



Season of LENT

A number of **Daily Bible Readings** have been prepared for use during the season of Lent. These are based upon the Sermon on the Mount teaching series which has been used in the 11.15 services at St John's Church.

You may wish to use these readings together with the **Daily Rhythm** order of prayer and worship for each day in Lent.

Bible study materials for small groups are also available.



Keynsham Parish
Sharing Jesus Christ

Week One: Keeping it Secret

Matthew 6.1-24.

Monday:	Living authentically. <i>Matthew 23.1-7.</i>
Tuesday:	Faith and deeds. <i>James 2.14-22.</i>
Wednesday:	Living within our needs. <i>Proverbs 30.7-9.</i>
Thursday:	True fasting. <i>Isaiah 58.3-8.</i>
Friday:	Fasting and celebrating. <i>Luke 5.33-39.</i>
Saturday:	Seeking after the things of God. <i>Isaiah 55.1-6</i>
Sunday:	Lives of contentment and holiness. <i>1 Timothy 6.6-10.</i>

An exercise to try...

1. Keeping a Spiritual Journal



It can be helpful to keep a record of your daily thoughts, feelings and prayers.

FIND yourself a blank exercise book or something similar which is small, lightweight and easy to carry around. Find 10 minutes each day to sit and reflect upon your spiritual journey. This is an opportunity to think about where God has been at work in the events or thoughts of your life?

WRITE: you might want to ask yourself:

- How and when have I been aware of God today?
- Has God felt absent today? Why might that be?
- What is my greatest desire or prayer at this moment?
- What verse of scripture spoke to me? How might it apply to my life?
- What experience, life story or event has inspired me today?
- What questions am I wrestling with?

BE REGULAR: write something each day, no matter how unimportant or silly it might appear. This is your personal journal – no-one else will ever read it – so use it to express what is what is on your mind.

REVIEW: look back over your journal, either every week or month and see how prayers might have been answered and how your understanding and self-awareness has developed.

Week Two: Do not worry

Matthew 6.25-34

Monday:	The folly of seeking worldly treasures. <i>Ecclesiastes 2.4-11.</i>
Tuesday:	Do not fear. <i>Matthew 10.28-31.</i>
Wednesday:	The folly of worrying. <i>Psalms 49.1-10.</i>
Thursday:	Seeking after God. <i>Amos 5.4-6.</i>
Friday:	Seeking spiritual treasure. <i>Philippians 4.7-11.</i>
Saturday:	Having a Godly perspective. <i>2 Peter 4.7-11.</i>
Sunday:	Rest for the weary. <i>Matthew 11.25-30.</i>

An exercise to try...

2. Down: Up OUT: IN

Here is a simple exercise designed to help you let go of the things that separate you from God and take hold of those things that brings you closer to him.



Make yourself comfortable in a sitting position with both feet on the floor. Place your hands **palm down** on your lap, touching your legs. As you become aware of the weight of your hands on your lap think about the things that you want to lay down in your life. Negative thoughts, bad former experiences, your sense of regret and failure, the habits that let you down, memories that disturb you, your feelings of weakness and frailty. Lay down those thoughts and feelings before God as you lay down your hands on your lap. Now turn those **palms upward** in a receiving gesture. Receive God's forgiveness, his love and affirmation of you. You are accepted and forgiven, you are God's child. Receive his Spirit.

You can repeat this exercise by concentrating upon your breathing in the same seated position. Think about your own quiet breathing - out and in - out and in - out and in. **Breathe out** all that holds you back from becoming who you want to be and all that God wants you to be. Release your disappointment and regrets to God. Expel all your striving and resistance. **Breathe in** all that God's wants for your life. Breathe in his love - his forgiveness - his belief in you - all that he wants for you.

Week Three: Forgive and be forgiven

Matthew 7.1-14

Monday:	A forgiven people. <i>1 John 1.5-10</i>
Tuesday:	Not judging other people. <i>James 1.1-7.</i>
Wednesday:	Warning about hypocrisy. <i>Matthew 23.27-32</i>
Thursday:	Forgiving each other. <i>Colossians 3.12-14</i>
Friday:	Controlled by the Spirit of God. <i>Romans 8.9-11</i>
Saturday:	Shaped by the word of God. <i>Colossians 3.15-17.</i>
Sunday:	Following God's path. <i>Philippians 3.12-16.</i>

An exercise to try...

3. Praying the **Jesus Prayer**



Prayer doesn't have to be long and complex. One of the simplest, most helpful ways to pray is to use a centring prayer such as the 'Jesus Prayer'. This comes from a story Jesus told (*Luke 18 v9-14*) about the prayer of someone who recognised their own weakness and need of God. The prayer can be prayed over and over again, as part of a sigh or the drawing of breath or even when rolling three beads on a chain through your fingers. It is a recognition that we can't make it on our own, we need Jesus, we are calling upon his help and strength for our lives, we are asking him to forgive us and form in his own image.

***Lord Jesus Christ
Son of God***

Have mercy on me, a sinner.

Another very simple prayer was used by early Christians as a statement of belief - often quoted in Aramaic, the language Jesus spoke, as '*Maranatha*' (Come, Lord Jesus). It can be repeated and used as part of our breathing in and out. It is a call upon Jesus to be present with us now, but also a statement of faith that He will come one day in great power to be present among us in a new and special way. We can meditate upon the meaning of each word or else use the prayer when other words fail us. It is a prayer that reminds us of Jesus' victory over evil and the hope we have in His loving presence with us always.

Maranatha. Come, Lord Jesus.

Week Four: Back down the mountain

Matthew 7.15-23.

Monday:	Forsaking false idols. <i>Jeremiah 2.5-13.</i>
Tuesday:	Forsaking false promises. <i>2 Peter 2.1-3.</i>
Wednesday:	Producing good fruit. <i>Matthew 12.33-37.</i>
Thursday:	Demonstrating the love of God. <i>1 John 3.11-18.</i>
Friday:	Seeking Kingdom values. <i>Amos 5.21-24.</i>
Saturday:	Sharing the coming Kingdom. <i>Luke 9.1-6.</i>
Sunday:	Living as God's people. <i>1 Peter 2.9-12.</i>

An exercise to try...

4. Reviewing the Day



Take 15 minutes to review your day. You can do this at any time of the day:

Ask for the strength that you desire

Be grateful for all that God gives you

Call for God's light, that you may see your life as God wants you to see it

Day review - where was God today?

How have you responded today?

Express your gratitude for what was good today and your regret for what wasn't good.

For tomorrow - pray for it.

OR

- A. What is your deepest spiritual desire? ASK for such change in your life.
- B. You may not always feel grateful. See everything in your life, including life itself, as a gift from God.
- C. God's spirit shows us how God sees us. Ask God to show you only the things which you need to see about yourself.
- D. 'Playback' the period since the last review. Review the words, experiences, places and people that have been in your life. Where has God been in your life of the life of other people today?
- E. The 'playback' will lead you to deeper thanksgiving and perhaps even regret. Note areas of resistance - where these keep occurring it might be a sign that God wants to work to bring about change.
- F. Look ahead. What help and guidance are you likely to need for the day ahead? What qualities will be needed? Ask God for them.

Week Five: Living it out

Matthew 7.24-29

Monday:	Connecting words with actions. <i>James 1.19-27.</i>
Tuesday:	Living lives of true repentance. <i>Luke 3.7-14.</i>
Wednesday:	Living in the shadow of the cross. <i>Mark 8.31-38.</i>
Thursday:	Living in the light of resurrection. <i>1 Corinthians 15.20-28.</i>
Friday:	Renewing our minds. <i>Romans 12.1-3.</i>
Saturday:	Renewing our hearts. <i>Ezekiel 36.24-29.</i>
Sunday:	Renewing the world. <i>Isaiah 25.6-9.</i>

An exercise to try...

5. Making the '*caim*'



Some of the earliest Christians in Britain, used the symbol of a circle to help them to visualize the protection and presence of Jesus with them. This led to the practise of making the '*caim*', in which they drew a circle as a symbol of the encircling love of God.

Sit somewhere on your own and using your right finger or just your imagination to draw the *caim* around you. Alternatively, you can use a circle of candles. Wherever you are, place yourself inside a circle. You might want to find a Bible and read **Psalm 91**. Picture each of the protections that God can be for you or you might want to meditate (*think deeply*) upon these words:

See yourself surrounded by God and his love.

Rest a while in that love

Let that love fill your life

Let it fill the place where you are

Know that God goes with you

Visualise the next few days ahead...see that God's love is there for you to explore...enfolding and surrounding you.

See God's love in ever-widening circles

God reaches out...He seeks to touch your life...He encircles your loved ones...your home...your work...your friends...your hopes and passions.

Know that the love of God radiates in ever extending circles.