



### Prayers & Readings for this week

- Please pray that the times of Private Prayer and reflection on Wednesday mornings at our Brooklands church premises will continue to prove helpful - bringing uplifting changes in mind and heart for many, near and far.
- Help us to use all our senses to discover the good things you are doing in our homes, communities, and nation today.
- We pray that in quietness and calm we will see revealed the Sovereign Lord amongst us in this week that lies ahead.
- Lord help *me* to be kind to *all* I meet today, proclaiming Christ in all I do and say. Amen.

Monday	Reading Acts 8:9–40 Pray for Grant & Crys Pettitt
Tuesday	Reading Acts 9:1–22 Pray for Fay Powell
Wednesday	Reading Acts 9:23–10:8 Pray for Matthew, Charlotte and Joshua Purves
Thursday	Reading Acts 10:9–33 Pray for Adriana, Philip, David, Joseph, Pete & Rebecca Richmond
Friday	Reading Acts 10:34–48 Pray for Mark, Rebecca, Charlie & Laney Rotheram
Saturday	Reading: Catch up Pray for Nick, Ada and Joshua Savu & family
Sunday 12 <sup>th</sup> July	Reading Acts 11:1–12:5 Pray for Dean, Simona & Mia Stanfield

On the first Sunday of the month we celebrate communion. If, following the morning message, you would like to join us in 'the breaking of bread', please have some bread and fruit juice prepared. The Lord's Supper is one of two sacraments we have in our church (the other being baptism). They are part and parcel of regular times of celebration each year. Both are focused upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is also the important discipline we call 'prayer', and last week for the first time for almost four months, we had an organised time of prayer in our church building. Okay, it was different for we met 'socially distanced' in the sanctuary for private reflection and prayer. The chairs were sanitised and spaced out to help keep people safer. We often associate prayer with audibly praying together with others, listening to one another's prayers and responding with an 'Amen'. However, private, silent prayer has always had a great part to play in the Church. While Jesus taught us a model prayer we might say - known to many as *the Lord's Prayer* - he also spoke highly of the individual who goes into a closet, closes the door and prays to the Father in secret. To pray privately and reflectively is a valued Christian discipline.

This Wednesday morning at 10:30 am the church will once again be open for private prayer and reflection. We want to assure you of a safe environment in which to pray. Before any work for the Lord is done, there must be prayer! Let us use this powerful resource of the church. Stewards will be available to direct and help you during this hour set aside for prayer. Feel free to drop in for ten minutes or so. Hand sanitising gel will be provided, and we advise bringing a face covering or mask.

We all miss being involved in what 'normal' church looked like and we thank you for your patience in these trying times. Our thoughts and prayers are for one another and especially those living on their own. We obviously want to pray for our nation in this continued time of extraordinary challenge, for those living in fear of losing their job and those frantically looking for employment just now. We remember too John B & Jon F receiving treatment for cancer. We remember Margaret G who is now home from hospital and needing insulin injections.

Pray that our College in Didsbury gets a good number of new students for the coming semester in September. Pray for David R who has registered to start his studies there. **Grace and peace to ALL!**



**Readings:** Gen 22: 1-8, Ps 145: 8-14, Matthew 11: 25-30 - **Message:** 'Service'

'Service' – is one of the words which we use to describe a church gathering. It is a **meaning-packed** word. It contains so much of significance from the scriptures; it is a Christian word through and through. It is a word that describes the actions of a follower of Jesus.

In many ways, it sums up the kind of life Jesus lived. On one occasion Jesus exclaimed these words: "... *the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*" (Matt 20: 28)

Let's take a closer look at this raft of rich meaning embedded in the word **service** that runs through the whole bible. Firstly, from a classic passage about the Patriarch Abraham himself, we find that...

### 1. God served Abraham and Humanity

The significance found in Genesis 22 extends to the whole world. There is a decisive part of the story of Abraham's journey where God seemed to ask a lot of his servant. We read: '*Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about."*' (Genesis 22:2)

It is at the eleventh hour that God steps in, stops Abraham in *his act of sheer obedience* and **provides** another way. What is happening here is that God steps up and does something that should take our breath away. This act holds eternal significance on the grand scale. Because, instead of Isaac, **God provided a ram** for the burnt offering. It may have appeared co-incidental that the animal's horns got caught in a thicket nearby - but think again.

First, the location was not far geographically from the place where Jesus died for us. It was Mount Moriah. It was the Temple Mount – the place where Solomon's Temple was built (and the same site where the Islamic 'Dome of the Rock' stands today). But listen to this from Gen 22:

**'So Abraham called that place "The LORD Will Provide". And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided."**' (Genesis 22:14)

This is the Lord **'Serving' us!** The whole world in fact - and at the very place where Jesus died; and the place where, at Pentecost, all nations were blessed. Listen to God's Promise from Gen 12: "*I will make you into a great nation... I will*

*bless you... and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you*"! There is a **servant heart** in one of God's Names – **Jehovah-jireh, The Lord Will Provide!**

### 2. Jesus served his disciples and us

This is so true of that occasion when **Jesus organized** the Last Supper for his disciples. It was **Jesus** who had **arranged** the room for them to celebrate the Passover. According to the gospels, **Jesus** had **arranged** for a room '*laid out and ready*' for this special celebration; all the disciples had to do was to see to the final preparations.

It was there at the allotted time that **Jesus hosted** this meal that we emulate in the simplest of ways in communion this morning. Allow me to point out that the Lord's Supper was Jesus **SERVING** his disciples - and now *us*, of course, today.

Jesus is the **'servant King'**. This phrase carries a rich and authentic prophetic proclamation. Let me say it again; this is Jesus **serving** us. **He serves us still!** The Lord continues daily to **'provide'** for us. It is his nature; it is his promise; it is his way; it is his Name, **Jehovah-jireh!** When we gather for **a church 'Service'** (face-to-face, or online) **it is for the Lord we gather.**

This special phrase is so apt for today – '*The Lord will provide.*' And if we need to hear the application and the outworking of all that this means..., then here it is:

### 3. We serve one-another and our neighbourhood

We sometimes struggle to square the circle; we are tempted to think *I can't do this*. Sometimes a church thinks – we don't have what it takes...

Can I just repeat this powerful spiritual lesson directed to you this day - **'The Lord will provide'**. And can I just add the rest of that verse, which comes to us in the form of a promise - **"On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided."**

This is none other than the place where Jesus Christ gave his life for us. It was close to this place that Abraham was asked if he would willingly give up his only son... As we look back, we remember that **it was God who gave up His Son for us all!** It is God who still serves us all.

We come together in a moment to be part of this **'service'** – this serving one another and our neighbourhood. All of this is encapsulated in the breaking of bread among us.

As we come to communion, we think of those resplendent words of invitation from Jesus in Matthew chapter 11, **'Come to me...'**! He beckons us and as we accept his offer, we sit and **dine at his table.**