

# twelvebaskets

*FREE TO DUPLICATE AND DISTRIBUTE*



## ORDINARY 18C

31st July 2022

A short act of worship and daily devotions

A Free resource funded by donations from Individuals, churches and **twelvebaskets**.

If you would like to help fund this resources [click here](#).

For more information <https://theworshipcloud.com/terms/free-weekly-resource>

## Opening Prayers

God of all grace, you have given us so much,  
All we have is gift and this day, as I pray, I celebrate that truth again.

*[Take a moment to write down, draw, or reflect on the things you are grateful for, what you'd like to say 'thank you' to God for today]*

It is good for us to hold onto those little glimpses of thankfulness. We have so much to be grateful for. Let us now take a moment to bring those 'thank you's' to God in prayer now.

Loving God, I am so thankful for all you have given me and all that you are doing in my life. I offer up in prayer all the things I wrote down and thought of, and all the quiet prayers of thanks being offered around the world this day.

Thank you God and, most of all, thank you for loving us.

In the reading from Hosea today, we read about all the ways that the people of Israel were failing God. I too know that I have let you down, Lord God and in a moment of quiet, I bring my prayers of confession to you.

*[In the quiet, think about your regrets, your guilt, your shame. Hand all these things over to the God who loves you just as you are.]*

Even as I confess and repent, I know that you have already forgiven and accepted me, just as I am.

For that, and for all your blessings, I thank and praise you, O Lord our God.

Come Lord Jesus,  
Come Holy Spirit,  
Come and reign in our hearts today.

Amen.<sup>1</sup>

**You may now wish to say the Lord's Prayer in the version or translation with which you are most comfortable.**

### Hymn:

615 STF – Let love be real, in giving and receiving - [YouTube](#)

**Readings:** Hosea 11:1-11 – [Click for reading](#)  
Luke 12:13-21 – [Click for reading](#)

---

<sup>1</sup> Opening prayers written by Tim Baker

## Responding to the readings

How easily distracted are you?

Are you someone who can sit and read a book in a noisy room, where other people are having animated conversations, or are you too tempted to look up and get involved or listen in?

Are you able to walk down a street without getting distracted by a shop that you like the look of, or are you already heading out of your way to 'see what they've got in there'?

Are you able to sit at your desk and crack on with work or do you get distracted as soon as you remember there is a sports game happening that you care about and you just want to 'check the score'?

If you've seen the beautiful Disney Pixar film, *Up*, you might remember the character of Doug: a dog who can (through some translation software) speak English. The human characters in the story get a unique insight into the mind of a dog, including the inherent distraction that comes when a dog spots a squirrel! At random moments, and in the midst of any other thought or conversation, if Doug sense a squirrel nearby, he simply barks 'squirrel' and runs off towards those most-chaseable-of-animals!

What about in your walk of discipleship – does any of this resonate? Are you able to stay focussed on what you are learning about God and God's love for you, or are you liable to get distracted at the drop of a hat? Many of us struggle to remain focussed on what it is that God is calling us to, and to the journey of seeking to follow Jesus. Our world and our society are full of distractions and pastimes that are designed to absorb our time and energy and – in most cases – our money too!

What are the things most likely to distract you?

And what is most likely to help bring you back?

What practices and rhythms work for you to help you return to your walk of discipleship?

Our Old Testament reading picks up on this issue of getting distracted and turning aside from God's desire in our lives. In Hosea, we hear the prophet's lambasting of the people of Israel for all the ways they have failed to follow God's instruction, for all the ways they have rejected Yahweh, even though their God has been faithful to them and freed them from so much oppression. Hosea appears to be reporting an attitude from God that – 'they would deserve to be in real trouble', but because God is gracious and generous, they won't receive the full punishment they deserve. This passage calls to mind one of the lectures in Biblical studies at Sheffield University – Hugh Piper – whose final lecture on the Old Testament used to involve his challenge to students to come up with one word to summarise the whole narrative of the Hebrew Bible. Dr Piper's own entry into the challenge was the word, 'nevertheless'.

Throughout the story of the Old Testament – God's people fail to live up to the standards expected of them, but God loves them nevertheless. Heroes, champions and kings fail in their duty, but God uses them *nevertheless*. There is evil, brutality, violence, sin and a long list of mistakes, *nevertheless*, God's will is done, God's

kingdom comes a little closer... I wonder – to what extent do you agree with Hugh Piper’s assessment of the Old Testament? Perhaps you can see echoes of that in your own life?

To illustrate what this looks like, let’s turn to a real-life example. All We Can – an international development agency working on behalf of the church to help tackle poverty and see people’s potential fulfilled – is committed to working over the long-term. The organisation has pioneered what is called the ‘partnership approach’ or ‘partnership ethos’ as a way of relating to the communities and places where the work is carried out. All We Can doesn’t deliver projects in poor countries to help them tackle poverty. Rather, this work is about getting alongside people, communities and partner organisations so that they can thrive, so that they can come up with their own solutions to the problems they face, so that they can become all that they can. That’s not easy, and it’s not a ‘silver bullet’ approach that ‘fixes’ things overnight. It is lengthy, sometimes much more lengthy than simply delivering a new well or a new school or a new hospital.

However, All We Can remain convinced that is a gospel approach. Jesus’ ministry is relational and incarnational, not transactional. Jesus models a way of getting alongside people, understanding their story and listening to their voices that has often been overlooked when the church has sought to work in some of the places and communities where All We Can is now working, including Zimbabwe, Malawi, India and Uganda. Often, the church – and secular development agencies – have been guilty of assuming that the solutions lie in the west, and that what people need is a ‘quick fix’ – a new project, a new school, a new hospital...whereas All We Can’s work exemplifies a longer, slower, steadier, more sustainable and more loving approach. An approach built on walking together in partnership, over many years.

How can we be counter-cultural when that narrative is the norm? How can we advocate a different way of being which is about community, not self; about long-term, not quick-fix; about relationship, not ego?

Why not find out more about All We Can’s work and how you can support it by visiting their website: [allwecan.org.uk](http://allwecan.org.uk) or looking them up on social media – @allwecanuk<sup>2</sup>

## **Blessing**

Go from this place, to seek justice,  
Go out into the world, to play your part in seeing every person’s potential fulfilled.  
Go out and do all you can to make the world a better place,  
In Jesus’ name.

Amen.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Reflection written by All We Can – if you want to find out more about their work and how you can get involved, visit [allwecan.org.uk](http://allwecan.org.uk) for opportunities to pray with them, volunteer and give.

<sup>3</sup> Additional prayers by Tim Baker

## Prayers and Prayer Pointers for the Week

### Monday 1<sup>st</sup> August

- Gracious God, at the start of this new month, show me how to love without borders or restrictions, how to radically live out your calling on my life and your challenge to all of us to live in the way of love.
- Show me how to be the kind of shepherd who would always go in search of the one most in need, how to reach out to the lost sheep in my life and community.
- Show me how to love as you love, O Christ.

### Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> August

A prayer for refugees from All We Can,  
God creator of all,  
For people who are displaced,  
may they find a safe refuge.

For people who have lost control of their lives,  
may they know a sure foundation.

For people who live in fear,  
may they be given a strong fortress.

For people who are disillusioned,  
may they have hope in a future.

Loving Father, in times of crisis, sorrow and uncertainty  
we ask that you draw near.  
Amen.

### Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> August

- The German theologian Meister Eckhart once said, 'if the only prayer you ever say in your life is "thank you", that will be enough'.
- Today, throughout the day (or whatever is left of the day), simply look for opportunities to pray the words 'thank you' to God.
- Thank you for the sunrise. Thank you for that I have enough food for the day. Thank you for my health, such as it is. Thank you for that lovely conversation with a friend. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.
- Amen.

### Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> August

- Gracious God, I know you have plans for me- plans for me to be a part of your kingdom and an agent of love in the world.
- Today, show me how to respond to the invitations I might receive. Help me to be open to the opportunities to share your love.
- In Jesus' name I pray,
- Amen.

## **Friday 5<sup>th</sup> August**

Be still.

Be still and know that I am God.

Be still for the presence of the Lord is in this place.

Find spaces for stillness today. Be still, with no objective or intention, other than stillness, which is an end in itself.

## **Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> August**

Lord God, you have opened my eyes to the world around me.

Let these eyes not grow weary because of what they see:

war instead of peace,

despair instead of hope,

profit instead of prosperity,

want instead of need,

statistics instead of people,

destruction and pollution instead of nurture and growth.

I know your continual challenge to me: to pursue a life of justice and peace. I know you have provided me the tools to make a difference. Your message has lit a spark within.

Ensure that I will continue to look upon the people of the world as my neighbours

that I will not stay quiet as injustice continues

that I will not let hatred or despair win over love and hope

that I will not let your people become statistics that remove their humanity

that I will not sit by as your world is damaged beyond repair.

I pray that you will keep the fire burning within me. Amen.