

## Participating Together . . .

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 what your thoughts and responses and then pray for one another, and pray together for our world.

**Read 1 Peter 4:12-16**

**Watch the YouTube Video:** <https://youtu.be/JGUkgdOW2o0>

Now spend some time reflecting on the words of 1 Peter, and ponder these questions:

**How is God with me in my present struggles?** As you reflect on the foundational image of Jesus on the cross – what does that say to you about your own trials and traumas? Take some time to simply re-connect with the Jesus of the cross – to let God’s Spirit rest on you.

**How can I rejoice in my “participation in Christ”?** What is it in the nature of God; what is it that you already know about God that can give you cause to rejoice? Take time to inhabit those realities – let them impress themselves into your mind so that you can be sustained by these truths when things do become difficult and overwhelming.

**How else do I participate in Christ?** What are the friendships, the experiences, the networks of belonging that God has sent your way? Even if some of those have been disrupted or taken from you – who can you give God thanks for? Who might be giving God thanks for you?

**What have I taken for granted?** How might the circumstances in which we find ourselves remind us of the plight of others in the world, for whom this experience is all too familiar. How can we use this opportunity to pray for them, and to live our lives more aware of their plight in the future?

**How can God be glorified?** How might God be using you, to quietly but clearly reveal God’s presence in the world, through your attitudes and actions?

## PRAYER

God, our ever-present help and constant companion, thank you that the trials and turmoil we face do not make you more distant, but offer themselves as new opportunities to discover your presence. When we find it hard to see that presence, grant us the faith to believe that you are at our side. Help us to stand in the shadow of the cross, and to recognise that though its promise can never be taken from us, our hope was wrought in suffering and sacrifice. Forgive us if we have been too consumed by our own struggles, or too distracted by our own success, to remember the plight of those in the world for whom hardship and suffering are all too familiar. Hold us fast in the knowledge that we are yours, and let your Spirit, the Spirit of Glory and of God rest upon us, now and always. AMEN