



Ripon & Lower Dales Methodist Circuit
With God in the City, Towns, Villages and rural areas

Week beginning 27th August 2023

Worship 'holiday at home' service

Summertime Praise

Welcome to the special summertime praise, holiday at home worship service. Using this time, space and our imaginations, let's come to God within the beauty of creation.

Imagine being by the coast, feel the refreshing breeze and listen to the sound of the ocean waves lapping the sand of the beach.

Imagine relaxing within the glorious greenery of the countryside and feeling the gentle breeze blowing through the trees.

Imagine the warm bright sunshine rising in the early morning inviting you to marvel at all you see as the rays of light awaken the earth.

Imagine the striking sunset with all its hues of pinks, oranges, reds and blues. Imagine the evening starlit sky, with the moon reflecting the sun now hidden from sight.

Let us pray... *Most loving God, thank you for the beauty of creation and for the joys of life which remind us of your goodness, mercy and love. Help us to pause awhile with you Lord, not rushing away but seeking our rest and recuperation in you. Aid us to open our hearts to receive the joy and peace you give. By your grace enable us to offer praise to bless your holy name. Amen.*

StF n°33

O Lord we are always in your presence.
In you we live and move and have our being.
You hold us in the palm of your hand
and you lead us to your glory.

*Phillip Jakob
Words and Music © 1999, Phillip Jakob*

In a moment of quiet, let us confess all that gets in the way of us living fully within the life-giving love of God.

...Lord Jesus, you revealed God's love for all people and made a way for salvation through your victory over sin and death upon the cross. We turn to you, trusting in your mercy to hear our confession spoken from repented hearts. By your grace, may we hear you speak forgiveness into our life as we long to deepen our relationship with you. Amen.

StF n°353

Jesus is Lord! Creation's voice proclaims it, for by his power each tree and flower was planned and made.

Jesus is Lord! The universe declares it; sun, moon and stars in heaven cry: Jesus is Lord!

Jesus is Lord! Jesus is Lord!

Praise him with alleluias, for Jesus is Lord!

Jesus is Lord! Yet from his throne eternal in flesh he came to die in pain on Calvary's tree, Jesus is Lord! From him all life proceeding – yet gave his life a ransom, thus setting us free. *[chorus]*

Jesus is Lord! O'er sin the mighty conqueror, from death he rose; and all his foes shall own his name.

Jesus is Lord! God sends his Holy Spirit to show by works of power that Jesus is Lord. *[chorus]*

Mark 2:23-28 The Message

²³⁻²⁴ One Sabbath day he was walking through a field of ripe grain. As his disciples made a path, they pulled off heads of grain. The Pharisees told on them to Jesus: "Look, your disciples are breaking Sabbath rules!"

²⁵⁻²⁸ Jesus said, "Really? Haven't you ever read what David did when he was hungry, along with those who were with him? How he entered the sanctuary and ate fresh bread off the altar, with the Chief Priest Abiathar right there watching—holy bread that no one but priests were allowed to eat—and handed it out to his companions?" Then Jesus said, "The Sabbath was made to serve us; we weren't made to serve the Sabbath. The Son of Man is no yes-man to the Sabbath. He's in charge!"

Pause for thought...

Holidays are a good time to pause and ponder things of life. I wonder, have you ever considered the origins of holidays, and when they became a thing? It might not surprise you that the word comes from holy days. It also may not surprise you that the earliest records of holidays that resemble those similar to what we know today, were for the wealthy. Holiday leave for workers, the common folk, didn't become a legal entitlement until the twentieth century. The Lancashire cotton workers were at the forefront of setting off a trend of holidays at the seaside. History reveals that pilgrimages were the forerunners of holidays, and the Romans would travel for years at a time. Admittedly this isn't a in depth historical account of holidays, but in this glaze we see how understandings and experiences have changed, which is hardly surprising.

How many Christians understand and experience the Sabbath is somewhat different to how the Sabbath was observed during the time of Jesus. In our reading it is clear that the Pharisees had also lost their way in understanding what the Sabbath was all about, misplacing the purpose of the Sabbath. Jesus is very clear in stating that the Sabbath was made to serve us. That the Sabbath was made for us and not the other way round.

What does the Sabbath mean to you? Society has perhaps changed in how it holds the Sabbath. A twenty-four seven, open all hour's consumerism and productivity, with cities that never sleep, would indicate that Sabbath days are not a high societal priority.

So no longer is Sunday, which became for the Western Christian, the Sabbath, a day of rest observed by society. But let's not get tied up in knots, rather, let's remember Jesus' teaching, that the Sabbath was made to serve us. Therefore, how might the Sabbath serve us? How do we ensure the Sabbath is held, whilst remaining true to its purpose? One answer is to recognise God is beyond time whilst being present in real time. But what day is it in heaven? Answer, a happy one. Days of the week provide measure and rhythm to our lives. Including the Sabbath on any of the seven days means it becomes possible for all people to be blessed by the Sabbath. For many workers, such as doctors and nurses, not working on a Sunday just isn't possible, sick people don't stop requiring care

because it's a Sunday. This is just one example from the care sector, we could add many more people to the list of Sunday workers. So the day is less important than the Sabbath, and the Sabbath is not to be served, but is to serve. Sabbath then, what does it mean to you? How do you allow the Sabbath to serve you?

The main point of a Sabbath day is to abstain from work, yet stringent rules run the risk of making people become servants of it. Therefore how do we enter into observing a day of rest well. Today leisure pursuits play a big part of life, mottos such as 'work to live, don't live to work' are not unfamiliar as people's priorities recognise the value of 'quality time with loved ones' and 'me time'. I am not criticizing this, pressures in life and work, burnout and other such related impacts of overworking are a real thing. This is the point of a Sabbath, a day to ensure we do have time to stop, to rest and recuperate.

God who made us, who knows us and who loves us, also cares about us. God calls us to rest but not without God, but within God's loving embrace. Of course God is with us everyday and we can turn to God at any time. I would suggest that just as we seek quality time with loved ones, that if we love God, we seek God within such times also. "Keep the Sabbath holy"

If we worship God out of a sense of duty, then something as gone wrong. Duty is about obligation, it's a job and its not freedom. Neither does duty speak of a loving relationship which we enter into freely and how we love freely. We do have freedom in and through Jesus Christ, who sets us free from sin and death. We do have freedom that welcomes us into a loving relationship with God. Therefore in our freedom do we welcome God into our holiday time, into our rest 'Sabbath' days. Do we welcome God into our leisure pursuits, our time with family and friends? God isn't just for some-days or just Sundays but for all days. I wonder, how, when and where you might next meet with God? Whenever, wherever and however do you do, what amazing day it will be because of God's transforming grace and love. Amen.

Relax with God.



Build upon the rock



StF n°471

Lord, I come to you,

let my heart be changed, renewed,
flowing from the grace
that I found in you.

And Lord, I've come to know
the weaknesses I see in me
will be stripped away
by the power of your love.

*Hold me close,
let your love surround me;
bring me near, draw me to your side.
And as I wait,
I'll rise up like the eagle,
and I will soar with you,
your Spirit leads me on
in the power of your love.*

Lord, unveil my eyes,
let me see you face to face,
the knowledge of your love
as you live in me.

Lord, renew my mind,
as your will unfolds in my life
in living every day
by the power of your love.

Geoff Bullock (b. 1956)
Words and Music © 1992 Word Music

Postcard Prayers

I wonder if you ever sent a post card from your holiday to those back home. I remember the postcards with comical messages such as 'the weather is here; I wish you were lovely'. I'm not sure these comical postcards stood the test of time, but some postcards have, usually with a picturesque view upon them.

Sending a postcard took more time and effort than sending a text message. A postcard was a means of showing those back home you were thinking of them, they conveyed something of love.

I invite you to write, metaphorically in your mind or on a bit of paper, postcard prayers for others. There is limited space on the back of a postcard, so consider what prayer messages of love you would want to pray.

Let us pray for...

*those we know and love,
our neighbours and our community,
the world and those in need.*

Merciful God, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Space to sit and be with God.

Imagine yourself sat with Jesus in one of your favourite places, perhaps on a beach or besides the babbling brook of a river. Sit awhile calmly enjoying the view, the sounds and the scents together.

What might you talk with Jesus about?
What might Jesus be wanting you to know?

Psalm 23: 1 – 3

The Lord is my shepherd,

I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures;

he leads me beside still waters;

he restores my soul.

He leads me in right paths

for his name's sake.

StF n°530

To be in your presence,

to sit at your feet,

where your love surrounds me,

and makes me complete:

*This is my desire, O Lord,
this is my desire.*

*This is my desire, O Lord,
this is my desire.*

To rest in your presence,

not rushing away,

to cherish each moment –

here I would stay.

Holiday treats...and thanksgiving

*Holidays often include having special treats
and yet each day we have so many things
that we can give thanks to God for in our life.*

*Looking around your home, notice the people
in the photographs; notice those things which
you appreciate because they make life better.*

***For all the wonderful memories we cherish
and for all the daily blessings we enjoy,
thanks to God. Amen.***

StF n°774

The peace of the earth be with you,
the peace of the heavens too;
the peace of the rivers be with you,
the peace of the oceans too.
Deep peace falling over you.
God's peace, God's peace growing in you.

Guatemalan text
translated by Christine Carson (b. 1965)

I hope you have enjoyed this special
summertime praise, holiday at home worship
service. Thank you for sharing in this act of
worship.

A blessing.

May you know the peace and love of God in
each moment of every day.

May you know the deep joy of God with us in
work, rest and play.

And the blessing of God, the Father, the Son
and the Holy Spirit remain with you and those
you love, now and always. Amen.