, is not part of what it means to follow Christ. Jesus tells us that serving others is an important part of our discipleship. We need to put others before ourselves, as Jesus did. During the past year, ways of serving each other have changed a great deal. Shielding and self-isolation have thrown independent people into situations where they have had to rely on other people to do their shopping or collect their medication. This can be a real frustration when you want to be self-reliant. It is more difficult to serve others, if you are unexpectedly house-bound. Yet one way to look at this, is that when we accept care from others, we are actually blessing them. If we allow people to help us and thus bless them, then we are in fact serving them! There is a balance.*



So let us learn how to serve,  
and in our lives enthrone him;  
each other's needs to prefer,  
for it is Christ we're serving.

*Graham Kendrick (b. 1950)*

*Serving others need not be all about getting out and doing things for other people. Listening to others, either over the garden fence or on the telephone, is one way in which we can serve other people. It is surprising how much a cup of tea and a listening ear can really comfort and calm someone. Sharing your experience with people is also helpful, for example; baking, DIY, crafting or gardening tips can be supportive.*

*Wisdom gained from experience and shared with others, can save people from making mistakes or may help them to make difficult decisions. In Proverbs 3:17, it says that wisdom “will guide you down delightful paths”! Ecclesiastes 2:26 says “God gives wisdom, knowledge and joy to those who please him.” It is surprising how offering to pray for other people can help to make them feel strengthened and comforted. These are some of the ways in which we can serve others, when practical ways are more difficult for us. God gives us different gifts and ways to serve, that can be adapted to our changing circumstances. Gentler ways of serving are just as important as more practical methods. Jesus tells us that we are all equal – no-one is more important than anyone else. Everyone can contribute to the well-being and care of others. No-one is forgotten. Take a moment to think about how you may have blessed someone this week, without realising it. Perhaps you shared a cup of tea with someone and offered a moment of calm in their busy day? Maybe you listened to them about something that was worrying them or offered to pray for them? It is surprising how much this can help and support someone. There are no limits to the way we can offer comfort and love to others, just as there are no limits to God’s love for us.*



Remember...

You are blessed by God,  
and loved by him,  
always.

## **OUR PRAYERS**

*Here are some prayers for this Sunday. Feel free to add your own.*

Loving God, thank you for the love you show me each day, and for the gift of your Son Jesus Christ. I give thanks for the blessing of those who show me their love and their kindness.

Help me to serve others in the week ahead, remembering that, in whatever small way, I can be a blessing to them.

Loving God, hear my prayer.

Loving God, thank you for the wisdom and experience you have blessed me with; for helping me to adapt to the changing times and giving me new gifts to share with others. I give thanks for the many people who put themselves last, in order to put others first – in my family, in my community and in the wider world.

I pray for...

Loving God, hear my prayer.

Loving God, you know all those who are troubled, lonely or suffering ill health. You understand when we worry about those we love. I know that you are only ever a prayer away from me. In love, I lift up to you...

Loving God, hear my prayer.

*Offer your own heartfelt prayers and yearnings, praise and thanksgivings.*

## **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.  
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,  
for ever and ever. **Amen.**

## **PRAYER OF BLESSING**

*A closing prayer of blessing for this week.*

O God, help me to serve you each day,  
by following the example of Jesus, our Servant King.  
Guide my daily living.  
Bless me and keep my loved ones safe, I pray. **Amen.**