# Bread for the Journey

## Daily Readings and Prayers on the Revised Common Lectionary

## Monday, July 22, 2013

**READ -** The Psalter: Psalm 85

So often in the Psalms, the writer remembers a time when God restored the people after times of trial and calls upon God to do that for them once again. Because of God's love and faithfulness to prior generations, the psalmist draws comfort and assurance that God has not abandoned us and will bring about peace and righteousness.

**REFLECT -**

- Whenever you are going through a time of trial and your prayers seem unanswered and things don't seem to be improving, the psalms can provide great comfort and assurance that God IS working and IS with us, even if we cannot see or feel it. Can you think of a time of your life when you look back that this was true?

**PRAY -**

Lord, help me trust you even when things are tough and I can't see the work of your hands. Thank you that you are always there for me. Amen.

## Tuesday, July 23, 2013

**READ -** Old Testament: Hosea 1:2-10

God used Hosea, the woman he chose as his wife, and the children she bore him to illustrate the depth of his anger with the people of Israel for adopting the pagan customs of the people around them. Hosea marrying a promiscuous woman represented Israel's unfaithfulness and the names of their children foretold God's punishment that awaited them.

**REFLECT -**

- In what ways are we "promiscuous" in taking on the values and customs of our culture which are not God's ways? Are we deserving of God's punishment just as Israel received?

**PRAY -**

Father, help me to see where my priorities, my actions and my words are unfaithful to your will and your ways and guide me to make changes where they are needed. Amen.

## Wednesday, July 24, 2013

**READ -** The Epistle: Colossians 2:6-19

Verses 9-15 of this passage gave the people of Colossae a clear and compelling reasons not to give in to the pagan Greco-Roman society they lived in with its emphasis on philosophy and reason and it's pagan festivals and rituals. The writer makes clear that by Christ's saving work on our behalf, we need nothing else except faithfulness for our salvation.

**REFLECT -**

- Compare the hope we have in Jesus Christ to the uncertainty with which the people lived in Hosea's time. We can have confidence that if we place our faith in Jesus and try to live according to his teachings, the temptations of our culture have nothing to offer us. Why then is it so hard for us to live that way?

**PRAY -**

Gracious God, thank you for sending Jesus so that we may know for sure what you are like and how you want us to live. Help me to remain faithful to you today. Amen.

## Thursday, July 25, 2013

**READ -** The Gospel: Luke 11:1-13

Jesus teaches his disciples a simple, yet profound prayer to be prayed in community with other believers and then urges regularity and persistence in offering prayers to God.

**REFLECT -**

- Although God knows our every need even before it rises from our lips, Jesus emphasizes here the importance of talking with God often and expressing our deepest thoughts and concerns to him. God wants relationship with us, not information. Do you pray regularly and persistently? If not, why not?

**PRAY -**

O Lord, in your mercy, hear my prayers. Amen.

## Friday, July 26, 2013

**ACT -**

Focus Verse: Psalm 85:8

Let me hear what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts.

Make today a day of listening and watching for God's direction. In your prayer time, simply give thanks to God for another day and sit quietly. If possible, sit outside or close to a window where you can see the beauty of God's creation. Notice the breeze rustling the leaves, the call of the birds, the beauty of blooms on flowers. Breathe deeply and quiet your mind, opening yourself to hear God speaking to you in some way. As you go about your day, watch for ways in which God is "speaking peace" in your life, in the lives of your family and friends, in our community and nation. How can you be an instrument of God's peace to those around you? Look for opportunities to share God's peace that has been given to you with others who need that peace as well.