

2020 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

“They showed us unusual kindness” (Acts 28:2)

BIBLICAL REFLECTIONS AND PRAYERS FOR EIGHT DAYS

QUESTIONS FOR MEDITATION OR GROUP DISCUSSION

Day 1: Reconciliation

Acts 27:18 – 19:21

Luke 18:9-14

Psalm 85

1. What are some moments in our lives where we felt like Paul and his fellow people at sea, tossed about in life’s storm? How did it change us and how did we treat others?
2. The sailors decided to throw unnecessary things overboard to save the ship and crew, even when those seemed necessary the day before. What do we cling onto today, even if it was important earlier in our lives, that is holding us back? How can we let it go?
3. How can we practice letting go the prejudices, assumptions, and mutual distrust that have built up within Christian communities over the centuries? Think of some ideas, whether practical, spiritual, or emotional, as to how to throw overboard our suspicion of other Christians.

Day 2: Light

Acts 27:20

Psalm 119:105-110

Mark 4:35-41

1. Christ is our light and guide, but what happens in our context (where we live and where we worship) when we lose sight of Christ? What does that look like in our churches?
2. What are some ways we can remind ourselves to keep ourselves guided towards Christ? Reflect on ways that are practical, spiritual, and emotional that we can remind our hearts that we are called to centre the Church on Christ.
3. In Mark, we see Jesus calming the storm that threatens to drown his disciples. What is the link between centering the Church around Christ and working towards Christian unity?

Day 3: Hope

Acts 27:22, 34

Psalm 27

Matthew 11:28-30

1. It is hard to see the points in our lives where God is present and the Spirit is at work. Where can you see it here and now, uniting Christians and creating room for reconciliation?
2. What are the doubts and worries we have on the way to reconciliation with our Christian neighbours? Naming and knowing our doubts and worries is often as important as repairing our relationships in the first place.
3. What does hope look like, in Malta's context and in our own?
4. Malta, like many nations, has been a place of sanctuary for many refugees. Approximately 93% of migrants arriving by boat to Malta are asylum seekers, according to the Human Rights Watch [\[1\]](#). Over two thirds of the refugees arriving in Malta will move to other countries, and many often reach Malta unintentionally, while trying to navigate the Mediterranean Sea, hoping to land in Greece, Italy, or other nearby nations. Only 9.2% of asylum seekers in Malta actually receive refugee status, which would grant them security and the ability to work [\[2\]](#).

Day 4: Trust

Acts 27:23-26

Psalm 56

Luke 12:22-34

1. Are there any inherent problems with worrying? Whether it is something within your control or beyond it, what does our experience and our faith tradition say about worrying?
2. In a world full of worries and injustices, where are we called as a church to help calm the fears of others? How can we do that?

Day 5: Sustenance

Acts 27:33-36

Psalm 77

Mark 6:30-44

1. Hunger is a global concern, whether in our own neighbourhoods or in countries like Malta. How does hunger impact your community?
2. Reflect on some of the ways that your church can address hunger, on any scale. Resources can be found here from the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, your local food bank, the World Food Programme (<https://www1.wfp.org/zero-hunger>).

Day 6: Hospitality

Acts 28:1-2, 7

Psalm 46

Luke 14:12-24

1. What does hospitality mean to us? How is it different than the hospitality Jesus is telling us to demonstrate?
2. We are called by Scripture to show hospitality to people on the margins of society. Who are those people? Where do we find them in our lives?
3. Churches are called to show hospitality together. What are ways we can show hospitality with other churches in our community?

Day 7: Conversion

Acts 28:3-6

Psalm 119:137-144

Matthew 18:1-6

1. In this reading, the people of Malta are suspicious of Paul, and Paul persuades them of his genuineness. How do our suspicions and/or prejudices about other churches affect us in our own church, and as Christians as a whole?
2. What are ways we can meet and learn from other churches, to lose our preconceived notions about the people within them?
3. Who are the people we need to listen to for our hearts to open, and unity across denominations to unfold?

Day 8: Generosity

Acts 28:8-10

Psalm 103:1-5

Matthew 10:7-8

1. Paul exchanges gifts with the people of Malta. Why is it important to give? Why is it important to receive?
2. What do we need to do to prepare to share with other churches? How can we prepare spiritually, emotionally, and practically to share our gifts with one another?

[1] <https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/malta0712ForUpload.pdf>

[2] <https://borgenproject.org/facts-about-refugees-in-malta/>