

# Sunday Morning Resources

Sunday 1 June 2025 - The Seventh Sunday of Easter

**Lectionary Readings** (depending on the kind of service you are leading, you may use one or more of the following readings – however, you **must** use the gospel reading, as this is what the homily is based on)

[Ezekiel 36.24-28]; Acts 16.16-34; Psalm 97; Revelation 22.12-14, 16, 17, 20-end; John 17.20-end \*\*Acts must be read\*\*

## Homily

**Today's homily has been written by the Revd Jackie Metcalfe, Assistant Curate - Associate Priest, Landbeach and Waterbeach (Benefice)**

How lovely that in the last few hours of his life Jesus should not only pray for himself and his disciples but also for us.

Our reading today from the gospel of John forms part of a prayer that Jesus offers at the conclusion of the last supper. We are told that Jesus prayed frequently. He prayed in the wilderness before starting his public ministry. He went into desolate places and prayed throughout the night. He taught his followers to pray. Nonetheless, here in John's gospel we have the only account of a long prayer by Jesus.

It is sometimes called the High Priestly Prayer. Once a year the High Priest would go into the Holiest of Holies, the sanctuary at the Temple in Jerusalem and pray for the people before he offered a sacrifice for their sins. So here Jesus prays before he goes to his death and lays down his life as an offering for the sins of the whole world.

Firstly, he prays for his mission and asks that he might be glorified as he brings glory to God through his death on the cross. Secondly, he prays for his disciples as he sends them into the world. He asks that they might be kept safe and made holy as they too live to glorify God.

Now, in today's reading he prays for all believers in the future and that includes you and me. In offering his prayer Jesus shows unshakeable confidence in God and in his disciples. For the time being his followers might be few. Jesus knows what is going to happen. He knows that in a short while they will abandon him. Yet he also believes that these very same men will spread his name throughout the world. Jesus never loses his faith in God or his confidence in people. Many will come to believe through them.

And Jesus prays for them and that of course means that he prays for you and for me. Three times he asks God his Father that we would all become one as he and his Father are one.

Jesus knows about the divisions in any society. He sees it in his time. There were the Romans, the Jewish religious leaders, the ordinary people, the rich, the poor, the foreigner, the stranger, the outcast, the sick and so on, often living at odds with each other. Just think for a moment about all the divisions in the world today. Think also about how we put up

fences, shut doors and perpetuate the divisions which can lead to hostility, hurt and pain. Far too often we seek to protect ourselves and to maintain the status quo.

So, what does Jesus mean when he prays that we, his followers, might be one?

Jesus doesn't pray that our differences should be eliminated. He doesn't pray for uniformity. He certainly doesn't pray that we should worship in the same way and conduct our Christian lives according to one pattern.

But he does pray that we would be one, as he and the Father are one, so that our oneness might reveal God's presence to the world. This is a spiritual unity which sees Christians growing together in love and friendship as the Holy Spirit lives in them and they exercise their God given gifts for the glory of God and the spread of God's kingdom.

Jesus's prayer is that we rise above our differences and show that we are redeemed by being and living like God. The only way we can do this is through love. Jesus and the Father are one because they love and give themselves to each other. We too must live with the same unconditional and transformational love that overcomes boundaries and division.

Earlier on in the last supper Jesus gave his disciples a new commandment, that they should love one another as he had loved them. If they did that then people would know that they were Jesus's disciples. To love like Jesus means to love God, our neighbours, our enemies and ourselves, not with a wishy-washy, two-dimensional, candy floss type of love but with a love that is all encompassing, demanding, costly and life changing. We must reach out to others in need, go that step further, make sacrifices and consider the needs of others first. This is the only way in which we as Christians can become one. Oneness is not about eliminating differences. It is about love. It is about a God given love in which there may be differences but there is no division.

It is lovely that Jesus prayed for us and now we need to make sure that Jesus' prayer is answered. Today let's think seriously about how we can move forward. I wonder what barriers we need to dismantle and what changes we need to make in our own lives so that we can live for Jesus, love others as he loved us and be one with each other as we bring glory to him.

Let us pray

Dear God,

Help us to live in harmony, setting aside our differences to focus on what truly matters; loving you and one another.

Give us hearts that are patient and humble, seeking to build bridges rather than walls.

May Your Spirit guide us to work together and reflect Your perfect unity.

In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

### ***Ways to Engage all Generations***

When different generations are gathered together in worship there is an opportunity to build relationships and to encounter God in our conversations as we build relationships and learn from each other no matter what our ages, stage of life or faith and for all present to feel included. Adding some wondering questions to the service at an appropriate moment can help to do this.

Wondering Questions: Some wondering questions that may help to engage all generations to ponder and explore during the talk, service or during the week may include (three or so) of the following style of questions:

- I wonder what your favourite part of the story/passage is? I wonder why that is?
- I wonder who your favourite character is? I wonder why that is?
- I wonder how \_\_\_\_\_ felt or I wonder how \_\_\_\_\_ felt when \_\_\_\_\_ happened?
- I wonder how you feel about \_\_\_\_\_?
- I wonder where you are in this story?
- I wonder what part of the story is about you?
- I wonder what the [tree, pearl, coin] could really be?
- I wonder why \_\_\_\_\_ said \_\_\_\_\_?
- I wonder what we can learn about God in this story?

### ***Suggested intercessions***

We pray for the Church

Heavenly Father,  
you have called us in the Body of your Son Jesus Christ  
to continue his work of reconciliation  
and reveal you to the world:  
forgive us the sins which tear us apart;  
give us the courage to overcome our fears  
and to seek that unity which is your gift and your will;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/topical-prayers/prayer-christian-unity>

We pray for the World

Living God,  
deliver us from a world without justice  
and a future without mercy;  
in your mercy, establish justice,

and in your justice, remember the mercy  
revealed to us in Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/topical-prayers/prayers-world>

### We pray for our local Community

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the gift of community, a place where we can connect, support, and encourage one another. We pray for unity, understanding, and love among all members. Help us to see each other as your children, and to treat each other with kindness and compassion. We ask for your protection and blessings over our community, that we may flourish in your love and peace. We pray for those we know who are in need.

We name them in the silence of our hearts ... ..

Finally, we pray for ourselves as we commit the coming week to you

Almighty God,  
in Christ you make all things new:  
transform the poverty of our nature by the riches of your grace,  
and in the renewal of our lives  
make known your heavenly glory;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/topical-prayers/prayers-personal-situations>

### ***Suggested hymns/songs***

Make me a Channel of your peace

The Church's one foundation

Bind us together Lord

We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord

### ***Activities to accompany the service***

If you are looking for resources to accompany the service for engaging younger children, then there are lots of online resources. The following free to access/download resources may be useful starting points:

- <https://flamecreativekids.blogspot.com/>
- <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/MessyChurchBRF/>
- <https://www.faithinkids.org/>
- [reflectionary.org](https://www.reflectionary.org/) – lectionary-based resources
- [engageworship](https://www.engageworship.org/) – in particular 'Area 52' for lectionary-based material
- <https://www.bdeducation.org.uk/product-category/primary-age-5-11/>  
(weekly@ lectionary resource)