

Mears Ashby and Hardwick and Sywell with Overstone



**Prayers and Reflections
for use at home**

**Sunday 20 July 2025
Trinity 5**

Welcome to this week's prayers and reflections. Our Gospel reading asks the question, 'When is it a time to be still? When is it a time to serve?' Or, when should we be like Mary, and spend time with Jesus listening to his teaching, and when should we be like Martha, and put his teaching into practice.

May you be inspired by our Lord's words.

Every blessing,

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*As you prepare to enter Mary's and Martha's humble home,
offer up your praise to our Father in heaven.*



My God, how wonderful thou art,
thy majesty how bright,
how beautiful thy mercy-seat
in depths of burning light!

Frederick William Faber (1814-1863)

Prayers and Reflections for use at home on Trinity 5 Still or Serve

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 bowl of water ready for the time of letting go. When you are ready, say this opening prayer.

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 words of this next verse.

How wonderful, how beautiful,
the sight of thee must be,
thine endless wisdom, boundless power,
and awful purity!

Frederick William Faber (1814-1863)



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

As we let go of our past and present mistakes, we lift our eyes up - tentatively - to the one who forgives us. Our heart's eyes get a glimpse of God's awesomeness. He is the creator of all of the unfathomable vastness of the universe and yet makes time for each one of us. If we are unsure of how we can stay true to our Lord's teaching, his Spirit can guide us. For he is drawing on the eternal and endless wisdom that is the very core of the universe, the boundless power and strength of the one who gives life to all that is, and the purity of heart and soul which is at the heart of each one of us. For we are all made in God's image.

Pause to ponder which aspects of God's awful and awesome nature you are seeking to draw on. How can he support you at this time? Trust in and give thanks for his loving faithfulness.

When you are ready, turn in prayerful praise to our next two verses.



O how I fear thee, living God,
with deepest, tenderest fears,
and worship thee with trembling hope
and penitential tears!

Yet I may love thee too, O Lord,
almighty as thou art,
for thou hast stooped to ask of me
the love of my poor heart.

Frederick William Faber (1814-1863)

May you feel at one with our Father in heaven and sense his Spirit speaking to yours. To be connected is to be ready to absorb our Lord's words for daily life and to sense how to apply them.

Be still, and know that I am God.
Be still, and know that I am God.
Be still, and know that I am God.

from Psalm 46

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 God whose love is unbreakable.

Almighty God,
send down upon your Church
the riches of your Spirit,
and kindle in all who minister the gospel
your countless gifts of grace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

What a beautiful prayer for us - Christ's Church, and for each one of us - Christ's followers. We are called to be signs and foretaste of his kingdom of love and peace. We can only do this by being in tune with God's voice, his Spirit within us, and by paying close attention to our Lord's words, the teaching offered by our bibles.

One of the passages which inspires the way I live is God's vision for life on Earth. It is a vision filled with harmony and peace, and a oneness across the globe that is centred on Christ our King. It comes from the opening chapter of the letter to the Colossians. Here is a lovely version from The Message Bible.

We look at this Son and see the God who cannot be seen. We look at this Son and see God's original purpose in everything created. For everything, absolutely everything, above and below, visible and invisible, rank after rank of angels - everything got started in him and finds its purpose in him. He was there before any of it came into existence and holds it all together right up to this moment. And when it comes to church, he organizes and holds it together, like a head does a body.

Colossians 1:15-18

Christ is at the heart of life on Earth - uniting us with each other and with God's heavenly realm. This is the power of the cross and of the empty tomb - the Resurrection - and our 'Yes!' to him.



Father of Jesus, love's reward,
great King upon your throne,
what joy to see you as you are
and know as I am known.

Frederick William Faber (1814-1863)

LISTENING TO GOD'S WORD

At the home of Mary and Martha

As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, 'Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!'

'Martha, Martha,' the Lord answered, 'you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed – or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.'

Luke 10:38-end

Still or Serve?

The story of Jesus' visit to their home begins with Martha - the sister who shows her love for him through her doing. It is clear from the opening to this passage that Martha is a follower of Jesus. Clearly, her heart is open to his message of love and forgiveness. We see this in the Gospel of John, with the author's account of the death of Lazarus. It is both sisters who write to Jesus to tell him about Lazarus' illness, asking for his help. John goes on to say, 'Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.' Notice how John puts Martha before Mary. Jesus loves Martha. She - by her actions - shows her love for him. It is no bad thing to love by serving. But, is this enough? How can her love for Jesus be played out in her life, with her family, friends and neighbours, if she fails to make the time to be still and listen to his teaching? She will miss core parts of his wisdom.

She needs to stop what she is doing, let go of her 'to do' list in the kitchen, be still and listen. Listen to Jesus. Absorb his teaching. Sense how these words speak to her life and how she can be a sharer of his kingdom. It is - perhaps - no coincidence that the next chapter of Luke's Gospel opens with Jesus teaching his disciples how to pray. Stillness may not have come naturally to the twelve who were used to working hard for a living, just as it didn't come naturally to Martha - one born to serve.

Pause for a moment. Do you like to be still and listen? What or who distracts you when you sit down to read your bible, listen for the Spirit's nudges and reflect on where God is in your life? How might you learn to let go of your worries and restless thoughts, and simply be with God's Spirit and dwell in his words of wisdom?

Seek our Lord's help. Pray for his gift of being with.



Drop thy still dews of quietness,
till all our strivings cease;
take from our souls the strain and stress,
and let our ordered lives confess
the beauty of thy peace,
the beauty of thy peace.

John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892)

Being with Jesus gives us the wisdom for life. If we never stop doing long enough to be with God and his words for us, we will miss out on so much of our Lord's loving presence and his teaching. We will fail to receive everything that he is giving to us so that we can serve him. Be still comes before go serve. This is our Lord's lesson to the Martha in all of us.

If you wish, pray for this gift of being still before serving.



Lord Jesus, I am anxious about my life,
worried and distracted over many things:
help me to centre my heart on the way of your kingdom,
to carry your peace in my being

so that I can share this peace with others. **Amen.**

OUR PRAYERS

Feel free to use one or more of these prayers and to add your own.

Lord Jesus, you loved both sisters - Mary and Martha and, through them, you remind me that stillness comes before service. To listen is to receive your wisdom for life. You are my guardian and my guide...

Lord, hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus, I think of Martha in the kitchen, preparing meals for her hungry guests. For Martha, to love is to serve. Lord, I give thanks for all who volunteer to feed the hungry homeless and refugees...

Lord, hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus, I think of Mary sitting at your feet, listening to your words of life and love. For Mary, to love is to be still. Lord, stillness can be so elusive for some. I lift up to you those who are stressed or anxious...

Lord, 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, you search me and you know me,
all my thoughts and feelings are open to your gaze,
you see the paths I will take before I take them. Guide my daily living.
Bless me and keep my loved ones safe, I pray. **Amen.**