

“Do you love me?”

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 John 21:15-21

If you can, watch the YouTube video: <https://youtu.be/jolNKIJS00Y>

As the future becomes increasingly uncertain, many questions, fears and frustrations might begin to surface. The story of Simon Peter's conversation with Jesus is one in which Peter is likely to have had similar feelings. But Jesus reminds him that his place in God's purposes is not founded on his successes or failures, his fears or disappointment but his love for Jesus. You are invited to reflect on this conversation through the three things that Jesus says:

Do you love me? Although this is a question – hear the reassurance that is contained within it – Jesus knows disappointments, fears and frustrations of prevailing events. Embrace this reality for yourself. Do not rush to answer this question – Jesus asked it three times. Jesus asked “do you really love me?” not because he doubted it was true, but because he wanted Peter to explore and express the depth of that love – so take time to explore and express the love that you have for Jesus.

Feed my sheep – care for my lambs. Recognise and acknowledge that we all need to take care of each other in these difficult times. This is not a distraction from our faith, but an expression of it. Remember that you can't look after others if you don't look after yourself. Don't be afraid of receiving the help and support of others – Jesus called us to be a community, a body. Old, young, physical, spiritual, emotional – who can you care for? What can you offer? What care do you need to receive?

Follow me: Remember Jesus offers his presence, not a roadmap or an instruction book. As you acknowledge and recognise the uncertain and challenging circumstances that lie ahead – try to hear the voice of Jesus beckoning you as you seek to confront them. The experience may be different, God's presence might be made know in new ways, but you are not being left to walk this road alone – Jesus invites you to follow him into and through whatever is required of us in the days ahead.

PRAYER

Loving God, though my love for you is often frail and faltering, grant me the assurance of knowing that however troubling or difficult times might be, this is all you require of me. Open my heart to give and receive the care that is needed to sustain us through the road ahead and open my eyes to see and know your presence as you journey at our side. And whatever our present circumstances might require or offer, may we be first and foremost defined by our love for you. AMEN