

Mears Ashby and Hardwick and Sywell with Overstone



**Prayers and Reflections
for use at home**

**Sunday 2 August 2026
Trinity 9**

Welcome to this week's prayers and reflections. In our Gospel Reading, Jesus is busy feeding the crowds spiritually and the disciples are anxious about how to cater for them. It is the feeding of the five thousand. It is a wonderful opportunity to think about whether we need to adjust own diet so that God can nourish us more fully.

Enjoy taking a fresh look at this miraculous feeding.

Every blessing,

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*As you prepare to reflect on the feeding of the five thousand,
open your heart to Jesus.*



Guide me, O thou great Redeemer,
pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but thou art mighty,
hold me with thy powerful hand:
Bread of Heaven, Bread of Heaven,
feed me now and evermore,
feed me now and evermore.

William Williams (1717-1791)

trans. Peter Williams (1727-1796)

Prayers and Reflections for use at home on Trinity 9 Our Diet

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.

Open now the crystal fountain,
whence the healing stream doth flow;
let the fire and cloudy pillar
lead me all my journey through;
strong deliverer, strong deliverer,
be thou still my strength and shield,
be thou still my strength and shield.

*William Williams (1717-1791)
trans. Peter Williams (1727-1796)*



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.

Our verse offers us the Old Testament image of God's people being guided through the wilderness. God leads them by day in a pillar of cloud, by night by a pillar of fire, so that they could travel safely by day or by night. It is a powerful reminder that God is with us. Always. When we can't get off to sleep because we cannot silence our worries, God is there for us. We can offload our worries and seek his peace. When we are excited by life's possibilities and unsure what to do, God is there for us. We can seek his advice and he will guide us. For God knows us what is good for us and for his creation. It is why Jesus sends God's Spirit to us both by day and by night to be our inner guide. There is no problem or dilemma or question that is too small or too large for him, too complex or too simple for him. He is interested in every aspect of our daily lives. He cares about us just as the Father cared for his people in the wilderness, daily over forty years.

Take a moment to think about how you are journeying through life. Where do you want God to be? What do you need from him? Ask, you will receive of him.



*Ask and it shall be given unto you,
seek and ye shall find;
knock, and it shall be opened unto you;
allelu, alleluia.*

*Alleluia, alleluia,
alleluia, allelu, alleluia.*

*Author unknown,
based on Matthew 7:7*

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.

Gracious Father,
revive your Church in our day,
and make her holy, strong and faithful,
for your glory's sake
in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Our prayer asks for spiritually feeding. It is a call for God to enrich us – our inner us – our spiritual lives – our souls. We can only be our best us when we are deeply rooted in God who is above us – with us – within us. Life is at its very best for us when we truly feel at one with the God who loves us. Even when life is tough, life is made better with God on our side, when we know he is for us. For with God, we can find the strength to cope with the unbearable and to live with the unresolvable.

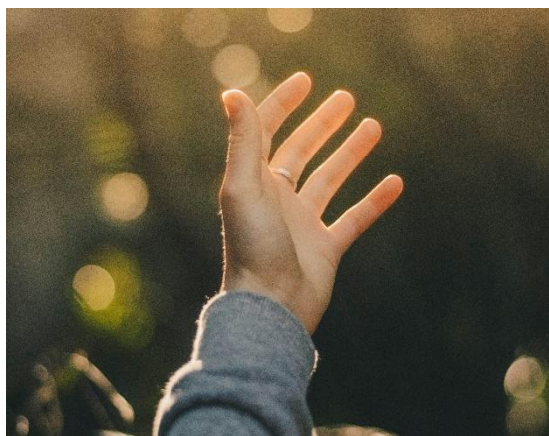
Pause to contemplate your own experience of this. Give thanks for God's steadfast love and faithfulness – for his nearness – both today and on your life's path.

Our prayer asks for three things for God's Church and for her members. Holy – to live lives that reflect God's love and goodness. It is to live by God's two essential rules: Love him – Love others as we do ourselves. Living by these rules creates beauty and blessings for those whose lives we touch.

Strong – is to draw on God for the strength to resist temptation, to cope with life's stresses and fears, problems and sorrows.

Faithful – is to keep believing even when we are tempted to doubt or give up on God because of what's happening in our lives or in the news.

Ask and God will provide. Praise him for this.



When I tread the verge of Jordan,
bid my anxious fears subside;
death of death, and hell's destruction,
land me safe on Canaan's side;
songs of praises, songs of praises,
I will ever give to thee,
I will ever give to thee.

William Williams (1717-1791)
trans. Peter Williams (1727-1796)

LISTENING TO GOD'S WORD

Feeding of the Five Thousand

When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed those who were ill.

As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, 'This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away, so that they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food.'

Jesus replied, 'They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.'

'We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish,' they answered.

'Bring them here to me,' he said. And he told the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Matthew 14:13-21

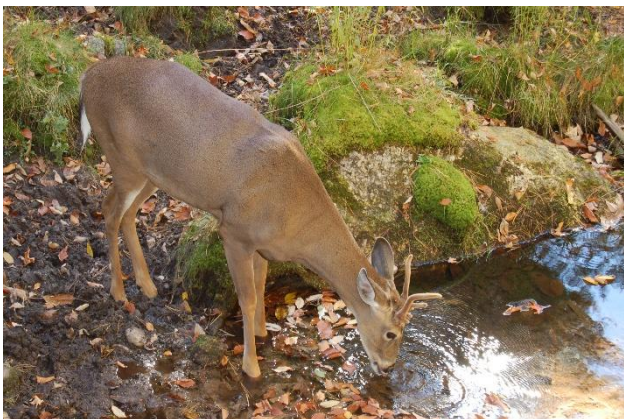
Body or soul...

Jesus has just heard of the untimely death of John the Baptist, his cousin, who has been executed on Herod's orders. Jesus mourns for him. But, even in his grief, the people need him. They come in their droves to him seeking what only he can provide – bodily healing, spiritual feeding.

Picture the scene by the Sea of Galilee. A crowd of people are eagerly listening to Jesus. They have been there for hours upon hours. The sun dips as evening approaches. Still the people stay to drink in his words, witness his love for those who are lost or hurting. All hunger is forgotten as Jesus feeds their hearts and souls. They don't want to leave this place or go home. Their focus is on him alone. They are like Mary who preferred to sit at Jesus' feet rather than serve in the kitchen.

Whereas the disciples are more like her sister Martha in Luke 10:38-42, who did not realise that this was a time to listen not work. Feeding can wait for an hour or two. Time has been standing still as Jesus teaches, until the disciples step in and try to call time. 'It is getting late, the people will be hungry, send them off to get food for themselves.' they say to Jesus. It is an invitation to ponder whether we put the practicalities of life before our need for spiritual feeding.

Pause to think about how you allow God to nourish your spiritual life, your heart and soul. Contemplate too how you can be at times like Martha or the disciples, too busy to be fully present with God or to stop what you are doing and truly listen to him. How might he feed you with his Bread of Heaven?



As the deer pants for the water,
so my soul longs after you.
You alone are my heart's desire
and I long to worship you.

Martin Nystrom (b. 1956)
© 1983 Restoration Music Ltd
Based on Psalm 42:1-2

OUR PRAYERS

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

Lord Jesus, you are the true and living bread. Your words feed my soul, guide my daily life. Help me to be like the crowds – hungry for your love and for your teaching. Lord, feed me now and evermore...

Lord, hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus, like you, the disciples had compassion for the crowds. You saw their inner hunger and fed them. The disciples were hungry, and thought of the crowds. Lord, may I be one who feeds with love...

Lord, hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus, you looked in the eyes of each person who came seeking; seeking healing, seeking hope, seeking forgiveness. You calmed fears, you renewed strength. Lord, feed those who are on my heart...

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.**