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## **ORDINARY 21B**

22nd August 2021

A short act of worship for use in peoples homes

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## Call to worship

Gracious God, we are your people, seeking to know you more.

Gracious God, come amongst us, by your Spirit, that we might be transformed by our encounter with you.

Gracious God, may we go from this place, recognising you in every place and every moment.

Amen.<sup>1</sup>

**Hymn: 156 STF – From the breaking of the dawn - [YouTube](#)**

## Opening Prayers

Generous God, we marvel at your extravagance in bestowing blessings on us, and we are in awe of your generosity.

Thank you for the gift of Jesus, who, time and again, demonstrated your propensity for giving.

Forgive us for those times when we have acted selfishly, thinking only of ourselves instead of our fellow humans.

Help us to be a people of extravagant generosity, especially when we find it difficult to do so.

Open our hearts to love and goodness and make us a people of goodwill and kindness, so that all we encounter, will experience something of your love and care for them.

Amen.<sup>2</sup>

## Let us now say the Lord's Prayer

**Readings:** Ephesians 6:10-20 – [Click for the reading](#)

Psalm 84 – [Click for the reading](#)

John 6:56-69 – [Click for the reading](#)

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<sup>1</sup> Call to Worship written by Tim Baker

<sup>2</sup> Opening prayers written by Ramona Samuel

## Reflections on the reading

*[Today's reflection comes from Ashley Cooper, the Principal of Cliff College. [You can watch, download and use Ashley's recording of this sermon here.](#) NB: Ashley's video begins with him reading the Psalm for today].*

Many people believe that the author of today's Psalm (84) was trapped in a place where he couldn't get to God's temple – probably in captivity or separated from the temple because of war. And that's why he wrote, 'my soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the Lord.' 'I wish I could be there!' I wish I could be in God's temple, because that is where God is... You get that sense of pain from this author, as he just says – I want to be there! I want to be in God's presence, but there is a sense here that he can't get there.

I would guess that the journey of the last couple of years for many has been one of distance, one of longing, of yearning and pain; and trying to find our way into the presence of God, our normal routes, our places of worship and encounter have been ripped away from us – and many have struggled to find their way to keep their faith, to hold on.

This Psalm is really a call into the presence of God – setting your sight, and your goal, on reaching him. How have you done that these past months? Have you struggled? Have you found new and creative ways into God's presence? As we move forward, we need to realise that our focus is not on 'where do we go to on a Sunday' (and I recognise that those buildings are helpful and precious to many of us), but ultimately, our focus is 'whose presence do I desire, and yearn for?'

I simply encourage you today to focus on God, and encounter him. When was the last time you rested in God's presence? Trust in him as you push forwards – know that he is your strength. Wait on him, and fall into God's presence. It's worth it!

Amen.<sup>3</sup>

## Prayers of intercession

Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we come to you as the one who created the laws and offered grace in abundance.

Lord, we pray for our Christian brothers and sisters around the world,  
We lift them to you as they seek to follow the commandments of your gospel and great commission,  
May they be strengthened and emboldened for the mission you have called them to,  
Cleanse and mould your church into the likeness of Christ.

*[Pause]*

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<sup>3</sup> Based on the Reflection written by Ashley Cooper

Bring peace and safety to our world, in particular to the places of the world where laws have been leveraged for revenge and gain.  
Open paths of reconciliation and heal the brokenness,  
Repair the war torn cities and countries and make a way for those who have been displaced to find a place to call home again.

We pray for the 65 million plus refugees around the world who are on their journey.  
Lord, whose Son became a refugee and had no place to call his own; look with mercy on those who today are fleeing from danger,  
Bless those who work to bring them relief.

Lord, bring healing and reconciliation to marriages and peace to those who have experienced broken relationships.  
Lord, repair trust and build bridges of communication so love may flow.

*[Pause]*

Lord, teach us to love our neighbour,

In a moment of silence, we think of those who we would consider a neighbour and place them into your hands

*[Pause for a minute]*

Lord, teach us to be quick to forgive and acknowledge our own mistakes.

Above all else, inspire us to live in the likeness of your Son Jesus Christ.

In your mercy, hear our prayer,

Amen.<sup>4</sup>

**Hymn: 404 STF – God’s Spirit is in my heart - [YouTube](#)**

## **Blessing**

Go from this place inspired,  
Go from this place renewed,  
Go from this place with the Spirit of God alongside, within and all around you,  
Go from this place, a child of the Living God.

Amen.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Prayers of intercession written by Matthew Forsyth

<sup>5</sup> Additional prayers by Tim Baker