

Daily Rhythm

Making worship part of the everyday
Rhythm of Worship // www.jamesnicolson.co.za

Devotional Diary : 29 Dec 2014 – 4 Jan 2015

Readings for the week with thanks to www.gbod.org:

[Isaiah 60:1-6](#). Isaiah prophesies to a people just returning from exile that the day would come when all nations would "stream to their light."

[Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14](#). In praise of the righteous king who would receive tribute from all nations

[Ephesians 3:1-12](#). Paul says that his imprisonments are enabling the Gentiles, including leaders of the Roman Empire, to learn the mystery that they, too, are invited to become fellow heirs with Christ Jesus.

[Matthew 2:1-12](#). Matthew tells of the visit of the Magi and their participation in God's subversion of Herod's plan.

Confession focus for the next three weeks: Each day you will find another aspect of a three-week confessional cycle (you may recognise it, we have used it before) under the Confession for the day.

Monday:

Adoration Focus: Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice. (Psalm 105:3)

Confession: In what areas am I envious? Does this envy "drive" my life in any areas? How does this indicate a restlessness within my own spirit? How can my relationship with God help me with my envy?

The Word: See readings above (also the additional comments/questions on readings) or use your own devotional aid.

Seeking the Kingdom

Shared Focus: This week we focus on any healing or forgiveness our world needs to ask for. Think about the past year. In what areas is God prompting you to pray? Today, focus on your own heart.

Personal prayers: (Use this section to list people you need to pray for or situations of personal concern that you need to bring before God in prayer)

Dedication: "He drew a circle to shut me out – Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout. But Love and I had the wit to win; We drew a circle that took him in!" (Edwin Markham) In the day that lies ahead of you, draw a circle that includes God.

Tuesday:

Adoration Focus: How many are your works, O Lord! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. (Psalm 104:24)

Confession: Does a seething anger just wait to rise up within my heart? Do I find that I am quite controlled until I unexpectedly burst out in a rage? Do I drive my car aggressively? Ask God to allow you to acknowledge your anger and release its hold over your life.

The Word:

Seeking the Kingdom:

Shared Focus: This week we focus on any healing or forgiveness our world needs to ask for. Think about the past year. In what areas is God prompting you to pray? Today focus on your journey in a community of people close to you.

Personal Prayers:

Dedication: "He drew a circle to shut me out – Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout. But Love and I had the wit to win; We drew a circle that took him in!" (Edwin Markham) In the day that lies ahead of you, draw a circle that includes others.

Wednesday:

Adoration Focus: Praise the Lord... who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. (Psalm 103:5)

Confession: In the face of crying needs we often choose not to notice or even deliberately ignore them. Ask God to open your heart to His call to serve.

The Word:

Seeking the Kingdom:

Shared Focus: This week we focus on any healing or forgiveness our world needs to ask for. Think about the past year. In what areas is God prompting you to pray? Today, focus on the news stories that have reached us during the year.

Personal prayers:

Dedication: "He drew a circle to shut me out – Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout. But Love and I had the wit to win; We drew a circle that took him in!" (Edwin Markham) In the day that lies ahead of you, draw a circle that includes God's plans for the new year.

Thursday:

Adoration Focus: But you, O Lord, sit enthroned forever; your renown endures through all generation. (Psalm 102:12)

Confession: Lord, make me aware of the pride in my life. Pride that keeps me aloof and apart; pride that is rooted in insecurity and a need to prove myself; pride that makes me humiliate other human beings. Lord, help me to make myself vulnerable and to serve rather than be served.

The Word:

Seeking the Kingdom:

Shared Focus: This week we focus on any healing or forgiveness our world needs to ask for. Think about the past year. In what areas is God prompting you to pray? Today, focus on your life in service and care as part of a church community.

Personal prayers:

Dedication: "He drew a circle to shut me out – Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout. But Love and I had the wit to win; We drew a circle that took him in!" (Edwin Markham) In the day that lies ahead, draw a circle that includes your Kingdom of God community.

Friday:

Adoration Focus: I will sing of your love and justice; to you, O Lord, I will sing praise. (Psalm 101:1)

Confession: Lord, forgive me for alienated myself from this world that you love. Help me to reach out in love and care. Help me to make a difference.

The Word:

Seeking the Kingdom:

Shared Focus: This week we focus on any healing or forgiveness our world needs to ask for. Think about the past year. In what areas is God prompting you to pray? Today, focus on the different people who are part of your country.

Personal prayers:

Dedication: "He drew a circle to shut me out – Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout. But Love and I had the wit to win; We drew a circle that took him in!" (Edwin Markham) In the day that lies ahead, draw a circle that includes serving others.

Saturday:

Adoration Focus: Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. (Psalm 100:3)

Confession: Lord, forgive me when I invest huge resources for my own entertainment but will be resentful about a minor offering to alleviate another's deep suffering. Lord God, I pray for a generous heart.

The Word:

Seeking the Kingdom:

Shared Focus: This week we focus on any healing or forgiveness our world needs to ask for. Think about the past year. In what areas is God prompting you to pray? Today, focus on Africa and the world.

Personal prayers:

Dedication: "He drew a circle to shut me out – Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout. But Love and I had the wit to win; We drew a circle that took him in!" (Edwin Markham) In the day that lies ahead, draw a circle that includes the promptings of God's Spirit.

Sunday:

Adoration Focus: The Lord reigns, let the nations tremble; he sits enthroned between the cherubim, let the earth shake. (Psalm 99:1)

Confession: Lord, forgive me when I give all for my own ambitions and lose your call to share in love in important relationships in my life. Help me to count the cost of loving and discover new joy in giving.

The Word:

Seeking the Kingdom:

Shared Focus: This week we focus on any healing or forgiveness our world needs to ask for. Think about the past year. In what areas is God prompting you to pray? Today, focus on your personal journey of worship.

Personal prayers:

Dedication: "He drew a circle to shut me out – Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout. But Love and I had the wit to win; We drew a circle that took him in!" (Edwin Markham) In the day that lies ahead, draw a circle that includes bowing in worship.

Weekly Rhythm

Joining our stories with the stories of God's people.

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In our spiritual tradition there is a daily, weekly and seasonal (yearly) cycle, all working together to breathe God's life into us and connect us in a worshipful relationship with our Creator. This resource explores these rhythms from the perspective of the Christian Year (using the Revised Common Lectionary). It is aimed at those who want to journey with these texts in a transformational way, particularly from a worship perspective. Each week we will share around the set texts as they inspire our daily, weekly and yearly rhythms.

Additional information about the readings. Notes in italics are with thanks to www.gbod.org.

All of today's texts are about the manifestation of God's saving intervention in history -- whether in the days following the ending of the exile (Isaiah) or in Jesus Christ (Ephesians, Matthew) -- and in particular God's outrageous revelation of salvation to Gentiles, who were formerly bitter enemies and oppressors. Paul's imprisonment by Gentile leaders gives him the opportunity to witness to Gentiles in high places that God is out to save THEM through Jesus Christ as well. The Magi were descendants of the Babylonians, the very people who carried the people of Judah into exile. When word about God entering history gets out, no part of the world is unaffected.

Isaiah 60:1-6. *Isaiah prophesies to people just returning from exile that the day would come when all nations would stream to their light.*

Notice how darkness and light are contrasted in this passage. How does God bring light to your life and to your world?

A Prayer based on Isaiah 60:1-6

Arise! Shine! The light you have been waiting for is here!

Darkness has been banished!

God's light of hope floods the earth

God's light comes to us all.

Lord, make us ready to journey to this Light.

Prepare our hearts to receive this Light. Amen.

— written by Nancy C. Townley, and posted on the **Worship Connection** page of the **Ministry Matters** website.

Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14. *In praise of the righteous king who would receive tribute from all nations –*

How does the leadership of a righteous person make a difference to the lives of others?

How is this action seen in Jesus? How will it be seen in our future?

A Prayer based on Psalm 72: 1-7, 10-14

O God our Guide and Helper, we come to worship you!

You stay beside us as we journey through life.

O God our Just and Holy One, we come to thank you!

You lead us in your path of justice and peace.

O God, our Trustworthy Leader, we come to praise you!

We know we can always rely on your promises.

O God, we gather to worship, praise and thank you. Amen.

— written by Joan Stott, on the [Geelong City Parish UCA](http://www.geelongcityparish.org.au) website.

Ephesians 3:1-12. *Paul says that his imprisonments are enabling the Gentiles and even the leaders of the nations to come to know the mystery that they are invited to become fellow heirs with Christ Jesus.*

Can hardships serve God's ends? How do we see this in Christ's life? Are there hardships in your life that serve God's purposes?

Matthew 2:1-12. *Matthew tells of the visit of the Magi and their participation in God's subversion of Herod's plan.*

Strange gifts that carry meaning:

GOLD: Gold is the gift that above all else is fit for a king. As the wise men bring this gift they are saying this Christ is our king!

FRANKINCENSE: What is it? It is a gum resin that when burnt gives off a fragrance. It was a major ingredient of holy incense and was set before the holy of holies with the bread of the presence. Frankincense indicates the priestly nature of Christ. In the scriptures the priesthood symbolises our union with God. "We have then, my brothers, complete freedom to go into the most Holy Place by means of the death of Jesus. He opened for us a new way, a living way, through the curtain—that is through his own body. We have a great priest in charge of the house of God." (Hebrews 10:19ff.) The Holy Place was considered the very dwelling place of God.

MYRRH: What is it? It is a substance derived from shrubs and trees. It was used in Egyptian and eastern embalming. You may remember that Nicodemus brings myrrh and aloes for the burial of Jesus. So the gift of myrrh speaks of the suffering death of Christ.

Is there a symbolic sense in the different route that the wise men take after they have visited the Christ child?

Epiphany Prayers

(based on Matthew 2:1-12)

God of light, shining in darkness,
through a little child, born in Bethlehem,
you open to us the treasure of your grace.
Help us to search diligently for him,
so that we may offer our lives to you
with thanksgiving, joy, and praise;
through Jesus Christ, the rising star. **Amen.**

Shepherd of Israel,
you sent a star to enlighten the wise
and a child to topple the tyrant.
Make us wise enough to seek you
among the least of your children,
wise enough to trade our treasure
for the gift of overwhelming joy. **Amen.**

— posted on the **Presbyterian Church U.S.A.** website.