

This short act of worship has been produced for you by Revd Papa Owusu. If you are well enough and able, why not spend a few moments with God, perhaps at a time when you would normally be sharing with others in church - pray for them as they pray for you.

Call to Worship

Based on Psalm 66

Let us make a joyful noise,
singing glory to God,
offering glorious praise.
Let us say to our God:
'How awesome are your deeds.
Holy is your name.'

Hymn: Lord, I come before Your throne of grace (StF 58).

Sing/Read/Pray/Proclaim the words or listen to it here

<https://youtu.be/bekyy2PG1Cc>

Lord, I come before Your throne of grace;
I find rest in Your presence
And fulness of joy.
In worship and wonder
I behold Your face,
Singing what a faithful God have I.

*What a faithful God have I,
What a faithful God.
What a faithful God have I,
Faithful in every way.*

Lord of mercy, you have heard my cry;
Through the storm, You're the beacon,
My song in the night.
In the shelter of Your wings,
Hear my heart's reply,
Singing what a faithful God have I.

Lord all sovereign, granting peace from heaven,
Let me comfort those who suffer
With the comfort You have given.
I will tell of Your great love for as long as I live,
Singing what a faithful God have I.

*Robert Critchley (b. 1959)
and Dawn Critchley (b. 1965)*

Prayer

Let us pray

If we have fallen into despair,

Lord, forgive us.

If we have failed to hope in you,

Lord, forgive us.

If we have been fearful of death,

Lord, forgive us.

If we have forgotten the victory of Christ,

Lord, forgive us.

Silence

May the living God
raise you from despair,
give you victory over, sin
and set you free in Christ. **Amen**

The Collect

Boundless, O God, is your saving power;
Your harvest reaches the ends of the earth.
Set our hearts on fire for your kingdom
and put on our lips the good news of peace.
Grant us perseverance as heralds of your Gospel

And joy as disciples of your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord;
Who lives and reigns with you,
In the unity of the Holy Spirit,
One God for ever and ever. **Amen**

Today's reading: Luke 10:1-11, 16-20 (NRSVA)

The Mission of the Seventy

After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. He said to them, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest. Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, "Peace to this house!" And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the labourer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; cure the sick who are there, and say to them, "The kingdom of God has come near to you." But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say,

“Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you. Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near.”

‘Whoever listens to you listens to me, and whoever rejects you rejects me, and whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me.’

The Return of the Seventy

The seventy returned with joy, saying, ‘Lord, in your name even the demons submit to us!’ He said to them, ‘I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning. See, I have given you authority to tread on snakes and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing will hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice at this, that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.’

Hymn: We have a gospel to proclaim (StF 418).

Read/Pray/Proclaim the words or listen to it here

<https://youtu.be/I5wWRYq57EM>

We have a gospel to proclaim
Good news for men in all the earth;
The gospel of a Saviour’s name:
We sing His glory, tell His worth.

Tell of His birth at Bethlehem,
Not in a royal house or hall
But in a stable dark and dim:
The Word made flesh, a light for all.

Tell of His death at Calvary,
Hated by those He came to save;
In lonely suffering on the cross
For all He loved, His life He gave.

Tell of that glorious Easter morn:
Empty the tomb, for He was free.
He broke the power of death and hell
That we might share His victory.

Tell of His reign at God’s right hand,
By all creation glorified;
He sends His Spirit on His Church
To live for Him, the Lamb who died.

Now we rejoice to name Him King:
Jesus is Lord of all the earth.
This gospel message we proclaim:
We sing His glory, tell His worth.

Edward Joseph Burns (b. 1938)

Time to Reflect

In our story read from St Luke's gospel, we find Jesus appointing 70 people and commissioning them in pairs to spread the good news ahead of him.

Although St Luke only records this story, there are some resonances with the instruction given to the Twelve in Matthew 9:37-39; Matthew 10:7-16; Mark 6:7-11; and Luke 9:3-5. As the first missionary journey of the Twelve indicated the mission to Israel, this mission might signify a missionary journey to the Gentiles.

In the story, these 70 disciples were not supposed to take anything with them when they were sent out...They were to travel light, and their absolute concentration was to be on this urgent mission they had been commissioned to embark on. This may well mean no spares, no backup plan, just a reliance on God's provision.

They were to go and **spread** the good news, **heal** the sick, **engage** in hospitality, and **share** the peace. They were sent to people who might reject and persecute them, and **they went without questioning...**

There was clarity to this mission. It was God's mission and not

their Mission... We read from verse 16: '*Whoever listens to you listens to me, and whoever rejects you rejects me, and whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me.*'

They had been commissioned to be part of this God mission; all they had to do was to trust in and obey God.

The disciples committed themselves to this mission, trusted in God and obeyed his commands, so they returned with full of joy from their experience and what they were able to do in Jesus' name. Spreading the good news, engaging in hospitality, and sharing God's peace – are all ways of giving and receiving God's blessings. ***How does this play out in our lives?***

John Henry Sammis (1846-1919) puts it brilliantly the joy and blessings we receive when we trust and obey in his hymn 'When we walk with the Lord':

*When we walk with the Lord
in the light of his word,
what a glory he sheds on our way!
While we do his good will,
he abides with us still,
and with all who will trust and obey.*

*Trust and obey, for there's no other way
to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.*

As the 70 were called and commissioned and equipped to be part of God's Mission, we, as God's special people, are chosen and commissioned by the Lord of Harvest as workers of his harvest field as the 'harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few' (v2).

St Peter, in writing to the Church in 1st Peter 9ff encourages Christians to live a life of holiness and, in addition, carry out their mission of making God known to the world as God's people. Therefore, we are to offer worship to God and witness to humanity. St Peter says in *1 Peter 2:9-17 (The Message Bible)*

*But you are the ones chosen by God, chosen for the high calling of priestly work, **chosen** to be a holy people, [**and commissioned to be**] God's instruments to do his work and speak out for him, **to tell others of the night-and-day difference he made for you—from nothing to something, from rejected to accepted.***

Friends, this world is not your home, so don't make yourselves cosy in it. Don't indulge your ego at the expense of your soul. Live an exemplary life among the natives so that your actions will refute their prejudices. Then they'll be won over to God's side and be there to join in the celebration when he arrives.

Make the Master proud of you by being good citizens. Respect the authorities, whatever their level; they are God's emissaries for keeping order. It is God's will that by doing good, you might cure the ignorance of the fools who think you're a danger to society. Exercise your freedom by serving God, not by breaking the rules. Treat everyone you meet with dignity. Love your spiritual family. Revere God. Respect the government.

In our risk-averse society, we all like our comfort and security, but it is in these times that we are chosen and commissioned to be the light to all the world, to be the champions of God's mission... Are you willing? Are you ready? **Amen**

A time of prayer (trusting that others pray with us)

Loving God, you call us to bear one another's burdens, so we seek your discernment in aiding those struggling to stand beneath the ravages of physical and mental ill-health.
Peace and mercy be upon them.

Help us to speak up for the marginalised and the vulnerable burdened by the ever growing onslaught of social media.
Peace and mercy be upon them.

Help us to get alongside and bring comfort
to those fighting their way through the dark forest of grief.
Peace and mercy be upon them.

Lord, with an ever growing population
there is great need of you in the world today.
We pray for all those in the field of mission, at home and abroad,
particularly for those just stepping out on their journey.
Peace and mercy be upon them.

May your blessings be poured out to all in need
as we journey in step with your Holy Spirit.
Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Let us pray the prayer that the Lord Jesus taught his disciples
and us.

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and forever. Amen.**

**Hymn: Have you heard God's voice; has your heart been
stirred? (StF 662)**

Read/Pray/Proclaim the words or listen to it here
https://youtu.be/iQ_TRU6aPbY

Have you heard God's voice; has your heart been stirred?
Are you still prepared to follow?
Have you made a choice to remain and serve,
though the way be rough and narrow?

*We will walk the path that will cost you much
and embrace the pain and sorrow?
Will you trust in One who entrusts to you
the disciples of tomorrow.*

Will you use your voice; will you not sit down
when the multitudes are silent?
Will you make a choice to stand your ground
when the crowds are turning violent?

In your city streets will you be God's heart?
Will you listen to the voiceless?
Will you stop and eat, and when friendships start,
will you share your faith with the faithless?

Will you watch the news with the eyes of faith
and believe it could be different?
Will you share your views using words of grace?
Will you leave a thoughtful imprint?

*We will walk the path that will cost us much
and embrace the pain and sorrow?
We will trust in One who entrusts to us
the disciples of tomorrow.*

Jacqueline G Jones

Blessing

Where there is conflict,
let there be peace.
Where there is fearfulness,
let there be peace.
Where there is anger,
let there be peace.
Where there is violence,
let there be peace.

May God's peace rest on our homes
and all who live in them.
Amen.

The blessing of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit be with you now and remain with you always. **Amen**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen

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