

## Worship at Home - Sunday 23 October 2022 – Ordinary 30

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use at home. We invite you to spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people across the Methodist Connexion are sharing this act of worship with you.

### Opening Prayer

God our Saviour, the hope of all, to the ends of the earth and across the farthest seas, mountain-maker, storm-stiller, peace-bringer: the whole earth is filled with awe at your wonders. From morning's dawn to evening's fading, you bring joy. Awesome and righteous One, we bring you our praise.

(From Psalm 65)

### Hymn: StF 83 Praise, my soul, the King of heaven

Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it here

[\(17\) Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven \(Tune: Lauda Anima - 4vv\) \[with lyrics for congregations\] - YouTube](#)

Praise, my soul, the King of heaven;  
to his feet thy tribute bring.  
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,  
who like thee his praise should sing?  
Praise him! Praise him!  
Praise the everlasting King!

Praise him for his grace and favour  
to his people in distress;  
praise him, still the same for ever,  
slow to chide, and swift to bless.  
Praise him! Praise him!  
Glorious in his faithfulness.

Father-like, he tends and spares us;  
well our feeble frame he knows;  
in his hands he gently bears us,

rescues us from all our foes.  
Praise him! Praise him!  
Widely as his mercy flows.

Angels in the height, adore him;  
ye behold him face to face;  
sun and moon, bow down before him,  
dwellers all in time and space.  
Praise him! Praise him!  
Praise with us the God of grace!

*Henry Francis Lyte (1793-1847)*

### Let us pray together

God, present in all creation, **we adore you.**  
God, present in each person, **we honour you.**  
God, present in each moment, **we bless you.**

God, among us in Jesus, **we behold you.**  
God, within us by your Spirit, **we welcome you.**  
God, here with us now, **we worship you. Amen.**

### Today's Gospel Reading: Luke 18:9-14

### Time to Reflect

In a certain school, whenever a pupil survey was conducted, one complaint came up every time. Those students, the majority in reality, who were largely well-behaved, attentive and hard-working, would complain about the amount of time and attention given to dealing with those they called "the naughties": the disruptive, disinterested and disinclined students who did, in reality, seem to take up a large amount of classroom and pastoral time.

It was a fair point, but the school had a policy of accepting a range of children with a diversity of needs and abilities, and this was one of the side effects of being inclusive. The school also extended a measure of grace to those who broke the rules, which some saw as weakness, and others saw as grace. The tensions never were really resolved, though a large number of students turned themselves around by the time they left, which hopefully indicated that something was working for many of them.

The assessments people made of the school system sometimes depended on where they saw themselves on the naughty or nice spectrum, and that, in turn, depended on the realism of their self-assessment. Nor did everyone find it within themselves to celebrate the turn-around of others or to play their part in trying to help that turnaround to happen.

In our Gospel reading today, we see Jesus surrounded, as usual, with people the nice ones would classify as “the naughties”, and the “nice ones” themselves. ‘Pharisee’ and ‘Tax-collector’ are the categories they use to label themselves and others, and Jesus uses their own terms to bring them together.

For their difference, it seems, is only superficial and Jesus came for them both. The tax-collector knows he is not right, and hides behind his shame. The Pharisee believes he is right and hides behind his actions. Both need Jesus to release them from their common belief that their performance defines them before God, Both need Jesus to induct them into God’s kingdom of grace and mercy, where freedom is to be found.

In fact, Jesus leads us to recognise that both groups, are sinners in the Biblical sense, not because of the morality or otherwise of their actions, but because their view on life skewed their perspective, causing them to miss the mark of God’s intention. Both were missing the point. Both were focussing on the wrong things. Jesus came to bring both to full aliveness.

Depending on where we see ourselves in this story, we may be mystified that God would seek **us** out and welcome us home, but that is grace. We may be mystified that God would

seek out and welcome some other people. That, too, is grace.

We can choose to rejoice in God’s generous, gracious, merciful patience or not. What is certain is that, with or without our approval, God will go on, in Christ, seeking and saving the both the “nice” and the “naughty”.

Take a time to sit quietly

### **A time of prayer**

God of all life, you call us to give ourselves to you – all that we are, all that we have. Take what we offer of ourselves today, **and use it for your glory.**

As we answer your call to fight for justice, peace and integrity within ourselves and within our world, using the courage and tenacity we see in Jesus, take what we offer of ourselves today, **and use it for your glory.**

As we run the race you lay out before us, fulfilling the tasks we are given, using the strength we are granted as we strain to complete your work, take what we offer of ourselves today, **and use it for your glory.**

As you offer us the prize of your approval and life, through our victories and our disasters, in our joy and our struggles, take what we offer of ourselves today, **and use it for your glory.**

God of all life, work your purpose for creation into the hearts, minds and imaginations of all you people, those who consciously seek you, and those who do not, and day by day, take what we offer of ourselves today, **and use it for your glory.**

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **The Lord’s Prayer**

*Our Father .....*

**Hymn: Listen to Come all ye vagabonds ([17](#))  
[Come All Ye Vagabonds \(Lyrics video\) - Stuart Townend - YouTube](#) or sing a verse of a hymn that comes to mind**

### **A prayer of blessing**

May God, who cares for all alike, protect you;  
may Christ, who seeks and saves all alike, hold you;  
may the Holy Spirit, who is guide to all, lead you into peace and wholeness:  
And may the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with you now and until Time's end. Amen

Original Materials by Revd. Dave Bonny,  
East Staffordshire and South Derbyshire Circuit

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Local Churches please insert CCLI No here

We are grateful to all the Ministers and Local Preachers from around the Connexion who have contributed to Worship at Home. This resource is administrated by Ministries: Vocations and Worship in the Connexional Team and will end at the end of 2022.

For more worship resources see

[The Bible \(methodist.org.uk\)](http://methodist.org.uk)

[Singing the Faith Plus \(methodist.org.uk\)](http://methodist.org.uk)

**Luke 18:9-14:** He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt: 'Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax-collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, was praying thus, "God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax-collector. I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income." But the tax-collector, standing far off, would not even look up to heaven, but was beating his breast and saying, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" I tell you, this man went down to his home justified rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted.'