

A Devotion for the week to 17th of Jan. 2021

This service is written for Stretton Park and McDonald Wing in Maffra, Laurina Lodge in Heyfield and Royal Freemason's in Sale. It is also made available for those who are interested, for their private use.

INTRODUCTION : In this time may we remember that God is all around us, that He loves us and that He wishes to speak to us and have us listen.

HYMN No. 26 - I need thee every hour

You can read the words to yourself, or out loud. If you remember the tune well enough you can sing it yourself. You can, of course sing just the first, or the first and last verses.

From Psalm 139: Lord, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit down and when I rise. You know my thoughts from far away. You are familiar with all my ways. Where could I go from your spirit? How could I flee your presence? Even if I settled on the far side of the sea, your hand would guide me. How precious are your thoughts to me, O God. Search me and know my heart and my anxious thoughts. See if there is any wrong in me and lead me in the everlasting way.

PRAYER

Lord God, you know us through and through. You know our every action and our every thought. We know that not everything we do is always what you would want. Help us, O Lord we pray, to be better people. Help us to be patient towards others, even towards those people who are difficult. Help us to be good company towards others and listen to their stories, not just tell our own. Help us to do what we can to make life better for those we see, and to help or comfort them as we are able. May our concern for others be a reflection, in a small way of you care and concern for us. Your love for us is wider than the seas. However far we go, wherever we may be, you are there with us. We thank you for your presence, never failing, in the good times and the bad, ever loving and forgiving. Help us to relax in the knowledge of your care. Thank you, God for being with us. Amen

HYMN No. 18 - Trust and obey

BIBLE READING - First Samuel 3 : 1 - 10

REFLECTION

The story of the call of Samuel will probably be familiar to you. Samuel had been dedicated to a life of service to God when he was a child. Samuel lived with Eli, an elderly priest, in the temple in Jerusalem. This was back before David was king of Israel. Samuel was sleeping in the Temple at night, where he should be. A voice woke him up, calling his name, so he went to Eli the priest and asked Eli what he wanted. Eli told Samuel that he had not called him. After this happened three times, Eli realised that it was God who was calling to Samuel, and told him so. Next time when Samuel heard his name called, he replied: 'speak Lord, your servant is listening'. As a result of that, Samuel was able to listen to God and became a very important person in Israel at that time.

This reading tells us, without actually saying so, that God's call to us can be unexpected. These days we probably expect to hear God's call even less than Samuel and Eli did, way back then. It can be just as confusing now as it was then. These days there would be people who would want to know why we were hearing strange voices in our heads. But, are strange voices the only way that God can call us? I think God would call us in the way we were most likely to respond to.

I think that these days God generally calls to people through the Bible. Some times we read or hear a passage of the Bible and it just jumps out at us. It suddenly seems really important. I think that is God speaking to us. Sometimes we might look up something in the Bible and realise that it has a different meaning to what we had always thought. I think that can be God speaking to us as well.

Sometimes other people can help us see what God is trying to say to us. Other Christians, priests, ministers or just good friends can help us see what it is that God wants us to do. Sometimes, it might be our turn to offer help to someone needing direction. Or sometimes, like the Eli, the old priest in the Bible reading, it may our job to help someone else to get in contact with God to find direction themselves. In every case, God can call, but nothing can happen unless we listen.

HYMN No. 24 - Lead, kindly light

PRAYER

Lord God, today we pray for all who are uncertain of what God is saying to them. We also pray for those who just don't know what to do. For those who have lost their way and for those who are confused. May they find somebody who can be like the old priest Eli for them, to help them to see what to do next. We pray for Christians and for those of other faiths all around the world, help them to know what it is that God really wants them to do.

We pray for all who are sick and for those who care for them. We pray for comfort for those who mourn the loss of a loved one, whether the loss was recent or long ago. We pray for our friends and our families, for their health and for their well-being.

And we pray:

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, For ever and ever, AMEN

HYMN No 13 - The king of love my shepherd is

The BLESSING

Guide us, O Lord, in all that we do, and

May the blessing of the almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit

be upon you and remain with you always, Amen