

We satisfy our physical hunger with food and drinks, available from the supermarket. Let us take time now, wherever we are, to top up our faith with the food and drink of God's holy word. May these words be with us whether or not we can get to a church to worship, reminding us that God feeds all of us in our need.



**Prayer for peace:** Almighty God, from whom all thoughts of truth and peace proceed; kindle, we pray, in the hearts of all men, a true love of peace; and guide, with Your truth and love and wisdom, those who take counsel for the nations of the world that in tranquillity Your Kingdom may go forward until the earth is filled with the knowledge of Your love. Amen

**Focus:** Psalm 107 v 8 & 9 Let them praise the Lord for his great love and for the wonderful things he has done for them. For he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.

**Hymn:** ... as thou did break the loaves beside the sea StF 153 Break thou the bread of life

1 Break thou the bread of life, O Lord, to me, as thou didst break the loaves beside the sea;  
Beyond the sacred page I seek thee, Lord; my spirit longs for Thee, O living word!

2 Thou art the bread of life, O Lord, to me, thy holy word the truth that saveth me;  
Give me to eat and live with thee above; teach me to love thy truth, for thou art love.

3 Oh, send thy spirit, Lord, now unto me, that He may touch my eyes, and make me see:  
Show me the truth concealed within thy word, and in thy book revealed I see the Lord.

**Prayers:** God of everything, everywhere and everyone we adore you; we marvel at the depth of your love for us, we stand in awe at your grace given to us, we are amazed at the glorious balance of the earth and nature, we are stunned by the vastness of the universe. We are so privileged to be called your children, accepted and embraced. God of everything, everywhere and everyone we come before you to praise you and adore you for your awesome power; you can allow the waters to rise and the mountains to crumble, yet you keep the most helpless among us safe. God of everything, everywhere and everyone we adore you for your wisdom, for your leading us and guiding us; God of everything, everywhere and everyone we adore you because you have shown us your love and mercy. God of everything, everywhere and everyone we praise and thank you, for you are a great and loving God. We thank you for sending us your son, Jesus Christ to show us that love, and to help us to see how you want us to share that love with all around us. God of everything, everywhere and everyone, we thank you for all we see of beauty in the world you have created and in people's lives that you are changing day by day, We thank you for the love which enriches our lives even when things are difficult. God of everything, everywhere and everyone we thank you for family and friends, for fellowship and fun, for the opportunity to serve you and for all that makes our lives meaningful God of everything, everywhere and everyone I am sorry when I get so carried away with the busyness of each day that I don't take a break to simply stop and dwell in your love. I am sorry when I allow the stresses and demands of life or circumstances to eat away at my feelings of well-being. I am sorry when I'm

caught up in conflict and frustration, when I harbour resentment, instead of being forgiving. God of everything, everywhere and everyone we come before you confess that in our actions and reactions we have failed you, in our loving and forgiving we have fallen short of your mark, in our humble believing and trusting we have denied your grace and power. In silence we lay before you the sins which are clouding our relationship with you just now ... God of everything, everywhere and everyone your love is so amazing that no matter how grave our problems, how terrible our mistakes, how shameful our behaviour, and no matter how often we stumble and fall, we can pray to You secure in the knowledge of your love and your forgiveness. God of everything, everywhere and everyone what we have to give we have first received from you. What we give, we give freely. We pray that you would use our gifts for the good of all Amen

**Reading:** Matthew 14 13 to 21. Hear the Gospel of Christ; **Glory to Christ our Saviour** “When Jesus heard what happened to John (The Baptist), he left in a boat. He went alone to a place where no one lived. But the people heard that Jesus had left. So they left their towns and followed him. They went by land to the same place he went. When Jesus got out of the boat, he saw a large crowd of people. He felt sorry for them, and he healed the ones who were sick. Late that afternoon, the followers came to Jesus and said, “No one lives in this place. And it is already late. Send the people away so they can go to the towns and buy food for themselves.” Jesus said, “The people don’t need to go away. You give them some food to eat.” The followers answered, “But we have only five loaves of bread and two fish.” Jesus said, “Bring the bread and the fish to me.” Then he told the people to sit down on the grass. He took the five loaves of bread and the two fish. He looked into the sky and thanked God for the food. Then he broke the bread into pieces, which he gave to the followers, and they gave the food to the people. Everyone ate until they were full. When they finished eating, the followers filled twelve baskets with the pieces of food that were not eaten. There were about 5000 men there who ate. There were also women and children who ate.” This is the Gospel of Christ; **Praise to Christ our Lord**

**Reflection:** God is in the business of taking little, ordinary things and using them for His glory and sometimes God chooses the seemingly smallest and weakest to demonstrate His power. This reading has Jesus taking something small which is then blessed ... with an amazing result. This boy had something that was available, only very little, five small bread rolls and a couple of fish. Jesus took it, gave thanks and shared it using His ability – giving the food to the Disciples to distribute. What came next was more than enough: from availability and ability came abundance. First we have Availability: Jesus took what was on offer: commentaries suggest that this miracle happens on the northeast bank of the Sea of Galilee not far from Bethsaida. There are no shops and certainly not enough money to get enough food to feed so many people. Sometimes when life throws things at us, we look at the situation and figure that it’s impossible and when that happens it’s very easy to concentrate on what we *don’t* have instead of thinking about what we *do* have. In the story in 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings, a widow is in debt and so distressed she can’t see any way out. Elisha simply asks her to concentrate on what she does have and what she can do and God multiplies it until she has enough to pay her debt (and more), just as in the Gospel reading. Next comes Ability: Any of us could be the most gifted person in the world, but if we don’t *use* our ability then it is no good to anyone. Jesus multiplied the food, but he wasn’t the

distributor. Jesus was the supply but he didn't actually give anything to anyone; the disciples did it. He had his part to play and the disciples had theirs and the same is true today. While Jesus is the giver of life, the church exists to take that message out to everyone who needs to hear it. He has given us the task of distributing the message, sharing the good news. God's gifts are given for the common good. That means that church is not a 'spectator sport'. It's not like a spiritual spa where we can just come every week and lie and soak in God's goodness. It's not the garage where we drop in once a week, fuel up, check the tyres, top up the oil level and the windscreen water and go through the car wash. We all need to be available to play our part in the church community to use our skills and abilities. In this way we work together and we get things done. So we take our gifts and use them and when we put them together and we can produce great things – from ability and availability comes Abundance. If we buy sugar and flour and butter and eggs and icing sugar and candles but don't do anything with them we don't get a birthday cake ... if we buy flowers and pick greenery from the garden but leave them in the garage in buckets of water we can't end up with a lovely flower arrangement ... if our car sits in the garage we can't give a lift to our neighbour ; take them shopping or to meet a friend for a cup of coffee ... we all have a part to play in worship and in our church family so let's all take our ability, add our availability and so be abundant sharers of God's word and the good news of Christ's death and resurrection for our salvation.

**Prayers:** We pray for those whose witness of truth and justice has brought them suffering, those who have carried their own cross and know it's weight; we pray also for those of other faiths and those who feel they have no need of you. God of everything, everywhere and everyone **hear our prayer** ... you are strength for the weak, refuge for the distressed, comfort for the sad and the homeless. We pray for the victims of violence especially those who suffer from aggressive behaviour in their own homes, from family members in a place that should be about safety and love, and we think about those who are suffering because of natural disasters. We pray for those scarred by the wounds that life has inflicted upon them, for the lonely and depressed. God of everything, everywhere and everyone **hear our prayer** ...we pray for our ministers, and all who work within our churches and circuit, for our church members especially our congregation at St Martins and we thank you for all those people who work for you in hospitals and homes and hostels, for those who seek to care for the sick or for addicts for whom life seems not to be worth living. Give healing to the sick and grant that your strength may be a reality to those who seek to kick the habits which bind them. The families and friends of those who are ill suffer too and are full of concern; wrap your arms around them and let them feel your nearness. God of everything, everywhere and everyone **hear our prayer** ...we remember before you the needs of those who feel rejected and unloved and unwanted, those who are terminally ill, those who are angry at the way they have been let down, those who feel life is passing them by, those who have been made redundant but who would dearly love to have a job, those who are heartbroken because of the death of a dear loved one - comfort them in their grief, loving Lord God of everything, everywhere and everyone **hear our prayer** ... We pray for our health workers, teachers, those who serve in public service and for our armed services, police, fire, ambulance and other emergency aid agencies; grant

them strength and compassion. God of everything, everywhere and everyone hear our prayer ...we pray for those who live in fear of any kind, those who face prejudice because of their race or colour or caste or relationship choices, because of a disability or their religious background, those who are fearful of the future with all its uncertainties, those who face difficult decisions where there is no easy answer; help them to know you are with them. God of everything, everywhere and everyone **hear our prayer** ...we pray for those who wait and pray in patience, for those who agonise over injustice, for those who show mercy and compassion and for those who work for peace where no peace seems possible. God of everything, everywhere and everyone hear our prayer ...We ask your blessing on HM the King and the Royal family; like people everywhere they have their relationship problems and health issues, but they have to bear them in the glare of intrusion and incursion, so we ask for their healing and wholeness along with the serenity to deal with life in their 'goldfish bowl' of publicity. We ask your blessing on the Government, that they and all rulers and leaders may do what is best for their people. We bring all these prayers to you in faith, trusting in your love and mercy and in the name of Your son our Lord and saviour Jesus Christ who taught us when we pray to say: *Our father who art in heaven hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen. Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name; your kingdom come; your will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen*

Bread of heaven , feed me now and evermore Hymn St F 465

1. Guide me, O thou great Jehovah, pilgrim through this barren land.  
I am weak, but thou art mighty; hold me with thy powerful hand.  
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven, feed me till I want no more; feed me till I want no more.

2. Open now the crystal fountain, whence the healing stream doth flow;  
let the fire and cloudy pillar lead me all my journey through.  
Strong deliverer, strong deliverer, be thou still my strength and shield; be thou still my strength and shield.

3. When I tread the verge of Jordan, bid my anxious fears subside;  
death of death and hell's destruction, land me safe on Canaan's side.  
Songs of praises, songs of praises, I will ever give to thee; I will ever give to thee.

**“May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and evermore. Amen.”**

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