



'Worship at home'

April 28th 2024



We continue in the Easter season, reflecting on how we continue to experience the risen Christ in our lives. As you come to worship, you might wish to find a **dry branch** or **twig** for your prayer reflection.

Opening

We are branches, abiding in love.

Connected to Christ, the true vine.

We are the body, seeking Christ as the head.

Connected to each other, the church.

Called to become disciples, with fruitful lives.

Connected to the world, showing God's love.

We come to worship, to the glory of God.

Growing in grace and love.

Reflect on your dry branch or twig. What sort of plant has it come from? Would it have green leafy branches, or colourful flowers? Reflect on what its branches need in order to grow ... water, sunshine, rich soil ... and connection with the main plant to nourish and sustain them.

Who/what in your life nourishes and sustains you?

**Are there times when you identify with
a dry, lifeless twig?**

Who/what brings hope and the promise of new life for you?

John 15:1-8

[The Vine and the Branches](#)

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even

more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the

vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches

are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

New International Version

"Abide in me": root yourselves in this central place, and remain rooted here, and my life will flow through you and bear fruit in the world.

—Bruno Barnhart

The Good Wine: Reading John from the Center

God of love, plant us in the soil of your grace.
Nurture us with the strength of Christ,
the vine of everlasting life.
Enlighten us with the wisdom of your Spirit,
which flows through us today and all days.
Abide in us, that we may abide in you
and live in your love.
In your holy name, we pray. Amen.

— Adapted from [The Abingdon Worship Annual 2012](#),

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Would does it mean for you to abide in Jesus?

What helps you to do this?

When we abide in Jesus Christ, we remain connected to the source of life. We are nourished and sustained. We grow and bear fruit.

What fruit do you bear when you abide in Jesus, as the source of your life?



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In order to grow and bear fruit, plants require pruning. They are shaped, and the process encourages fruit and new growth. Sometimes we are afraid of pruning ... perhaps we fear the remainder of the branch might die too ... or we fear the process might be too painful. However, pruning makes way for new beginnings, and allows for the emergence of new life.



What parts of your life might you ask God to prune, in order for you to grow in more life-giving ways?

When we are connected with the vine as the source of our lives, we also connect with many other branches. Our vines and root systems enmesh, with the vine as the source of our common life.



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Reflect on the people in your life with whom you are connected.

How are you enriched, nourished and strengthened by your relationships?

How can you enrich, nourish and strengthen those people?

Lord, we would grow with you
new shoots reaching out
hands stretched upward
like leaves newly formed
soaking up your light and warmth
Lord, we would grow with you

Lord, we would grow with you
in sunshine and rain
in darkness and light
in cold days and summer days
from Springtime to Winter
Lord, we would grow with you



<https://abc.net.au>

Lord, we would grow with you
and bring forth fruit
that is pleasing to you
fed by your living water
giving sustenance to others
Lord, we would grow with you

~ contemporary Welsh prayer posted on
A Place for Prayer. <http://revgalprayerpals.blogspot.ca/>

Pray for:

- the people you feel most connected with
- the people you feel least connected with
- faith communities to be safe places of nourishment, sustenance and new growth
- those who are impacted most by violence or abuse from others, especially by those whom they love
- the global church as we seek to respond to many different issues and crises in our world
- new opportunities to arise as old branches are pruned away, in our lives, in our church, in our community, in our world
- those involved in the Australian Defence Forces and for Chaplains and those who support them and their families
- peace in times of conflict and for those impacted by war and destruction



Closing

We live as branches, leaves and fruit
of the one true vine.

May God the vine grower
tend us and make us fruitful;
May we abide in Christ Jesus,
as he abides in us
and gives us life;
May the Holy Spirit
fill us with God's love.

Amen