



37-38B EASTER  
7B- ASCENSION  
DAY - SKIPTON  
STREET PLACE

The potential of prayer

**ABSTRACT**

My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. John 17:15-17

**Jim de Jong**

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Madala: South African definition; An old man; an 'old one'. Frequently as a term of somewhat affectionate or respectful address, especially to an elderly black man.

## FIRST READING

*Acts 1:15–17, 21–26 (NIV)*

<sup>15</sup> In those days Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty) <sup>16</sup> and said, “Brothers and sisters, the Scripture had to be fulfilled in which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus. <sup>17</sup> He was one of our number and shared in our ministry.”

<sup>21</sup> Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus was living among us, <sup>22</sup> beginning from John’s baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection.”

<sup>23</sup> So they nominated two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. <sup>24</sup> Then they prayed, “Lord, you know everyone’s heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen <sup>25</sup> to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs.” <sup>26</sup> Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles. <sup>i</sup>

**GOSPEL***John 17:6–19(NIV)*

<sup>6</sup> “I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me, and they have obeyed your word. <sup>7</sup> Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. <sup>8</sup> For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. <sup>9</sup> I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. <sup>10</sup> All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. <sup>11</sup> I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. <sup>12</sup> While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.

<sup>13</sup> “I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. <sup>14</sup> I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. <sup>15</sup> My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. <sup>16</sup> They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. <sup>17</sup> Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. <sup>18</sup> As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. <sup>19</sup> For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified. <sup>ii</sup>

*Response*

For the word of the Lord

## Thanks be to God

### 37-38B Easter 7B- Ascension Day - Skipton Street Place The potential of prayer

SUNDAY, MAY 16, 2021 | EASTER | SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER OR ASCENSION SUNDAY |  
YEAR B

Sunday, May 16, 2021 | Easter | Seventh Sunday of Easter or Ascension Sunday  
Year B

*First Reading, Psalm, New Testament & Gospel, Option I*

*First Reading* Acts 1:15–17, 21–26

*Psalm* Psalm 1

*New Testament* 1 John 5:9–13

*Gospel* John 17:6–19\*

or

*First Reading, Psalm, New Testament & Gospel, Option II*

*First Reading* Acts 1:1–11

*Psalm* Psalm 47 or Psalm 93

*New Testament* Ephesians 1:15–23

*Gospel* Luke 24:44–53<sup>iii</sup>

Before his arrest, Jesus prays for his friends that they may be one as he is one with the Father. He asks that they may be protected in the uncertain times they face and made holy – i.e. set apart from the world’s unbelief – by the truth about who Jesus is.

The way in which Jesus prays helps us to understand the breadth and potential of prayer – not a formula of words, but an ongoing conversation and relationship with God/Jesus that helps to inform and shape everything that we are and everything that we do.

This week we explore Jesus’ prayer for his friends in uncertain times.<sup>iv</sup>

	<b>Pre-Service</b>
	<b>Introit</b> <del>TIS # 152</del> — “Joyful joyful we adore you” (Various ... see attached) “We are one in the Spirit” V1, C, V2, C, V3, C
	<b>Greeting</b>  May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ The Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all

	<b>and also with you</b>
	<p><b>We Gather</b></p> <p>You who are passing through hard times: come!  You who need strength to support those who are suffering: come!  You who are full of happiness: come!  You who are burdened and busy: come!  Come; let us unite in worship  of the one who offers us protection, comfort and joy.  Amen</p> <p><b>Acknowledgements</b></p> <p><i>Let us pray</i></p> <p>We come to you, Lord,  ready to worship,  ready to learn,  ready for prayer,  ready for action.  May our worship here spill out into our every day.  Amen.</p>
	<p><b>We say Sorry</b></p> <p>Forgive us, gracious God,  when we have turned away from your word  and immersed ourselves in the distractions of the world.  Forgive us, when we have sought to belong to the world  and compromised your truth to fit in.  Forgive us, when we have bickered among ourselves  and not shown the world that we are one.  Forgive us, when we have distanced ourselves  from those you have called us to serve.  Forgive us, O God; protect us and unite us.</p> <p>In Jesus' name.  Amen.</p>
	<p><b>Words of Assurance</b></p> <p>Gracious God,  we thank you for the enduring prayer of Jesus for his disciples  which reaches and reassures us today as we walk in their footsteps,  reminding us that we are not alone  but protected, empowered, forgiven,  and surrounded by your grace every step of the way.  Amen.</p>
	<b>Hymn/song</b>

	TIS #411 (AHB #328) – “Filled with the Spirit’s power, with one accord”
	<p><b>Welcome</b></p> <p><i>Let us pray</i>  Gracious God,  set apart as your people yet together in your world,  <b>we worship you as one.</b></p> <p>Emboldened by your power,  protected by your promises and filled with your peace,  <b>we worship you as one.</b></p> <p>Upheld by your word,  inspired by your truth and named as your friends,  <b>we worship you as one.</b></p> <p>Keep us safe in the world.  Keep us praying for the world.  Keep us serving the world.  <b>As one, in Jesus’ name.</b>  <b>Amen.</b></p>
	<p><b>Readings</b>  Acts 1:15–17, 21–26  John 17:6–19</p> <p><i>respond</i>  For the word of the Lord  <b>Thanks be to God</b></p>
	<p><b>Hymn/song/video</b>  TIS#154 Great is thy Faithfulness  <del>We are one in the spirit—Scholte</del></p>

**Response**

The Real "Lord's Prayer" 2  
John 17:6-19

Do our women who have been mothers remember your favourite gift  
that you ever got at a baby shower?

A woman received one very special gift, a baby quilt hand-sewn by her grandmother,  
who had passed away years before.

As Louise marvelled over the beauty of the quilt,  
it hit her that her grandmother had planned, and hand stitched this quilt,  
long before Louise ever got pregnant.

Motivated by love and faithfulness, this grandmother had planned this very special gift  
for a future great-grandchild she would never see. <sup>v</sup>

Today we receive a very special gift.

This passage relates Jesus’ last major prayer before his arrest and crucifixion.

Our lesson from John’s gospel is often referred to as the “real” Lord’s Prayer.

It is the one in which Jesus prayed for his friends, the apostles.

Jesus knew that his ministry and his life were both drawing to a close.

He had already submitted himself to the Father's will.

He knew that his arrest and trial and very public, very humiliating, very violent death would throw his apostles into a turmoil.

Put yourself in the place of Jesus' friends.

Imagine seeing Jesus' arrest and torture and death through their eyes.

Wouldn't you be overwhelmed by grief and fear and questions and doubts?

Did Jesus do a miracle to save his own life?

Nope. Obviously, Jesus did no such thing.

They were all within his power.

But they weren't God's will for him or for his followers.

Jesus provides us the perfect example of how to align our choices with God's will, even if God's will is frightening and difficult and hard to understand.

That's one of the primary purposes of prayer,

to develop such a loving, trusting relationship between us and God that we naturally align ourselves with God's will.

And so . . . Jesus, in his last hours on this earth,

did what he had always done throughout his ministry.

He took his concerns to his loving Father in prayer.

Jesus prayed for others.

He prayed for his disciples,

and then he prayed for all those people he had never met, people who hadn't even been born yet,

who would come to believe in him as their Lord and Saviour.

In other words, in his last hours on earth, Jesus prayed for you and me.

What an incredible gift of love!

Today we see Jesus at his very best in his darkest moment.

He was calm, confident in his Father's love and his Father's plans for him.

In fact, he was so confident that Jesus barely felt the need to pray for himself.

Instead, he prayed for his apostles who would be left behind to do his work.

He knew that they were weak, scared and unprepared.

And that is exactly why prayer is the first and best cure for dealing with our own dark moments.

Jesus' friends, the disciples heard Jesus thanking God for them and their well-being.

At one point they asked Jesus to teach them how to pray like he did.

And you will recall that Jesus taught them a model prayer

that we know today as the Lord's Prayer.

But on that day before his crucifixion, Christ prayed for his friends.

It is always reassuring when we are going through difficult times to know that someone else is praying for us.

We sometimes forget how powerful a simple prayer can be.

Do you pray for your friends? Jesus did.  
And you know what? In the same way that Jesus prayed for the apostles, he prays for us.  
In times of confusion, it is a great comfort to know that Jesus is praying for us.

But how did he pray? What did he ask for?  
Jesus prayed that God would help his friends remain strong.  
That's always an appropriate prayer—the prayer for strength.

A Pastor tells s story about two men praying.  
One prayed, "Lord, please help me to hold on." he said;  
The other prayed, "Lord, please help me to let go."  
I think we can all relate to prayers like this. Each one requires a different kind of strength.

"There are two types of strength.  
There is the strength of the wind that sways the mighty tree,  
and there is the strength of the tree that withstands the power of the wind.  
One is active strength, the other is passive strength.  
One is the power to keep going, the other is the power to keep still.  
One is the strength by which we overcome; the other is the strength by which we endure." vi

Jesus' prayer is a great reminder to us that God never intended us to suffer  
and struggle through life under our own strength.  
We have limited strength, limited wisdom, and limited perspective.  
Our circumstances sometimes look more powerful than God's love for us.  
Through prayer, God wants to restore our strength, wisdom, and perspective.

Jesus knew the cost of being one of his followers in those early days would be high.  
He knew there would be times when his disciples' lives would be in danger.  
He knew there would be times when they would be tempted to run.  
But, Jesus didn't pray that they would be released from their problems.  
Instead, he prayed for them to be strong enough to withstand the challenges that lay ahead.  
Jesus did not pray for escape but victory.  
He prayed, "I am not asking you to take them out of the world,  
but I ask you to protect them from the evil one."

Jesus prayed for his friends.

He prayed that they would be strong.  
He also prayed that they would be united.

Jesus is praying for us.  
He is asking God two things in our behalf.  
First of all, he is asking that we shall be strong  
Secondly, he is praying that we will be united.  
That is one prayer we could help answer ourselves.  
We could start by praying for our friends. We could also pray for our church.  
Finally, we could pray for ourselves,  
that we will truly be strong and that we will always love one another.

That is a prayer that aligns with God's will and is in the spirit of Jesus Christ.



And we can know beyond the shadow of a doubt  
that God will be faithful to answer that prayer  
until the day we meet Him face to face.

Amen

	<p><b>Hymn/song</b>  <del>TIS # 154 – “Great is your Faithfulness”</del>  <b>TIS 228 AHB 163 – “Crown him with many crowns”</b></p>
	<p><b>Offering</b></p> <p>OFFERTORY SENTENCE  United in the ministry and mission of Christ,  we bring our gifts in service of the world.</p> <p>OFFERTORY PRAYER  Loving God,  may the gifts we bring be a token of our love.  May the service we would offer reflect  the promises of your reign and realm.  May all we have, and all we are, be dedicated to your glory.  In Christ’s name we pray.  Amen.</p>
	<p><b>Notices</b></p>
	<p><b>Prayers for all people</b></p> <p>To our sacred world of worship,  we bring our secular selves,  with all the burdens of the people we know and love;  all the burdens of the people we hear of and see;  all the burdens of the people we laugh with and cry with.</p> <p>All-powerful God,  who understands our needs before we think and speak,  we unload our pains and joys,  our sorrows and our celebrations,  and bring our prayers before you:</p> <p>for the hurting and the hurt;  for the loved and the loveless;  for the young and old;  for believers and non-believers;  for those certain of their faith and those who waver;  for those of different faiths and identities from us;  for the ill and those in pain and distress;  for the dying and those whose bodies are etched  with the marks of death and dying;  for the grieving whose minds are bewildered and burdened by grief.</p>

	<p>All-powerful God, surround each and every one with the circle of your protection. Amen.</p>
	<p><b>Lord's Prayer</b> Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. AMEN <sup>vii</sup></p>
	<p><b>Hymn/song</b> TIS #699 – “A New Commandment I give unto you” TIS #224 (AHB #159) – “All hail the power of Jesus’ name”</p>
	<p><b>We are sent out</b>  As we leave this place, Lord,     may our prayers be just beginning.     May our worship, our time here, what we have learned and what we have discovered,     lead us into action and lives full of worship     every hour of every day. We ask in the name of Jesus,     whose whole life was an offering of worship to you. Amen.  May the Lord bless us     and keep us May His face shine upon us     and be gracious to us May he lift up His countenance upon us     and give us peace Amen</p>
	<p><b>Benediction</b> TIS #755 – “You shall go out with joy” (Clap your hands)</p>
	<p><b>Thank you</b></p>

The Real "Lord's Prayer" 1  
John 17:6-19

Do our women who have been mothers remember your favourite gift  
that you ever got at a baby shower?

A woman received one very special gift, a baby quilt hand-sewn by her grandmother,  
who had passed away years before.

As Louise marvelled over the beauty of the quilt,  
it hit her that her grandmother had planned, and hand stitched this quilt,  
long before Louise ever got pregnant.

Motivated by love and faithfulness, this grandmother had planned this very special gift  
for a future great-grandchild she would never see. <sup>viii</sup>

Today we receive a very special gift.

This passage relates Jesus' last major prayer before his arrest and crucifixion.  
Our lesson from John's gospel is often referred to as the "real" Lord's Prayer.  
It is the one in which Jesus prayed for his friends, the apostles.

Clean Up Australia Day is held on the first Sunday of March every year  
and encourages people to clean up their local areas.

Any person can register a place they plan to clean up  
and others can join them there. <sup>ix</sup>

There is – or at least, there used to be  
a similar annual 'litter pick' in the Yorkshire village of Wombledon.  
Naturally! The children dress as Wombles – the Wombles of Wombledon  
and there is always a communal lunch.

The problem is that these annual events are on a Sunday morning,  
and coincides with morning services.

So, imagine that you normally  
– indeed, always – attend the morning service  
but you also want to join in with the litter pick. What should you do?

You could go to church and forget about the litter cleanup.  
That might be the 'right' thing to do – the first commandment:  
Love God. Then love your neighbour and all that follows from that.  
So, God comes first.

Perhaps it would be better if, before going to church,  
you give your apologies to the litter pick organisers  
and offer to do some litter picking at another time.  
That at least shows that you are genuinely interested and keen  
provided, of course, that you do go and do some litter picking at another time.

Or could you, for once,  
miss going to the service and go to the litter pick instead?  
God surely wouldn't mind just this once.  
And, more than that,

perhaps being with other members of your community to do the litter cleanup  
is a way of showing that the Church – and God  
really is interested in the whole community  
and not just the people inside the building.  
Perhaps joining in is part of your ‘worship and prayer’ for the community.

Or how about trying to get the whole congregation to join in with the litter cleanup?  
You could even start or end with some outdoor worship and prayers for the community.

How do we square Jesus’ words

‘They do not belong to the world’ with  
‘So I have sent them into the world’?

Jesus, whose authority did not come from this world, did live fully as part of it.

It is significant that, although Jesus clearly taught in the synagogues  
the Gospels tell us he did!

almost all the stories about Jesus,

most of his recorded teaching, his parables, his healings and more,  
happened outside – in and around the community.

So, an action such as communal litter cleanup can be an act of Christian worship and prayer.

And how can we express

or rather, do – something of that nature here in our community?

The Real "Lord's Prayer" 3  
John 17:6-19

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Jesus knew that his ministry and his life were both drawing to a close.  
He had already submitted himself to the Father's will.

He knew that his arrest and trial and very public, very humiliating, very violent death  
would throw his apostles into a turmoil.

Put yourself in the place of Jesus' friends.

Imagine seeing Jesus' arrest and torture and death through their eyes.  
Wouldn't you be overwhelmed by grief and fear and questions and doubts?

Did Jesus do a miracle to save his own life?

Did Jesus appear to his apostles with a host of angels around him  
so that they would never again doubt his divine nature?

Did Jesus supernaturally take his apostles with him to heaven  
so that they wouldn't have to suffer in any way?

Nope. Obviously, Jesus did no such thing.

They were all within his power.

But they weren't God's will for him or for his followers.

Jesus provides us the perfect example of how to align our choices with God's will,  
even if God's will is frightening and difficult and hard to understand.

That's one of the primary purposes of prayer,  
to develop such a loving, trusting relationship between us and God  
that we naturally align ourselves with God's will.

And so . . . Jesus, in his last hours on this earth,  
did what he had always done throughout his ministry.  
He took his concerns to his loving Father in prayer.

Jesus prayed for others.

He prayed for his disciples,  
and then he prayed for all those people he had never met,  
people who hadn't even been born yet,

who would come to believe in him as their Lord and Saviour.  
In other words, in his last hours on earth, Jesus prayed for you and me.  
What an incredible gift of love!

Navy SEAL divers in training are dropped off at night at least 3 kms away from an enemy harbor.  
With only a depth gauge and a compass,  
must then swim underwater in the dark to reach the enemy ship.  
Then the divers have to dive below the ship to the very centre of its hull in total darkness.  
Maybe "If you want to change the world,  
you must be your very best in the darkest moment."<sup>xi</sup>

Today we see Jesus at his very best in his darkest moment.  
He was calm, confident in his Father's love and his Father's plans for him.  
In fact, he was so confident that Jesus barely felt the need to pray for himself.  
Instead, he prayed for his apostles who would be left behind to do his work.  
He knew that they were weak, scared and unprepared.  
And that is exactly why prayer is the first and best cure  
for dealing with our own dark moments.

A mother prayed on her knees every morning, afternoon and night.  
Each morning she prayed to be open to God's will.  
at the end of each day she prayed for God to examine  
her thoughts, actions and words that day.<sup>xii</sup>  
When you maintain regular, faithful communication with God,  
God will reveal to you wisdom that means  
"nothing can happen to you that you can't make use of."  
Even suffering and sorrow and fear and doubts.

Jesus' friends, the disciples heard Jesus thanking God for them and their well-being.  
At one point they asked Jesus to teach them how to pray like he did.  
And you will recall that Jesus taught them a model prayer  
that we know today as the Lord's Prayer.  
But on that day before his crucifixion, Christ prayed for his friends.  
It is always reassuring when we are going through difficult times  
to know that someone else is praying for us.

We sometimes forget how powerful a simple prayer can be.  
Do you pray for your friends? Jesus did.  
And you know what? In the same way that Jesus prayed for the apostles, he prays for us.  
In times of confusion, it is a great comfort to know that Jesus is praying for us.

But how did he pray? What did he ask for?  
Jesus prayed that God would help his friends remain strong.  
That's always an appropriate prayer—the prayer for strength.

A Pastor tells a story about two men praying.  
One prayed, "Lord, please help me to hold on." he said;  
The other prayed, "Lord, please help me to let go."  
I think we can all relate to prayers like this. Each one requires a different kind of strength.

“There are two types of strength.

There is the strength of the wind that sways the mighty tree,  
and there is the strength of the tree that withstands the power of the wind.

One is active strength, the other is passive strength.

One is the power to keep going, the other is the power to keep still.

One is the strength by which we overcome; the other is the strength by which we endure.”

xiii

Jesus’ prayer is a great reminder to us that God never intended us to suffer  
and struggle through life under our own strength.

We have limited strength, limited wisdom, and limited perspective.

Our circumstances sometimes look more powerful than God’s love for us.

Through prayer, God wants to restore our strength, wisdom, and perspective.

Jesus knew the cost of being one of his followers in those early days would be high.

He knew there would be times when his disciples’ lives would be in danger.

He knew there would be times when they would be tempted to run.

But, Jesus didn’t pray that they would be released from their problems.

Instead, he prayed for them to be strong enough to withstand the challenges that lay ahead.

Jesus did not pray for escape but victory.

He prayed, “I am not asking you to take them out of the world,

but I ask you to protect them from the evil one.”

In 1943, Private First Class William Kiessel wrote to friends

that he did not want prayer for his safety, because “safety isn’t the ultimate goal.”

The goal, he stated, was “true exemplary conduct.”

The same goes for us “Safety isn’t the ultimate goal. True exemplary conduct is.”

Private First Class Kiessel added,

“What is important is that whatever does happen to me

I will do absolutely nothing that will shame my character or my God.”<sup>xiv(6)</sup>

That sounds very much like Jesus’ prayer for his friends.

He could have taken his apostles to eternal life with him.

He could have taken away their struggles and their suffering. He didn’t.

Their struggles and suffering were absolutely necessary

for the power of God to work through them.

It was their faithful witness in their suffering and struggles that built the church of Jesus Christ.

Jesus prayed for his friends.

He prayed that they would be strong.

He also prayed that they would be united.

“Protect them in your name that you have given me,” he prayed,

“so that they may be one, as we are one.”

That is such an important message for us.

We are not simply a collection of individuals.

We are the body of Christ.

Unity does not come easy.

It requires humility and a shared vision.

And most of all, unity requires prayer.  
 When we align our will with the will of God,  
 when we align our character with the character of Jesus,  
 then we will operate in a spirit of unity,  
 and we can accomplish the work of Jesus on this earth.

Jesus is praying for us.

He is asking God two things in our behalf.

First of all, he is asking that we shall be strong

Secondly, he is praying that we will be united.

That is one prayer we could help answer ourselves.

We could start by praying for our friends. We could also pray for our church.

Finally, we could pray for ourselves,

that we will truly be strong and that we will always love one another.

That is a prayer that aligns with God's will and is in the spirit of Jesus Christ.

And we can know beyond the shadow of a doubt

that God will be faithful to answer that prayer

until the day we meet Him face to face.

Amen

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<sup>i</sup> [Revised Common Lectionary](#). (2009). Bellingham, WA: Faithlife.

<sup>ii</sup> [Revised Common Lectionary](#). (2009). Bellingham, WA: Faithlife.

<sup>iii</sup> [Revised Common Lectionary](#). (2009). Bellingham, WA: Faithlife.

<sup>iv</sup> © Copyright 2002-2021, ROOTS for Churches Ltd. All rights reserved.

<sup>v</sup> By Louise Cramer "These 7 Stories Prove that Unexpected Gifts Are the Best Gifts" Huffington Post December 19, 2016. [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/unexpected-gifts\\_n\\_585199dce4b092f08686d81f](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/unexpected-gifts_n_585199dce4b092f08686d81f).

<sup>vi</sup> By Ellen Peach @Sent by Mary Sutherland. RichardWimer@xc.org @Wit & Wisdom.

<sup>vii</sup> English Language Liturgical Consultation, 1988

<sup>viii</sup> By Louise Cramer "These 7 Stories Prove that Unexpected Gifts Are the Best Gifts" Huffington Post December 19, 2016. [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/unexpected-gifts\\_n\\_585199dce4b092f08686d81f](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/unexpected-gifts_n_585199dce4b092f08686d81f).

<sup>ix</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clean\\_Up\\_Australia#:~:text=Clean%20Up%20Australia%20Day%20is,others%20can%20join%20them%20there](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clean_Up_Australia#:~:text=Clean%20Up%20Australia%20Day%20is,others%20can%20join%20them%20there).

<sup>x</sup> By Louise Cramer "These 7 Stories Prove that Unexpected Gifts Are the Best Gifts" Huffington Post December 19, 2016. [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/unexpected-gifts\\_n\\_585199dce4b092f08686d81f](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/unexpected-gifts_n_585199dce4b092f08686d81f).

<sup>xi</sup> "Adm. McRaven Urges Graduates to Find Courage to Change the World" Naval Adm. William H. McRaven, ninth commander of U.S. Special Operations Command, University-wide Commencement on May 17, 2014. University of Texas at Austin [https://news.utexas.edu/2014/05/16/mcraven-urges-graduates-to-find-courage-to-change-the-world/?utm\\_source=morning\\_brew](https://news.utexas.edu/2014/05/16/mcraven-urges-graduates-to-find-courage-to-change-the-world/?utm_source=morning_brew).

<sup>xii</sup> Alice Munro, emphasis added, "Seeking God's Purpose," Proper 15, page 275. Robin Mathews-Johnson <http://www.gbgm-umc.org/wats1stumc/sermon0820.html>.

<sup>xiii</sup> By Ellen Peach @Sent by Mary Sutherland. RichardWimer@xc.org @Wit & Wisdom.

<sup>xiv</sup> Charles Colson's Breakpoint. Cited in MONDAY FODDER, <http://family-safe-mail.com/>.





## John 17.6-19

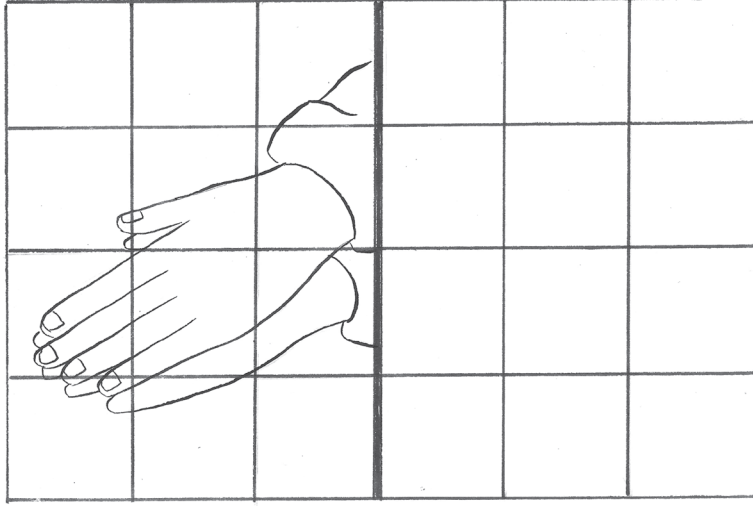
Jesus prays for his special friends, the disciples, to be protected when he goes back to heaven.



We often think about prayer in a particular way. Colour this picture and use it as your own way of praying. Write or draw onto the hands some ways of praying and reasons why we pray.

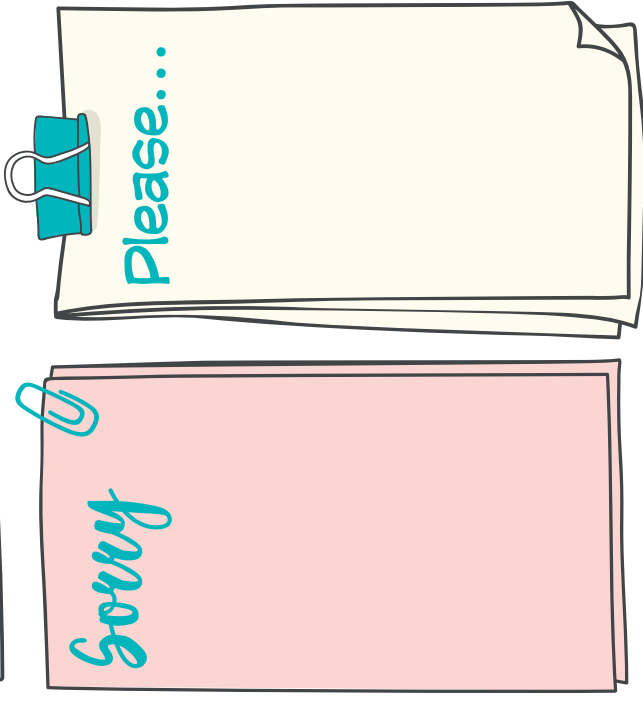
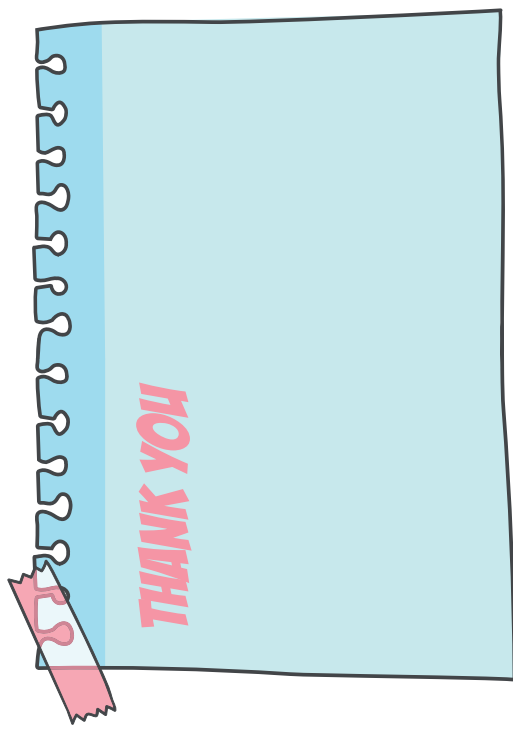
## ???.???.? Puzzle

Copy the picture of someone praying, using the drawing grid.



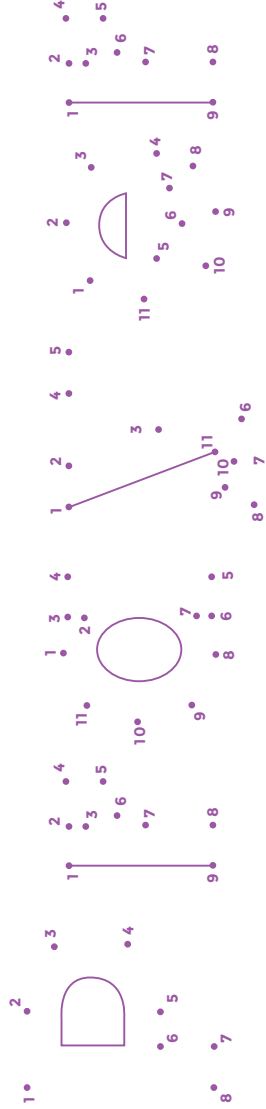
## Jesus Loves to Write

Write your own prayers to God; saying thank you, sorry and please.



## Dot Draw!

Follow the dots to reveal the word, then colour it in.



## The potential of prayer

 **John 17.6-19**

Jesus prays at length, talking with his father (God) about how he has been revealed to his disciples. He prays earnestly for them, asking God to keep them united and set them apart (holy, sanctified). He particularly asks God to keep them safe from the evil one, while they remain in the world.

Now read **John 17.6-19** see p.2 for text.

### A note on the passage

These are some of the last words of Jesus before his crucifixion, demonstrating how prayer is an ongoing conversation with God. Jesus knows the problems his disciples will face once he is no longer with them. There is a sense of comfort that Jesus is also praying the same for us.



**Ask yourself:** How does prayer help you in uncertain times?

## Daily Prayer

Jesus' prayer in John 17 has echoes of the Lord's Prayer. Try praying the Lord's Prayer at the beginning of each day...but with a twist. Use a different Bible version of the prayer each day (you can find them on [www.biblegateway.com/](http://www.biblegateway.com/)) and look up Matthew 6.9-13.

How does using less familiar words change the way you think about the prayer and/or respond to God?

## DANCE

The song 'Safe in the Father's hands' by Paul Field reflects the request by Jesus for us to be kept safe. The words can be found in some hymnbooks or here: [www.elevationkids.com/song/safe-in-the-fathers-hands](http://www.elevationkids.com/song/safe-in-the-fathers-hands).

Whether or not you know the tune (which you can find on YouTube), make up a dance or a mime – or even your own tune! – either on your own or as a household, and use it as an opportunity to celebrate that Jesus' prayer is just as much for us now as it was for his disciples then.



## FIND OUT

Research a country where Christians are persecuted for their faith. You could start with the World Watch list, which lists the most dangerous places to be a Christian – see [www.opendoorsuk.org](http://www.opendoorsuk.org). On that website you also find a variety of resources and ideas for prayer and action, including how to contact your MP to advocate for those who are suffering for their faith.

## WALK

This week, pray with your feet. Choose a safe part of your community and... just go for a walk. Allow what you see and experience to influence your prayers – e.g. passing a food shop might remind you of Fairtrade or a local food bank; graffiti might stimulate prayer about the need to have a voice. If you cannot walk safely, try to visualise a walk as you 'walk your fingers' over a map of your local area.

## BAKE

Make shield-shaped biscuits. Every time you eat one, or give one to someone else, give thanks for God's protection.

**You will need:** access to an oven; 50g caster sugar, 50g butter, 100g self-raising flour, 25ml milk, a drop of vanilla essence, a shield-shaped cookie cutter (or make your own shield template) and a knife, a rolling pin, a baking tray, icing sugar (optional).

- Preheat your oven to 190C/370F/Gas 5.
- Sieve the flour into a bowl; add the butter and rub with your fingers until the mixture is like breadcrumbs. Add the sugar and rub again. Add the milk and the vanilla essence. Knead together with your hands to make a firm dough.
- Roll out the dough on a floured surface to about 10mm thick. Cut out shield shapes. Spread the shapes out on a lightly greased baking tray.
- Cook for about 15 minutes – until golden brown.
- When they are ready, remove from the oven and allow to cool. (optional) Decorate with a dusting of icing sugar.



Choose a version of the passage to read. The first is the ROOTS version for children, the second is the NRSV text which may be suitable for older children, young people and adults.

**J**esus looked up to heaven and prayed, 'Father, I have made your name known to my friends. They were always yours. You gave them to me, and I have been glorified in them. Everything I have has come from you, and they believe that you sent me. I have protected them, I have guarded them, but now I am leaving and coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name.

'I have told them many things so they would be filled with my joy. Holy Father, protect them in your name. I have given them your word, and the world hates them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. Holy Father, protect them in your name.

'I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. Holy Father, protect them in your name.'



'As you sent me into the world, so I send them into the world. Make them holy by your truth. Holy Father, protect them in your name.'

John 17.6-19

## Did you know?

- To glorify means to praise or honour greatly.
- The evil one means Satan or the devil, a personification of evil.

## John 17.6-19 (NRSV)

Jesus said, 'I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them in your

name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves. I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.'

# They'll Know We Are Christians By Our Love

Words and Music by  
Peter Scholtes

♩ = 56

## VERSE

Fm Eb/F Fm Eb/F Fm Eb/F Fm Eb/F



1. We are one in the Spir - it, we are one in the  
2. We will walk with each oth - er, we will walk hand in  
3. We will work with each oth - er, we will work side by  
4. All — praise to the Fa - ther, from — whom all things

4 Fm Bbm Eb<sup>7</sup>/Bb Fm Eb/F



Lord; We are one in the Spir - it, we are one in the  
hand; We will walk with each oth - er, we will walk hand in  
side; We will work with each oth - er, we will work side by  
come; And all praise to Christ Je - sus, His — on - ly —

8 Fm Bbm Eb<sup>7</sup>/Bb Fm Eb/F



Lord. And we pray that all u - ni - ty may one day be re -  
hand. And to - geth - er we'll spread the news that God is in our  
side. And we'll guard each man's dig - ni - ty and save — each man's  
Son. And all praise to the Spir - it, who — makes — us —

## CHORUS

12 Fm Db Fm



-stored. And they'll know we are Chris - tians by our love, by our  
land.  
pride.  
one.

16 Bbm Fm Bbm Eb<sup>7</sup>/Bb Fm



love, yes they'll know — we are Chris - tians by our love. \_\_\_\_\_

# One more step along the world I go

Introduction: bars 5-8

Words: Sydney Carter (1915–2004)

Music: Sydney Carter (1915–2004)  
arranged Lionel Dakers (1924–2003)

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of three systems of vocal melody and piano accompaniment. The piano part includes chord symbols: G, D, D7, G, C, G, D, D7, G, D, G, C, G. Red asterisks mark the end of the introduction (bars 5-8) and the end of the main body of the song (bars 12-13).

1. One more step a - long the world I go, one more step a - long the world I go;  
 2. Round the cor - ners of the world I turn, more and more a - bout the world I learn;  
 3. As I tra - vel through the bad and good, keep me tra - vel - ling the way I should;

5 from the old things to the new, keep me tra - vel - ling a - long with you:  
 all the new things that I see you'll be look - ing at a - long with me.  
 where I see no way to go you'll be tell - ing me the way, I know:

9 And it's from the old I tra - vel to the new; keep me tra - vel - ling a - long with you.

4. Give me courage when the world is rough,  
 keep me loving though the world is tough;  
 leap and sing in all I do,  
 keep me travelling along with you:  
 And it's from the old I travel to the new;  
 keep me travelling along with you.

5. You are older than the world can be,  
 you are younger than the life in me;  
 ever old and ever new,  
 keep me travelling along with you.  
 And it's from the old I travel to the new;  
 keep me travelling along with you.