

Sanctuary First

A PLACE TO BE

Ready Pilgrim? (*Pilgrimage Part 1*) 03 - 30 June 2018

Over June and July we are going to explore the idea of pilgrimage.

A pilgrimage is a chance to stretch the legs and the imagination, to walk both *towards* God and *with* God. Pilgrimages have been popular throughout human history and have taken a number of forms. They tend to feature: a point A and B, moving under your own steam through some hardship or inconvenience, and a desire to be shaped physically and spiritually by the experience.

Pilgrims have crisscrossed our world, journeying to sites of holy, religious, and personal significance for thousands of years. On the way, these travellers have committed to getting to know one another, getting to know themselves, and getting to know God.

This is Part I of the theme and we will continue to explore pilgrimage in July. It may be that over this time you feel inspired to go on a pilgrimage of some kind yourself, taking advantage of the warmer weather to step into the unknown. We will be encouraging our Daily Worship writers to weave their own experiences of travelling, journey, and pilgrimage into their reflections.

Each week of the theme runs Sunday-Saturday and has its own subtheme, which contains daily Bible readings and thought triggers.

Date	Subtheme	Readings	Notes
03 June	The moment of departure	1. 1 Samuel 3: 10-20 2. Psalm 139: 13-18 3. Deuteronomy 5: 12-15 4. Psalm 81: 1-10 5. 2 Corinthians 4: 5-12 6. Mark 2:23 - 3:6 7. Hosea 6: 3	On any journey or pilgrimage there is the moment of departure when we leave <i>somewhere</i> or <i>something</i> or <i>someone</i> behind. Read through the daily readings and make connections with the weekly theme. 1. What does it mean for something to be 'ear tingling'? When was the last time your ears tingled? 2. Finding confidence in the moment of departure through knowing that God has gone before us, "In your book were written all the days that were formed for me". 3. Consider the Sabbath as a time to pause before the departure into the week that follows. 4. Setting out in the knowledge that God awaits our cry 'in the secret place of thunder'. 5. Stepping out of our comfort zone, not in our power, but in God's power. 6. Deciding to take action. 7. Choosing to depart, pressing on because "his appearing is as sure as the dawn".

Date	Subtheme	Readings	Notes
10 June	Turning to God	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Psalm 138 2. 1 Samuel 8: 4-20 3. Genesis 3: 8-15 4. Psalm 130 5. 2 Corinthians 4:13 - 5:1 6. Mark 3: 20-35 7. 2 Kings 17: 34-41 	<p>Going on a pilgrimage is as an act of physically turning towards God. Our bodies and minds are closely connected and physical movement can focus our attention.</p> <p>Read through the daily readings and make connections with the weekly theme.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Think about the physical act of bowing down in verse 2. What happens when we literally move our bodies, to turn towards God? 2. The consequences of turning away from God and towards an earthly king. What are we moving towards? 3. Shame makes us physically turn away. 4. Prayer as <i>echolocation</i> - sending out cries to find God. 5. Even when the physical and material let us down we can still turn to God. 6. Turning towards God might require us to literally turn away from what we've known. 7. To whom or what do we bow?
17 June	Regret, reluctance, turning back?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1 Samuel 16: 1-13 2. Psalm 20 3. Ezekiel 17: 22-24 4. Psalm 92: 1-4 5. 2 Corinthians 5: 14-17 6. Mark 4: 26-34 7. Genesis 21: 8-21 	<p>Pilgrimages are by their nature difficult; an easy pilgrimage is not a pilgrimage. Pilgrimages turn us into pilgrims and this process can be full of regret, reluctance, and a desire to turn back.</p> <p>Read through the daily readings and make connections with the weekly theme.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sadness, disappointment, and anxiety can hold us back but sometimes we need to start preparing even when our heart isn't it. When you are reluctant to continue sometimes there's nothing else for it but to fill your horn with oil and set out! 2. Crying out on the day of trouble. 3. An unexpected change of circumstance. The unnerving experience of finding yourself where you never imagined you would be. 4. Taking a moment to centre ourselves in the middle of stress. 5. The 'love of Christ urges us on' and we are given the opportunity for a fresh start, a clean slate, a new leaf. 6. Mustard seeds start out tiny and unassuming but grow and spread easily and quickly. They gain startling momentum, overwhelming what was there before. 7. A pilgrimage not of our choosing - Hagar and Ishmael are turned away into the desert. Hagar understandably reaches her limit and wants to give up but God intercedes with compassion.

Date	Subtheme	Readings	Notes
24 June	Being ready for anything vs. being prepared for anything...	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1 Samuel 17: 32-49 2. Psalm 9: 9-20 3. 1 Samuel 17:57 - 18:4 4. Job 38: 1-11 5. Psalm 107: 1-3, 23-32 6. Mark 4: 35-41 7. 2 Corinthians 6: 1-13 	<p>All pilgrimages require some mental and practical preparation, but it is easy to fall into the trap of trying to anticipate anything that could happen and pack accordingly...weighing ourselves down.</p> <p>There's a difference between being <i>ready</i> for anything and being <i>prepared</i> for anything. Both will help us face what is on the road ahead, but one will significantly slow us and frustrate us.</p> <p>Trying to <i>prepare</i> for every eventuality will wear us down, but with God's help we can be ready for anything with an open mind and an open heart. Our readiness is a willingness to face what is in front of us, even if we are in no way prepared for it.</p> <p>Read through the daily readings and make connections with the weekly theme.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. David chooses to travel light rather than encumbering himself with heavy equipment. 2. Trusting God has a plan. 3. The generosity we encounter on the journey often exceeds what we could have prepared. 4. God is not bound by time or gravity or all the other things that weigh us down. 5. The steadfast love of God. 6. The disciples were prepared for the storm. Jesus was ready for it. 7. Paul's answer to all the sorrows our hearts endure - is to open our hearts wider! We cannot be prepared for all that we will experience, but we can ready ourselves - by opening our hearts a little wider.