



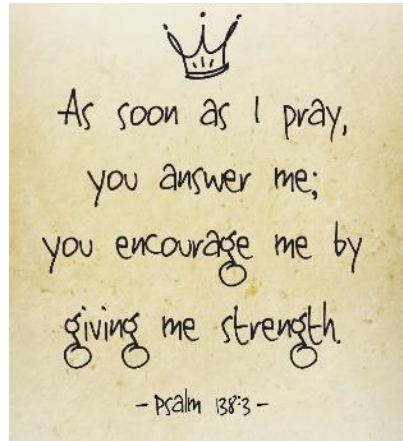
'Worship at home' Sunday June 9th 2024



As we continue in "Ordinary time"
in the Church's liturgical calendar,
we are encouraged to be open to the ongoing work of the Spirit
of God in our "ordinary", everyday lives, as we seek to grow in
our understanding of scripture, in discipleship, and in faith.

Opening from Psalm 138

Faithful God,
we come into Your presence
with thanksgiving,
deeply grateful for the unfailing
love and faithfulness
you have shown toward us,
your people.
When we call out to you,
you answer.
When we are exhausted,
you give us the strength to go on.
When we find ourselves in trouble,
you are there, standing beside us.
And so we come before you gratitude and praise,
offering you the worship of our hearts and lives.
Open our eyes to see and know you here among us;
open our ears to recognise your voice.
And then send us out from here,
to live and work in the world as your faithful disciples.
In the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord.
Amen.



~ Christine Longhurst

<https://re-worship.blogspot.com/search/label/Proper%205%20B>

Samuel was one of the first prophets of Israel, given by his mother Hannah to the priest Eli to be raised in the temple, and called by God as a boy to serve as prophet and judge. Samuel was a well-respected leader, listening to the people and listening to God. However, the Israelite people wanted a king.

1 Samuel 8:1-11, 16-20, 11:14-15

When Samuel grew old, he made his sons judges in Israel. The older son was named Joel and the younger one Abijah; they were judges in Beersheba. But they did not follow their father's example; they were interested only in making money, so they accepted bribes and did not decide cases honestly. Then all the leaders of Israel met together, went to Samuel in Ramah, and said to him, "Look, you are getting old and your sons don't follow your example. So then, appoint a king to rule over us, so that we will have a king, as other countries have." Samuel was displeased with their request for a king; so he prayed to the Lord, and the Lord said, "Listen to everything the people say to you. You are not the one they have rejected; I am the one they have rejected as their king. Ever since I brought them out of Egypt, they have turned away from me and worshiped other gods; and now they are doing to you what they have always done to me. So then, listen to them, but give them strict warnings and explain how their kings will treat them."

Samuel told the people who were asking him for a king everything that the Lord had said to him. "This is how your king will treat you," Samuel explained. "He will make soldiers of your sons; some of them will serve in his war chariots, others in his cavalry, and others will run before his chariots. He will take your servants and your best cattle and donkeys, and make them work for him. He will take a tenth of your flocks. And you yourselves will become his slaves. When that time comes, you will complain bitterly because of your king, whom you yourselves chose, but the Lord will not listen to your complaints." The people paid no attention to Samuel, but said, "No! We want a king, so that we will be like other nations, with our own king to rule us and to lead us out to war and to fight our battles." ...And Samuel said to them, "Let us all go to Gilgal and once more proclaim Saul as our king." So they all went to Gilgal, and there at the holy place they proclaimed Saul king. They offered fellowship sacrifices, and Saul and all the people of Israel celebrated the event.

Good News Bible

Samuel had led the people wisely. However, the Israelites had decided that Samuel's sons were too corrupt to take over Samuel's leadership, and they wished for a king to rule them. Rather than following God's ways, they wanted to choose for themselves a great ruler, to be like other nations.

Do you recall when you were a teenager, wanting to make your own way in the world, sometimes knowing that you were going against your parents' wishes? Perhaps you have had teenagers of your own and have had to let them find their independence. God advises Samuel to allow the people freedom of choice and go their own way even though it seems they are not listening to or trusting in God.

Samuel warned the people that if they appointed a king, it would change things. The king would want them to pay taxes, to work for him, to build up an army. The people wouldn't listen to Samuel: they thought they were right. Samuel found them a king, and Saul was anointed. Saul was a good king, but then he stopped listening to God and followed his own ways. Next David became king, well respected and much loved, however he too stopped listening to God and followed his own way. Over many centuries, this pattern continued.



So often we find that when we go our own ways, or listen to the ways of the world, we stop listening to God. Our own agendas and expectations, the busyness of our lives, and concerns about that which is going on for us and around us distract us from truly listening to God.

**Reflect on when/how you listen to God
as you seek to follow God's ways for your life.**

**Reflect on when/how your faith community
listens to God as together you seek to follow God's ways
for your community.**

**Read the Scripture passage from 1 Samuel again,
and reflect on any insights you might gain
and how the spirit of God might prompt you
through this story.**

The Israelite people laid their requests out but were intent on following a particular course of action. So often, when we pray, we talk to God, listing our concerns and laying them before God... how often do you then spend time listening to how God might be leading you to respond to your prayers?



Prayers

- ask God to help you discern the Holy Spirit at work in your life...
in your church...
in the world...
- ask God to lead you in God's ways for your life...
- ask God to prompt you to respond to your concerns for the world around you, as you pray for each of these concerns...

You might commit to setting aside some time each day in the next week to intentionally listen to God. Put aside your own agenda or expectations about what God might say, and simply listen... you never know how you might experience anew the Spirit of God who continues to work in our world, in our church and in our lives.

Closing

Give us understanding minds,
that we might know how to live wisely;
Grant us discerning hearts,
that we might follow your ways;
And fill us with your Spirit as we listen to you
with our whole being. Amen

