



‘Worship at home’

August 17th 2025



We come to worship God who is always faithful. You are invited to bring a pencil and paper for your prayer time.

Opening

Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and burden and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, mindful of the gifts we receive and confident of the sustenance the Lord provides.

Let us worship God.

Prayer

We pause to ponder the gift of grace and the miracle the Spirit works within us as we remain open to her restorative ways. In a spirit of gratitude let us contemplate people who have taught us what it means to truly love. Let us name them in silence and recall the lessons passed on...

We are thankful, O God, for the continued strength and beauty of your grace. Amen

based on Together in worship and praise, Mediacom, 2018



*Giusto de' Menabuoi
(Italian, ca. 1320–1391)*

Paradise, ca. 1378.

Dome fresco, Padua Baptistery, Italy.

The book of Hebrews holds up as examples and inspiration great ‘heroes’ of faith. Many were ordinary, unnamed people doing what they could and living out their faith. By persevering, taking some risks, and trusting God they accomplished some amazing and wonderful things, in God’s strength.

Who are your Bible ‘heroes’?

**Do you have real life ‘heroes’
who you look up to or seek advice from?**

Hebrews 11:29-12:2

It was by faith that the people of Israel went right through the Red Sea as though they were on dry ground. But when the Egyptians tried to follow, they were all drowned. It was by faith that the people of Israel marched around Jericho for seven days, and the walls came crashing down. It was by faith that Rahab the prostitute was not destroyed with the people in her city who refused to obey God. For she had given a friendly welcome to the spies. How much more do I need to say? It would take too long to recount the stories of the faith of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and all the prophets. By faith these people overthrew kingdoms, ruled with justice, and received what God had promised them. They shut the mouths of lions, quenched the flames of fire, and escaped death by the edge of the sword. Their weakness was turned to strength. They became strong in battle and put whole armies to flight. Women received their loved ones back again from death. But others were tortured,



<https://searching4christ.com/2019/02/22/the-race-marked-out/>

refusing to turn from God in order to be set free. They placed their hope in a better life after the resurrection. Some were jeered at, and their backs were cut open with whips. Others were chained in prisons. Some died by stoning, some were sawed in half, and others were killed with the sword. Some went about wearing skins of sheep and goats, destitute and oppressed and mistreated. They were too good for this world, wandering over deserts and mountains, hiding in caves and holes in the ground. All these people earned a good reputation because of their faith, yet none of them received all that God had promised. For God had 2

something better in mind for us, so that they would not reach perfection without us. Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race

God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honour beside God's throne. New Living Translation

What does *being surrounded by a huge crowd of witnesses in the life of faith* mean for you? It is important for each of us to have people in our lives who encourage us, help us up when we fall, and journey with us when times are hard.

There is a story about the Seattle Special Olympics in 1976, where nine children with disabilities competed in the 100 yard sprint. They ran as hard as they could but just when they were almost at the finish line, one boy stumbled and fell, and began to cry. A couple of the children saw him, slowed down, then turned around and went back for him. They linked arms and finished the race together, all crossing the finish line together as the crowd cheered them on.



Who are the people in your crowd of witnesses, who support and encourage you? They might be mentors, friends, family members, ministers or colleagues. They may be people who have written books that have helped us, people who we listen to via podcasts or other online tools.

Write down the names of those who are in your ‘crowd of witnesses’. Spend some time giving thanks for each one.

You might like to thank them this week via a phone call, text, card or message.

**Write down the names of those who appreciate
your support and encouragement.**

How can you get alongside them to cheer them on?

Spend some time giving thanks and praying for them also.

**You might like to send them
a message of support this week.**



Pray for...

- the church to be a place of support and encouragement
- those who feel lonely and unsupported
- those who are homeless or struggling to find money to pay for their essentials
- ways in which we can take action to help others
- those who are unwell, living with chronic illness, or nearing the end of their life
- those impacted by conflict in Ukraine, Gaza, and many other places throughout our world
- our world leaders in times of uncertainty and change
- the health of our earth, our climate, and all living creatures

Blessing

Go into this week thankful for the support of your 'crowd of witnesses',
Go into this week looking for ways to help others,
Go into this week knowing that God loves you so very much,
Go into this week knowing the grace that comes through Jesus,
And go knowing the friendship and fellowship of the Holy Spirit.
Go in peace. Amen

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Feel God
in every gentle touch.
See God
in every happy face.
Hear God
in every caring word.
Receive God's blessings
every day of your life.

<https://quotesgram.com/img/christian-quotes-on-blessings/312624/>