

“Rhythm, Routine and trusting God”

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 Daniel 6:1-14

If you can, watch the YouTube video: <https://youtu.be/LMbkf4JB2H8>

We can often see our faith as providing much of the stability and routine in our life, yet the reality is that much of the Biblical narrative is set in situations of uncertainty and turmoil. One example of that is the story of Daniel, who was taken as an exile to Babylon, forcibly removed from his home in Jerusalem. Daniel learned to hold fast to his faith not by disengaging with the world around him, but by becoming a key part of it – yet he never lost his sense of faith and identity in God – even if that was to his disadvantage. As you reflect on his story, three questions you might consider:

“What rhythms and routines do I need to establish to sustain my own faith in these new circumstances? As you reflect on what they might be, consider the purpose of these routines. Daniel was not just seeking to recreate what he’d once had, but to regularly re-centre his life on what his faith taught him. Facing Jerusalem was a symbol of a bigger reality – for all that he rubbed shoulders every day with some of the most senior officials in the World at the time, he never lost sight of the fact that God was ruler and king over all. How can you remind yourself of that reality each day? How can you let that define your own experiences at the moment?

What are the realities that you are having to face at the moment? Remember that what brought Daniel to that place of prayer was that he was utterly engaged in the affairs of state. The problems that the nation was facing, were his problems – the issues that needed to be addressed were his issues. He didn’t pray to escape those issues, he prayed to bring God to the centre of them. Whether it’s your family life, your own personal struggles, the needs of your community or those big issues that are echoing around the world at the moment, or something else – how can you bring God into the centre of your experience of them?

How can I re-affirm my faith in God in our present circumstances? Remember that for Daniel, things got worse before they got better. Faith can sometimes require us to believe despite what is happening around us. As you pray, take the opportunity to simply re-affirm your faith and our trust in God. Find strength not in simply expecting that God will change every circumstance – though at times this can happen – but that God’ unchanging rule and presence can be found in every circumstance that comes our way, whatever our immediate experience might be.

PRAYER

Faithful God, we cannot pretend for a moment that the world we find ourselves in is anything but difficult and uncertain. And we cannot pretend that it is not taking its toll on each of us as we are surrounded by realities that we neither expected or feel prepared for. Though perhaps we long for things to return to how they used to be, help us for this moment to embrace you in the present, to centre our lives each day on you, and to trust you whether things become worse or better. Thank you that you are faithful and unchanging, hold us fast with that truth even when we struggle to hold on. AMEN.