

## Make my joy complete

### Notes on the Bible readings

- Philippi, originally a Greek city, was considered to be a miniature Rome. The Romans knew how to run the empire and keep people in order. Slavery was taken for granted and woven throughout Roman society. Jesus' death by crucifixion was the ultimate slave's death; by asking the people of Philippi to be like Christ, Paul is asking them to embrace this existence, the lowest in the Roman Empire.

- We can assume that people in Philippi would have heard of the crucifixion story, which must have been brought in via trade routes. Status was everything in their world, but this story and Paul's message about it shows that this kind of status doesn't mean anything to God.

- In a world obsessed with self-interest and self-image, putting aside your own interests for the interests of others is quite a challenge, and one that we, as followers of Jesus, need to wrestle with. What does this look like in practice? How can we balance this with the need for self-care?

### A random act of kindness

Search the internet for and watch '20 random acts of kindness'. Think of a random act of kindness that you could do. Evaluate its costs to you (financial, time, etc.) – and make the necessary plans to do it.

### Questions for reflection

- ▶ Where do you see yourself in this image?
- ▶ When do you find joy in helping others?
- ▶ If the keyhole represents 'key support', what does that look like in your community?



### A prayer for others

*O God, so often we want to pray for others but don't know how. We can't remember names or numbers, or other issues weigh heavily on our hearts. Thank goodness, God, that you know what we mean when we pray. So, we bring in this moment, those names and faces, images and desires for others that pop in and out of our minds throughout the day...*

*the old lady at the bus stop...*

*the young mum at the checkout...*

*the chap up the road who's calling for his dog...*

*the teachers struggling with their class...*

*a young family who can't make ends meet...*

*those without work, who can't find new jobs...*

*those with mental health issues and seeking help...*

*those who know they need help for whatever reason, but are too ashamed to ask, or are ignored...*

*O God, for all these people and countless others, we offer our prayers. We know you do not need reminding, but you do need willing workers – even us – to help them know your love and have their needs met. Hear our ramblings, O God. Amen.*

### A personal prayer

*I simply pray that you, Lord God, will help me show your love to those around me.  
Amen.*

### Live your faith

Think of someone you don't normally engage with – or someone who represents a group or ideology that that you dislike – and do something specific and positive for that person.