

07 February 2021
A liturgy for use at home

Notes:

*A liturgy for use at home. Please adapt it as you see fit. Words in italics are instructions. Words in **bold** are said by all.*

PREPARATION

Light a candle as you read these words:
“the LORD delights in those who fear him,
who put their hope in his unfailing love.”
(Ps. 147:11).

Call to Worship

Praise the LORD!

How good it is to sing praises to our God;
for he is gracious; a song of praise is fitting.
The LORD builds up Jerusalem;
he gathers the outcasts of Israel.
He heals the brokenhearted,
and binds up their wounds.
He determines the number of the stars;
he gives to all of them their names.
Great is our Lord, and abundant in power;
his understanding is beyond measure.
(Psalm 147:-15)

Prayer of Adoration

Lord you are the everlasting God,
creator of the ends of the earth
you do not grow weary
you don't get discouraged
You give strength to the weary
and power to the weak
We gather to wait upon you
trusting that we too can soar
on wings like eagles.

Prayer of Confession¹

Gracious God,
our sins are too heavy to carry,
too real to hide,
and too deep to undo.

Forgive what our lips tremble to name,
what our hearts can no longer bear,
and what has become for us
a consuming fire of judgment.
Set us free from a past that we cannot
change;
open to us a future in which we can be
changed;
and grant us grace
to grow more and more in your likeness and
image. **Amen**

silence

God demonstrates his own love for us in this:
While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
In Jesus name we are forgiven. **Amen**

The Peace is shared

MINISTRY OF THE WORD

Scripture

Isaiah 40: 21-31
Mark 1: 29-39

Collect

Loving God,
the light of the minds that know you,
the life of the souls that love you,
and the strength of the wills that serve you:
help us so to know you
that we may truly love you,
and so to love you
that we may truly serve you,
whom to serve is perfect freedom
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Sermon

- *A written reflection is appended to these notes. The Sunday Sermon is also online*².

¹ from “The Worship Sourcebook”

² <https://durbanvillemethodist.co.za/category/sermons/>

Hear our prayer.

THE RESPONSE

Holy Communion will be celebrated via “drive-through from 10h15-11h00. Those watching live on Facebook will be invited directly to the “Table”. Those unable to watch on Facebook will be offered a Liturgy to pray through at the Drive Through

- Receive: spend time in quiet, “waiting on the Lord”. Trust that the Lord will strengthen you. It might be helpful to picture Jesus taking Simon’s mother in law by the hand and lifting her up. Picture the kindness, the joy, the life in Jesus’ eyes.
- Give: How can you serve the Lord this week. Who needs your prayers, your kind words, your gifts?

Prayers of Supplication and Intercession

These prayers may help as you hold before God the needs of our nation and church. Pray them as written or allow them to lead you into your own prayers of intercession.

All who minister to the sick

Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ went about doing good and healing all kinds of sickness and disease among the people: continue his gracious work among us in hospitals and nursing homes; and send your blessing on all who labour to Prevent suffering and to forward your purposes of love. We pray for doctors and healthcare workers of the DMC family, Bianca, Debbie, Kayla, Karla, Stephen, Philip, Glynnis, Gideon, Liza, Monique, Magda³; may you keep them safe and renew them each day by the power of your Holy Spirit, may you bless and protect their families and enable them to be salt light to their colleagues and patients.
Lord in your mercy

The Weak and Weary

Grant your help, Lord, to all who feel ill equipped for the demands of life, whether through age or illness, tiredness or poverty. Sustain them in overwork and anxiety; give them friends in their need; and enable them to find your will in the circumstances of their life and to rejoice in your life, even amid hardship difficulty.
Lord in your mercy
Hear our prayer.

Dedication

If appropriate pray the Covenant Prayer as a prayer of dedication:

Covenant Prayer

I am no longer my own, but yours.
Put me to what you will,
rank me with whom you will;
put me to doing, put me to suffering;
let me be employed for you or laid aside for you,
exalted for you or brought low for you;
let me be full, let me be empty;
let me have all things,
let me have nothing;
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things to your pleasure and disposal. And now, glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, you are mine and I am yours. So be it. And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Amen

Benediction

And now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and forever more.

³ Please let us know of medical workers who we may have left out.

“Waiting” on the Lord

The human touch

“Jesus went to her, took her by the hand, and helped her up.” When I held that image in my mind an unlikely memory came to me: A practice rugby match at school! A flank, one grade above me but two heads higher and 40 kg heavier bore down my channel. As I committed to the tackle the fierce determination in his eyes warned me it wouldn’t end well. He bounced me so powerfully I executed a complete backward somersault.

And there were those eyes again. No longer fierce, but kind, concerned, he took me by the hand, helped me to my feet – *“are you ok?”*...

Why this memory? I think because 30 boys were playing as if one thing mattered in the world. Scoring a try. Winning. A second later one thing mattered – was Sean ok. The whole game stopped. Admittedly, after the obligatory *“how many fingers?”*, we went right back to try scoring. But for a short moment the very *human* act of taking someone by the hand and helping them up dominated. Maybe it dawned on my soul *“there might be something more powerful and more wonderful than winning!”*

Friends, I think Jesus wants us to see the *humanity* in this healing story – after all he did refer to himself as the Son of Man – the deeply truly, human one. It’s normal to be amazed by Jesus’ power to heal. But focusing only on his miraculous power can blind us. We miss Jesus, miss what He wants us to see. So, let’s look, with empathy, at the human reality.

The Individual

Simon’s mother-in-law, let’s call her “mum”, is in bed – unable to worship with the family at Synagogue. It’s not difficult to empathise in this climate of isolation. The most painful aspect of illness is being cut off from life with others. In my early years of my ministry, I suffered an auto-immune condition that affected my joints. After weeks of limited mobility I thought, *“surely, I can make a pastoral visit to the retirement village”*. It was, literally, across the road. I walked – maybe 200m. That night my knees swelled up like melons, again! The folk I’d visited, two, nearly three times my age, could more easily visit me – indeed they did! I was in physical discomfort but my prayer that night was *“Lord, what purpose do I serve here? Am I going to have to be boarded? Surely it’s better if a healthy person replaces me”*, that was the painful thing.

Friends, when I prayed that prayer I still had much to learn (as I still do) about the kindness of the One to whom I prayed. One to whom a family can readily say *“mom’s in bed with a fever”*. One who readily takes her by the hand. He is ready to take you by the hand and lift you up.

The Community

Later we see the whole town gathered at the door. We wonder, *“why so many sick people in Capernaum”*? My first year in ministry I served a poverty stricken township, Tigane. On Thursday’s I visited the sick. In one immaculate cast iron structure after the next the people I visited suffered hypertension. Sickness I learned, thrives in communities stressed by unemployment, poverty, lack of resources.

A recent article in The Conversation titled *“racism has a physical impact on the body”* points out that an oppressive climate can even alter one’s genes – predisposing one to illness. Being

cut off from life in community is the worst part of illness, so too being cut off from the fullness of life can make us sick.

The people in Jesus' day lived in an oppressive climate. From the Roman oppressors to their own king and priests, leaders were self-serving. It made them sick. But in Jesus, the Kingdom of God, shattered those bonds. He awakened hope and humanity- they brought their sick, He made them well.

Jesus

By focusing on Jesus' humanity, we don't disregard God's power at work through him. Rather, we focus on the source of His power. His kindness. His love. His empathy. That's the Lord we pray to!

Service

Noticing Jesus's humanity also helps us see what it means to be healed: *"Jesus took her hand and helped her up, the fever left her and she began to wait on them"*. Healing is not simply physical well-being. Jesus' touch sets us free to serve. Jesus later said *"whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ... For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many"* (Mk 10:43-45).

A life of service - that's the *human* way of living. It's such a potent desire it sometimes blindsides us when we thought life was all about winning! Our communities are diseased, our world sick. But, Jesus, through his death and resurrection, is available for every town to crowd at his door!

We cry out *"how may I serve with Him in this work"*. Here's the answer: *"Early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed"*. To wait on the Lord in service requires we wait on the Lord in prayer. Best to know we wait upon one who is kind, who takes us, yes even me, in his hands and lifts me up. As the prophet promised:

*"those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength,
they shall mount up with wings like eagles,
they shall run and not be weary,
they shall walk and not faint"* (Is. 40:31).