

This short act of worship has been produced for you by Rev. Valentin Dedji. 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.

Welcome & Invocation:

Dear friends, it is my great joy to connect with you at this moment on this on-line platform. Thank you for welcoming me in your homes. We meet in the name of the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Amen!

For those who may not know me, I am Rev. Valentin Dedji, a minister in the Enfield Methodist Circuit, in North London.

Our first hymn is an invitation to be still and acknowledge the presence of God with us, even in the most desperate situations. Let's sing: 'Be still and know that I am God'.

Hymn: StF 18 'Be still and know that I am God'

(Sing/Read/pray/proclaim the words or listen to it here.)

https://youtu.be/AyDr9-Mpc_s

1. Be still and know that I am God
Be still and know that I am God
Be still and know that I am God

2. I am the Lord that healeth thee
I am the Lord that healeth thee
I am the Lord that healeth thee
3. In thee, O Lord, I put my trust
In thee, O Lord, I put my trust
In thee, O Lord, I put my trust

Anonymous. Based on Psalm 46:10-11

Prayers of Adoration:

O Loving God, as we gather to worship You,
we invoke the dynamic Spirit,
breathe upon our hearts today;

that we may your power inherit
hear us, Spirit, as we pray:
fill the vacuum that enslaves us -
emptiness of heart and soul;
and, through Jesus Christ who saves us,
give us life and make us whole.

Voice of God, prophetic Spirit,
speak to every heart today
to encourage or prohibit
urging action or delay:

clear the vagueness which impedes us-
come, enlighten mind and soul;
and, through Jesus Christ who leads us,
teach the truth that makes us whole. **Amen!**

1st Bible Reading: Ecclesiastes 4: 12 (NLT)

¹² A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken.

2nd Bible Reading: Galatians 6:2 (NLT)

² “Share each other’s burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ.’

Sermon:

Dear Friends,

This is probably going to be one of the shortest sermon you have ever listened to. Let’s call it then, a reflection.

Everybody needs a support system.

God created our physical bodies with internal systems that support each other. And that’s the same in our relationships. Everybody needs a support system. Sometimes when others disappoint us, we say, ‘From now on it’s just going to be God and me!’ That’s a big mistake! For, it’s the sheep who goes astray from the fold that gets eaten by the wolf. The devil will isolate you in order to destroy you. As we read it from the book of Ecclesiastes, ***‘A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken.’*** (Ecclesiastes 4: 12 NLT).

Revitalize our Pastoral Group System

Studies show that people who have caring support live longer, recover from illness faster, and find life more meaningful. This validates, more than ever the Pastoral Group system set up in the Methodist Church by John and Charles Wesley. That’s part of our Methodist identity and our DNA. Considering the troubling times that we are going through, at every levels of our daily life, I do hope that we’ll find the way to revitalize more efficiently Pastoral Care in our churches and our local communities.

Support – God’s Way

Support gives us a sense of connection and acceptance, which are core human needs. It provides an arena in which you can be vulnerable; a place where you can feel safe in saying, ‘I don’t know,’ or ‘Can you help me,’ or ‘I need a hug.’ This is support – God’s way. And if you can’t find it in your own family, turn to the family of God. And one more thought: don’t forget to express your appreciation to those who support you. Tokens of gratitude go a long way in saying, ‘I’m grateful for your help.’ Support is not a one-way street: As St Paul put it in his letter to Galatians 6:2 **‘Share each other’s burdens.’** Don’t get so engrossed in your own problems that you forget others have problems too. Take the time to inquire about their concerns. No one likes a taker. It’s in the give-and-take of mutual support that we grow and fulfill our God-given potential in life.

That’s why, I have chosen the hymn ‘Brother, Sister, let me serve you’ as our closing hymn for this reflection.

As conclusion, let me quote the following extracts for you from that hymn:

Brother, sister, let me serve you,
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to let you
be my servant, too.

We are pilgrims on a journey
and companions on the road;
we are here to help each other
walk the mile and bear the load.
I will hold the Christ-light for you
in the night-time of your fear;
I will hold my hand out to you,
speak the peace you long to hear.
I will weep when you are weeping;
when you laugh I’ll laugh with you;
I will share your joy and sorrow
till we’ve seen this journey through.

Amen!

Prayers of Intercession

Almighty God! As with silent hearts we bring to mind
how hate and war diminish humankind,
we pause - and seek in worship to increase
our knowledge of the things that make for peace.

Lord Jesus, sanctify our thoughts as we recall humbly
the lives of those who gave and give their all.
We thank you, Lord, for women, children, men
who seek to serve in love, today as then.

Give us deep faith to comfort those who mourn,
high hope to share with all the newly born,
strong love in our pursuit of human worth:
'lest we forget' the future of this earth.

So Jesus, Prince of Peace, disarm our trust in power,
teach us to stimulate the plant of peace to flower.
May we, impassioned by your living Word,
remember forward to a world restored.
In your name, Jesus Christ we pray. **Amen!**

Final Hymn: 'StF 611 'Brother, Sister, let me serve you'
(Sing/Read/pray/proclaim the words or listen to it here.)
<https://youtu.be/OJahFRDrSCs>

1. Brother, sister, let me serve you,
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to let you
be my servant, too.
2. We are pilgrims on a journey
and companions on the road;
we are here to help each other
walk the mile and bear the load.

3. I will hold the Christ-light for you
in the night-time of your fear;
I will hold my hand out to you,
speak the peace you long to hear.
4. I will weep when you are weeping;
when you laugh I'll laugh with you;
I will share your joy and sorrow
till we've seen this journey through.
5. When we sing to God in heaven,
we shall find such harmony,
born of all we've known together
of Christ's love and agony.
6. Brother, sister, let me serve you,
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace
to let you be my servant, too.

Richard A. M. Gillard (b. 1953)

Blessing:

May the day never burden you.

May dawn find you awake and alert, approaching your new day with dreams, possibilities and promises.

May evening find you gracious and fulfilled.

May you go into the night blessed, sheltered and protected.

May your soul calm, console and renew you through the power of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. **Amen!**

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