



Just because we cannot all worship together in our church building does not mean we cannot worship.

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use at home.
There are links to 'YouTube' for each of the hymns (**Press Ctrl/click to open them**)

Call to Worship

Let us come together to be still,
to be known, loved,
and held by God our creator,
to be thankful for all that God gives us,
to be healed and restored,
that in our worship today
joy and gladness may refresh and renew us.

Setting the Scene

Today we will explore our place in Jesus' community, using a passage from Mark where 2 disciples ask for special positions and recognition in Jesus' community. Jesus teaches that 'position' is not important in God's kingdom but serving others.

Opening Hymn – StF 372

But first a hymn which asks God to come and fill our hearts with His love and passion as we meet with him in this act of worship.

Come down, O Love divine,
Seek thou this soul of mine,
And visit it with thine own ardour glowing;
O comforter, draw near,
Within my heart appear,
And kindle it, thy holy flame bestowing.

O let it freely burn,
'Till earthly passions turn
To dust and ashes, in its heat consuming;
And let thy glorious light
Shine ever on my sight,
And clothe me round, the while my path illuming.

Let holy charity
Mine outward vesture be,
And lowliness become mine inner clothing;
True lowliness of heart,
Which takes the humbler part,
And o'er its own shortcomings
weeps with loathing.

And so the yearning strong,
With which the soul will long,
Shall far outpass the power of human telling;
For none can guess its grace,
Till he become the place
Wherein the Holy Spirit makes his dwelling

Bianco da Siena (died 1434)
<https://youtu.be/edK3Vv7Qwo4>

Prayers

God of community,
you look down from heaven
on your children on earth,
and are overcome with love.
Love that reaches out
to touch even the most faraway soul.

God the Father, who made all creation,
and shares all good gifts with us.
We adore you.

God the Son,
just as you walked on earth with your friends,
you are always here with us.
We adore you.

God the Spirit,
though we don't see you,
we know you are deep within our hearts.
You make sense of our place in your world.
We adore you. Amen.

Lord, sometimes we have very set ideas about communities.
The ones we belong to.
The ones we aspire to.
The ones we stay away from.
Help us to see as you do:
you love every member of every community.
We are all one in you.

Forgive us when we look down on others,
or consider our way alone to be the right one.
Help us to work together with you for good,
putting ourselves aside
and others always first. **Amen.**

Assurance of Forgiveness

God sees our hearts
as we turn to him to seek forgiveness.
He doesn't want us to fight for preference
but to grow ever closer to him
through pure and simple love.
As we come to him,
acknowledging that we don't always get it right,
he freely and abundantly pardons us.
Thank you, most gracious God.

Amen.

Reading – Mark 10 vv 35 - 45

The request of James and John

³⁵ Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. 'Teacher,' they said, 'we want you to do for us whatever we ask.'

³⁶ 'What do you want me to do for you?' he asked.

³⁷ They replied, 'Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory.'

³⁸ 'You don't know what you are asking,' Jesus said. 'Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptised with the baptism I am baptised with?'

³⁹ 'We can,' they answered.

Jesus said to them, 'You will drink the cup I drink and be baptised with the baptism I am baptised with, ⁴⁰ but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared.'

⁴¹ When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. ⁴² Jesus called them together and said, 'You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. ⁴³ Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴ and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. ⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'

Our hymn to lead us into my reflection speaks to the heart of this message today as it reminds us that servanthood is at the heart of our faith, personified in the life and ministry of Christ.

Hymn – StF 272

From heaven you came, helpless babe,
entered our world, your glory veiled;
not to be served but to serve,
and give Your life that we might live.

Chorus

*This is our God, the Servant King,
he calls us now to follow Him,
to bring our lives as a daily offering
of worship to the Servant King.*

There in the garden of tears,
my heavy load he chose to bear;
his heart with sorrow was torn,
'Yet not My will but Yours,' He said.

Chorus

*This is our God, the Servant King,
he calls us now to follow Him,
to bring our lives as a daily offering
of worship to the Servant King.*

Come see His hands and His feet,
the scars that speak of sacrifice;
hands that flung stars into space
to cruel nails surrendered.

Chorus

*This is our God, the Servant King,
he calls us now to follow Him,
to bring our lives as a daily offering
of worship to the Servant King.*

So let us learn how to serve,
and in our lives enthrone Him;
each other's needs to prefer,
for it is Christ we're serving.

Chorus

*This is our God, the Servant King,
he calls us now to follow Him,
to bring our lives as a daily offering
of worship to the Servant King.*

Graham Kendrick (born 1950)

<https://youtu.be/E4963QPHAIM>

Reflection – ‘All in this together’

If you had to describe the problem that both these people below have got, I wonder what phrase you might use?



Could I suggest that one phrase that you could use is that both these people **‘have got the wrong end of the stick’** in what they are trying to do? I wonder if there have been times when either our actions or words demonstrate that we have got the wrong end of the stick. Come on, **be honest !!!!**

Well, in our passage today, not for the first time, we have got the disciples of Jesus getting ‘the wrong end of the stick’ about what Jesus is about. On this occasion we have James and John seeking after leadership and status in God’s kingdom. Despite all that Jesus has said and done they ask a question almost as if they hadn’t been listening or watching. They simply fail to grasp just what sort of King Jesus will be.

James and John aspirations are challenged by Jesus whose leadership is all about following; following God and doing what God asks.

Following and leading are connected, but different activities. To follow is to go after, taking your lead from someone else. To lead is to set the direction and expect others to join with you in the task or journey. Both are very important.

Jesus follows the road to Jerusalem, as is asked of him. James and John follow, but they try to do so on their own terms. Are we like James and John, do we do the same? Is it the cost of discipleship that puts us off, or is it something cultural, in a world where independence and being your own person is constantly emphasised? When asked if they can share with Jesus in what he is doing, James and John say yes – but are they really in this together? Similarly, we who follow Jesus and ask God to act for us, how committed are we to hearing and doing what God might be asking of us?

In recent years we have seen all sorts of ecological initiatives in this country which have been introduced to help improve balance and diversity in our natural environment. One of the more high-profile initiatives has been the introduction of beavers back into the UK. Once upon a time they were an indigenous species but were locally extinct as people hunted them for their fur.

Beavers **work as a community**, creating a lodge and dam that provides their family space and shelter. And in felling trees and making dams, they change the landscape, creating new wetland habitats for themselves, and for plants and other animals in the surrounding countryside. They bring new light and space and improve water quality. Of course, not everyone wants their land flooded or trees cut down, so they have their detractors too. It will be interesting to see how the experiment works out in years to come.

Leaving aside those ecological arguments and details, the broad description of beavers

at work might be a helpful analogy for the gathered church.

The church provides a place for a family, a community, to gather and shelter. Church members are called to serve and transform their local neighbourhood, flooding the area with God's unconditional love, bringing the light of Christ into people's lives, and improving the quality of those lives.

The Kingdom of God is not about position or status, it is about setting aside 'self', and in partnership with fellow disciples to use our God-given gifts to help those 'in need' within our society and by so doing helping them to glimpse through us the personality and nature of Christ. So much so, that they want to play their part in working for the establishment of the Kingdom of God here on earth as well as in heaven.

It was Mother Teresa who said, 'Not all of us can do great things, but we can do small things with great love.' When we are challenged to serve a needy world, the task can seem overwhelming. The world is a big place. We may feel useless, helpless, but we can do one thing with great love. And we can start by thinking about the needs of the part of the world where God has placed us. We are all in this together – we need not feel or be on our own in doing so. Among the challenges of our church or other community groups, is there one thing that we might take on?

Are our eyes open to see God in every human being? Dare we pray less for what we want and more to see the world as God sees it? It is challenging seeing people who are different to us – people who have opposing ideas and principles, people we may genuinely fear – as all being God's children just as much as we consider ourselves to be.

Jesus calls us to love and to serve 'all', not just our friends and family. That too can be very challenging, and is why, every day, we should pray (in the words of St Loyola): 'Teach us to give and not to count the cost.'

In Jesus' account of greatness, the normal pattern of the contemporary world is inverted. It is God's 'slave' who reveals what it means to be great.

May our lives be surrendered into God's loving purposes, so that in so doing, we may be led into a greater understanding of what God wants of us and that more and more '**we will get the right end of the stick**' and that as a consequence God's love will be revealed more and more in what we say and do.

Amen

Prayers of Intercession

Christ throughout his ministry, repeatedly reached out to people in need and taking on the nature of a servant sought to heal them whether in body, mind or spirit. Often his first action was to use the power of prayer, as we will do now as we pray not just for people and situations, but to challenge ourselves how we may be able, through word and/or deed to help 'make difference'. So let us pray:-

Lord, we pray for those who have given their lives to serve –
whether on far-off mission fields
or just around the corner,
pouring out love and compassion on those
you have placed in their care and in their lives;
may they know your strength,
especially when they are weary or
overwhelmed.
Be their refuge, O God,
and give them all they need for each day.

Lord, we pray for those who,
in their vocations and workplaces,
are in a position of caring for others in tangible
ways –
looking after the sick and the lonely,
providing housing or advice,

being at the other end of a phone,
transporting those who cannot get around easily.
We thank you for them,
and ask your blessing on them.
May they be provided with the resources to do
their jobs well.
And we pray that those who are in supervisory
positions might have wisdom and awareness of
the needs of those who work for them.

Lord, we pray for each one of us,
that you may lead us in our own service of
others,
reminding us of the deep motivation of Christ's
love, and giving us a heart for your world.
In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

And let us draw all these our prayers together in
the words of the Lord's Prayer in its modern form.

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 for ever.

Amen

Our final hymn reminds us that Jesus chose to
share his good news through people like you
and me. He has shown us the way, and as we
take up his invitation to serve others so he goes
with us.

Hymn – StF 663

I, the Lord of sea and sky,
I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in dark and sin
my hand will save.
I who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?

Chorus

*Here I am, Lord.
Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.*

I, the Lord of snow and rain,
I have borne my people's pain.
I have wept for love of them.
They turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone,
give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my word to them.
Whom shall I send?

Chorus

*Here I am, Lord.
Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.*

I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will tend the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them.
My hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide
till their hearts be satisfied.
I will give my life to them.
Whom shall I send?

Chorus

*Here I am, Lord.
Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart*

(Brief interlude with chorus on 'YouTube')

I will go . . . when you lead me
Father lead me
I will go . . . I will follow endlessly

Chorus

Here I am, Lord.

Is it I, Lord?

I have heard you calling in the night.

I will go, Lord, if you lead me.

I will hold your people in my heart.

Daniel L. Schutte (born 1947)

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<https://youtu.be/4t6mz8yoocY>

A Blessing (with actions)

Lord, take our thoughts - *(touch head)*
and turn them into prayer.- *(hands together)*
Take our prayer and turn it into love. - *(hands over heart)*
Take our love and turn it into life.
In Jesus Christ - *(right index finger touches left wrist; then left index finger touches right wrist)*
today and every day. - *(palms face up in offering)*

Amen.