

## Saturday: Review of the week.

This week we were considering our response when "heaven is silent"

We discovered that despite our feelings, questionings, lack of understanding, laments, anger and doubts, God still loves us and remains faithful to us.

- God always acts in our best interests;
- Nothing can separate us from God's love;
- We can freely express our feelings and reactions to him;
- He is the God of the bigger picture
- We need to come eventually to a place where we accept his will rather than our own.

Some of the issues opened up this week may be very painful and you might like to talk to someone or ask someone to pray for or with you.

If this is the case please contact Nathan on 07595388686 or email him at [nathantoseland@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:nathantoseland@hotmail.co.uk)

### Pray dough recipe

2 cups of flour; 1 cup salt; 2 tbs oil; 2 cups water; 2tsp cream of tartar; food colouring.

Put all ingredients in a pan and mix together. Heat gently, stirring continuously until the mixture gradually starts to go gooey. When the mixture comes away from the sides of the pan turn it onto a board and knead it well. Allow it to cool.

## Prayer Resources.

Prayer has often been misunderstood to be simply an activity where we are encouraged to close our eyes and put our hands together, shutting out distractions around us and 'saying prayers'. Although this is one aspect of prayer there are many more ways in which we can communicate with Father God and present ourselves to Him.

This is simply a collection of different ideas we would encourage you to try as you pray. Please feel free to use whichever activities feel helpful. They do not have to be used in any particular order and you may find your own way to vary the exercises in order to be more relevant in your own situation.



We would love to hear from you regarding your experience of using these resources. Please come and chat or email me at [carole.waller1@ntlworld.com](mailto:carole.waller1@ntlworld.com), *Carole*

## Week 6 When heaven is silent.

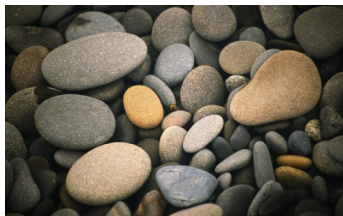
### Monday: God always acts in your best interests.

There are times when God seems distant and we have to live simply in faith that the things God says about himself and his character are true. This is often a hard time when pure grit and determination see us through and we learn a new level of trust. Joseph experienced this when he was betrayed by his brothers, left for dead, sold as a slave into a foreign country, falsely accused then forgotten by those who had pledged to help him. At the end of it all, he was able to recognise that "God intended it for good".

Gen 50:19-21

#### Activity:

Find a stone and hold it in your hand. Take some time to look closely at the stone and focus on it.



Some stones may have little cracks where the dirt has been trapped, Maybe you feel like that at the moment, perhaps you feel dirty or guilty on the inside.

Some stones may have glittery pieces of quartz in them. These may remind you of exciting times in your relationship with God or times when God felt to be particularly close.

Some stones are hard granite or sharp flint; others are softer and smoother. Have you hardened yourself so that you can't be hurt? Or do you feel soft and vulnerable?

Some stones are smooth and even in shape, having been worn by their experiences in the sea. Others are uneven or

When you have finished, sit back and take some time to look at it, you might like to lift it to God as a way of offering yourself to him, as you are. Perhaps you need to explain to God how you came to be in this place, maybe to give thanks for the things you appreciate, ask forgiveness for the things which have gone wrong or pour out your hurts and pain to him.

When you are ready, pour a few drops of oil onto your hands as a symbol of the Holy Spirit and gently start to stroke the dough, allowing the oil to soften it, gently smoothing away any rough areas or spikes. As you do so, allow the Holy Spirit to soothe your spirit and speak into your heart.

(if you are doing this with a friend, allow the friend to do this to your dough and vice versa, praying for each other as you do so).

When this is complete start to shape the dough again, this time into something beautiful, perhaps a flower or something pretty. Give thanks to the Lord that it is He who takes us and changes us, making us both useful and beautiful.



## Friday: "Not my will but yours"

There are times when it can be a real battle to conform to what God wants of us. Sometimes allowing our wills to become like Jesus' is a process which takes time. Sometimes we have to learn to forgive and have patience with ourselves so that God might work thoroughly and deeply within us.



"This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: "Go down to the potter's house, and there I will give you my message." So I went down to the potter's house, and I saw him working at the wheel. But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him.

Then the word of the LORD came to me: "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter does?" declares the LORD. "Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel." Jeremiah 18:1-6

You might like to try this activity simply on your own or with a friend whom you trust.

### Activity:

For this activity you will need a lump of clay, pray dough or bread dough. (recipe at end) and a little cooking or olive oil.

Start shaping the dough to reflect your feelings or attitude; if you are happy it might be round and flat, if angry you might like to make it tall or spiky etc., spend a little time shaping the dough and expressing yourself to God.

have been chipped or damaged recently by another stone. Think about which you are most like.

Peter called Jesus the Living Stone, rejected by people, smashed and thrown away, but chosen by God and precious to Him, more precious than diamonds or rubies.

We too are like living stones, we may feel cracked or tired, we may feel we don't fit or we may be too hurt to connect with anyone. Yet we're being built into a spiritual temple: polished, smoothed and beautified and made into a precious building for God to live in. 1 Peter 2:3-5

Look at your stone again and think about the things you want God to change in you to make you a more beautiful person.

Then, when you are ready, dip your stone into a bowl of water and as you do so offer yourself to God once more. As you do so see how the water transforms the stone, making it clean and causing it to shine with a new beauty.

## Tuesday: Nothing can separate us from the love of God.

Romans 8:38-39 says "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

### Activity:

Maybe you would like to spend some time simply reading this scripture through slowly several times and allowing it to soak in, accepting it as a simple fact without trying to understand how or why.

Perhaps you would like to look up Matt Redman's song "You never let go" on the internet and watch the video. You will find it at [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y83-vMeWc9E) and type the title into the search or follow the link:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y83-vMeWc9E>

### **Wednesday: "Unanswered prayer".**

Most people experience times when we feel the need to shout and scream at God and he doesn't feel to be listening. At these times it's hard to understand why other people seem to get all their prayers answered whilst God apparently stands afar off from our pain.

According to Pete Grieg in "God on Mute" lamenting is more than a technique for venting emotions. It is one of the fruits of a deepening spiritual life that has learned to stand naked before God without shame or pretence. .... Walter Brueggemann (The prophetic imagination p.57) " is that those who do not mourn will not be comforted and those who do not face the endings will not receive the beginnings" Honest lament can express a vibrant faith; one that has learned to embrace life's hardships as well as its joy and to lift everything – everything – to the Father in prayer.

### **Activity:**

You might find it helpful to use a piece of black paper (Available at 'The Works' at the garden centre!) In a place of quietness, take a red pen or red paint and write down your lament before God graffiti style on the paper. When you have finished, offer it to God as your honest feelings and questions and allow him to meet you at that place of total honesty.



### **Thursday:**

### **God of the unseen bigger picture.**

I asked for strength that I might achieve;  
He made me weak that I might obey.  
I asked for health that I might do greater things;  
I was given grace that I might do better things.  
I asked for riches that I might be happy;  
I was given poverty that I might be wise.  
I asked for power that I might have the praise of men;  
I was given weakness that I might feel the need of God.  
I asked for all things that I might enjoy life;  
I was given life that I might enjoy all things.  
I received nothing that I had asked for, all that I hoped for.  
My prayer was answered, I was most blessed.

Unknown soldier of the American Civil war



### **Activity:**

Spend some time simply thinking about the poem and read Romans 8:28-30. You might like to read it out loud, putting your own name into the passage.

Thank God for the truthfulness of this word, regardless of how you feel.

Begin to use this scripture as you pray for yourself and others in need, that we all might be encouraged to continue trusting God, that God's purposes in changing us into the image of his Son will come about. That we might work with him to become more like Jesus