



Monday, January 21, 2013

**READ-** *The Old Testament: Nehemiah 8:1-3, 8-10*

After the Israelites returned from captivity in Babylon and rebuilt the temple, they gathered to hear the Jewish law read from the book of Moses. They wept because they realized how unfaithful they had been to God's laws. Yet Nehemiah encouraged them to be joyful and celebrate for God had once more brought them back with his strength.

**REFLECT-**

- Following the letter of the Mosaic law was important to the Israelites in a time when Christ had not yet come. Jesus taught that there were two great commandments and all other laws "hung" on them: "Love God and love your neighbor." In what ways are you intentional each day about keeping those commandments?

**PRAY-**

Lord, thank you for sending your Son who taught us and showed us how we are to live to be faithful to you. Amen.

Tuesday, January 22, 2013

**READ-** *The Epistle: I Corinthians 12:12-31a*

As Christians, we are intended to be community with one another, using the various gifts we are given to support one another. We need each other – God made us that way. Paul compares the different parts of our body to the type of community we should strive for as Christians.

**REFLECT-**

- When you think about people whom you know well in this community of faith, where do you see different people using their gifts to love and serve God and neighbor? How have you been blessed by fellow Christians sharing their gifts with you?

**PRAY-**

O God, help me to use the gifts you have given me to be a blessing to others and to glorify you. Amen.

Wednesday, January 23, 2013

**READ-** *The Gospel: Luke 4:14-21*

After his baptism and temptation in the wilderness by Satan, Jesus returned to his home territory of Galilee to begin his public ministry. He went to worship in the synagogue in Nazareth, his hometown, and stood to read from Isaiah. His comment after the reading was that the prophecy was now fulfilled in him.

**REFLECT-**

- Jesus was not at all what the people expected in the long-awaited Messiah. How surprised the people in his hometown must have been when he claimed that he was the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy! Notice who he said he came for: the poor, captives, the blind, and the oppressed. What does that say about our work as his followers?

**PRAY-**

O God, as I seek to follow Jesus, help me to make his priorities mine in the ways I use my time, my resources and my efforts. Amen.

Thursday, January 24, 2013

**READ-** *The Psalter: Psalm 19*

This psalm is divided into two distinct sections – vs. 1-6 proclaiming the glory and majesty of God's good creation and its reflection of the Creator; vs. 7-14 emphasizing the importance of obedience to God's commandments and always seeking God's presence in our daily lives.

**REFLECT-**

- Many days, we are so caught up in the busyness of our lives that we fail to take notice of the outrageous beauty and remarkable construction of God's creation. The sunrise and sunset, a majestic mountain, the rolling waves of the ocean, and the tiny wings of a hummingbird are all reflections of God's amazing love and creative power. Take time today to notice these things and give thanks!

**PRAY-**

O God, thank you for this beautiful world in which we live. You have provided it for us to enjoy and to care for. Help me do my part in caring for your good creation in the way I live and the choices I make. Amen.

Friday, January 25, 2013

**ACT-**

*Focus Verse: I Corinthians 12:27*

**Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.**

There are no "lone ranger" Christians. The community of faith must work together to accomplish Jesus' work in the world. Do you know someone who seems hungry for God, but does not have a faith community to be part of? Invite that person to come with you to worship on Sunday or to bible study on Wednesday or to be a part of one of the ministries of the church. Think of the love and support you have received as a part of this church. Share that experience with the person you invite and encourage them to become part of this "body of Christ".