

“Where will my help come from?”

We are offering a series of reflections for individuals and churches who may be finding it difficult to provide midweek prayer and shared learning from Scripture. You can use these by watching the YouTube video, reading the relevant Bible passage and then reflecting on the questions below. To help make this a shared activity, you are encouraged to reflect on this together with friends using an online conference package, or simply arrange with a friend for them to watch it too. Then ring each other up, share your thoughts and responses and then pray for one another, and pray together for our world.

Read 2 Kings 5:5-8

Watch the YouTube video: <https://youtu.be/glj1-qIMtnk>

This is the second of three reflections when you are invited to engage with the story of Naaman by standing in the shoes of three different characters. In this reflection, try to look at things particularly from the perspective of the two kings.

Where am I looking to for help? The King of Israel rightly recognised that he did not have the resources to help Naaman, but instead of looking beyond himself to God, he just assumed that if he couldn't help, no-one could. The invitation to *“lift our eyes to the hills”* is an invitation to see beyond current circumstances and our resources. So let yourself hear the reply of the hills, the message implicitly conveyed by Elisha and the slave girl – *“my help comes from the Lord.”* Allow God to remind you that you are not solely dependent on your own resources, or those of the power brokers around us – in fact, if they seem hopelessly inadequate, let that reinforce the value of your faith even more.

Who else is looking for help? There is both comedy and tragedy in this episode – the king of Israel saw someone else's need as a threat. What pre-conceived ideas, assumptions or prejudices might cause us to overlook the needs of those around us? Recent events have conditioned us to see each other as a threat – let's not allow practical necessities to shape our attitudes to others. The King perceived Naaman as a threat because he saw him only in terms of his own resources – Naaman ceased to be a threat when his needs were directed to God.

How am I using the influence and opportunities that God has given me? The king was not wrong for being a king, but he failed to use his position to steer Naaman towards the prophet of the God who could help. This stands in stark contrast to the slave girl and the prophet; they had nothing like the same measure of power and influence, but enabled the story to move forward. God has put us all in places of influence, they may not be the seats of earthly power – but as the slave girl reminds us – we can all influence someone. How can we use our circumstances, whatever they may be, to help others hear the echo of that Psalm – *“my help comes from God the maker of heaven and earth.”*

PRAYER Gracious and all-powerful God, when I am tempted to define circumstances only by my own ability to find a way through them - rekindle within me that faith that looks to you. Where the needs or expectations of others confront me, grant me the wisdom to recognise those opportunities to be an agent of grace and to help your presence be made known. Whoever I meet and wherever I find them, may I seek to be an influence for you. AMEN