

Nudges of the Spirit

Meditations for August 16th to 22nd

Nudges of the Spirit is currently a ministry of Deacon Carolyn Quinnell and Denise Bersos.
This week's selections have been written by Carolyn.

Sunday, August 16th Genesis 45:1-15 and Psalm 133 OR Isaiah 56:1, 6-8 and Psalm 67 / Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32 / Matthew 15:(10-20) 21-28 (*written by Carolyn*)

Isaiah 56:7c *...for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.*

Are we there yet? Most of the time I associate those words with car trips – especially long ones. But today, let's ask ourselves if our houses of worship have become open to all people. Years ago, our (then) parish had an outside consultant come in and assess how “visitor friendly” we were. He made suggestions like, “Put up signs to let people know where the restrooms are,” or “Put some sort of hard surface on your parking lot because women wearing heels don't like walking across the grass.” All these seem like small details, but their absence can turn a potential new member off. Then there's the term, “This is my pew – I always sit here.” That's a hard one because we are creatures of habit. But with God's grace, we can give our seat to the newcomer – and maybe make a friend in the process.

Lord, help me to welcome the stranger with open arms. Amen

Monday, August 17th Judges 17:1-13 / Psalm 106:1-18 / Acts 7:44–8:1a / John 5:19-29 (*written by Carolyn*)

Psalm 106:6 *Both we and our ancestors have sinned; we have committed iniquity, have done wickedly.*

Exodus 20:5 speaks about God being a jealous God who punishes children to the third and fourth generations for the iniquities of the parents who turn their backs on Him. Ouch! This is actually the basis of what we call generational healing. Yes, the effects of hurts and sins do get passed down from parent to child. It's interesting to make a family tree where you notice things like abuse, alcoholism, cancer and other diseases and it's possible to see how they are carried from one generation to another. The idea behind generational healing is that we lift those things to the Lord and ask for His healing of our family bloodlines. We also give thanks for those ancestors who were a blessing, as the very next verse in Exodus says that the same God will show steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love Him and keep His commandments. Praise the Lord!

Lord, I ask your healing for my ancestors and give praise to those who believed in you. Amen

Tuesday, August 18th Judges 18:1-15 / Psalm 121, 122, 123 / Acts 8:1-13 / John 5:30-47 *(written by Carolyn)*

Psalm 121:8 *The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time on and forevermore.*

This entire psalm is full of refrigerator magnet quotes, but I particularly like this one. As part of my morning prayer routine, I regularly ask the Lord to watch over myself and my family in our waking and our sleeping, our going out and our coming in. That summarizes our entire day – does it not? What do you have planned for today that you particularly need the Lord to make His presence known to you? I have a difficult phone call to make that I've been putting off for some time. (I really don't like dealing with this particular company.) So, I've begun to lift that call to the Lord so that I will know his grace and guidance during it. Your situation is probably very different, but whatever it is, may you know His angels are watching over you.

Lord, sharpen my senses that I may be aware of your presence. Amen

Wednesday, August 19th Judges 18:16-31 / Psalm 119:145-176 / Acts 8:14-25 / John 6:1-15 *(written by Carolyn)*

Acts 8:14 *Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them.*

When Jesus sent the disciples out to do ministry, He sent them in pairs. Here the early church is doing the same thing. At this point, Peter would have had a lot of experience with preaching, while John would probably have been known more for his pastoral skills. What a great combination of gifts to bless the people of Samaria with! What gifts do you look for in your minister/pastor/priest? Some congregations want both a good preacher and pastor, but also good administrator, good with kids – and the list continues. Perhaps one very good quality is the ability to recognize the gifts of those around them and not be afraid to call on them when needed. No human is meant to take the place of Jesus all by themselves.

Lord, help me to let go of those things I am not good at and trust them to someone else. Amen

Thursday, August 20th Job 1:1-22 / Psalm 131, 132 / Acts 8:26-40 / John 6:16-27 *(written by Carolyn)*

Job 1:21 *He (Job) said, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return there; the Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.”*

If you would, please read all of Job 1:1-22. Many years ago, I was a student in a bible study on Job and recall our group having quite the discussion on this reading. First of all, we questioned why Satan was in heaven at all; next we discussed at length who exactly caused the losses that Job experienced; then we also discussed the verse quoted above. I have given birth to two children and kissed two family members goodbye as they passed from this world

to the next. There was (much) physical pain at the births followed by emotional hellos to my new babies. At the deaths, there was much emotional pain as my loved ones left, and I'm sure wonderful reunions in heaven with our Lord. We are not meant to live our lives in this world forever. But while we're here, we are meant to thank the Lord for all our blessings. Can we do that?

Lord, I bless and thank you for life. Amen

Friday, August 21st Job 2:1-13 / Psalm 140, 142 / Acts 9:1-9 / John 6:27-40 *(written by Carolyn)*

Job 2:6 *The Lord said to Satan, "Very well, he is in your power; only spare his life."*

Ouch! This hurts my head! What about God surrounding us with His angels of protection and watching over us against the forces of the evil one? What about the line in the Lord's prayer that says, "Deliver us from evil?" Why would God allow Satan to torment Job? The short and honest answer is, "I don't know." However, a personal observation would suggest that we grow spiritually when we live through adversity. Psalm 23 reminds us that the Lord walks with us through the valley of the shadow of death and that we are protected by His rod and staff – His presence is comforting. In my own case, I know I have to cling to those words as I keep moving. I pray you have words of comfort to live by as well.

Lord, some days the darkness seems darker than others. Shine your light into my life so that I may see you. Amen

Saturday, August 22nd Job 3:1-26 / Psalm 137:1-6 (7-9), 144 / Acts 9:10-19a / John 6:41-51 *(written by Carolyn)*

Acts 9:11 The Lord said to him, “Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul. At this moment he is praying...

I invite you to read the entire selection from Acts today and then consider the faith of Ananias who did what the Lord told him to do. I also ask that you consider who Judas was that lived on Straight Street and how Saul ended up at his house. Was Judas a follower of Christ or simply an innkeeper? If he was a follower, then he also took a risk by having Saul stay in his house. Did he witness Saul's healing and become a follower of Jesus? Then there's the irony of the homeowner's name being Judas. After all, it was a different Judas who betrayed Jesus and here this Judas was facilitating (by his hospitality) Saul's conversion. How about you? Do you have the faith of Ananias, or maybe the hospitality of Judas?

Lord, guide me to do those things you would have me do. Amen

