

Preparing the Soil

For week beginning on January 8

Being in relationship with God is more than just a once-a-week event. Just like any relationship, regular communication is needed. I challenge you to create a daily routine to prepare your hearts for God’s word. This is something that can be done in less than 20 minutes per day. It just requires a time and place of quiet (before the day begins or after the day has ended or even on the train coming home from work). The readings are designed to coordinate with the sermon theme of the following week. I invite you to follow each step Monday through Saturday.

I. Invocation (Pray this each day):

Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ, most merciful redeemer, for the countless blessings and benefits you give. May we know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day praising you, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

II. Psalm 139:1-6 (Read this each day):

III. Daily Scripture Readings

Monday Psalm 139:7-12
Tuesday Psalm 139:13-18
Wednesday 1 Samuel 1
Thursday 1 Samuel 3:1-20
Friday John 1:29-42
Saturday John 1:43-51

IV. Prayers

Monday For those in need of healing from *Yellow Pages*
Tuesday For those serving in military and vets
Wednesday For our shut-ins and caregivers and families in grief
Thursday For our leaders in government and church
Friday For family members and neighbors
Saturday For yourself

V. Reflection Silent and/or written

VI: Benediction (Spoken each day):

Dear Jesus, assist me to follow God’s will, even as you followed your own destiny. Shed light upon my path, and keep close to me that I may follow close to you. Amen.

The general idea and often the words of the benediction are taken from: *A Guide to Prayer* by Rueben Job and Norman Shawchuck, (The Upper Room: Nashville, 1983).

A New Opportunity: Reading through the Bible in two years.

The following readings are designed to lead the reader through the Bible over the course of two years. Each day there is a reading from the Psalms, the Old Testament, and the New Testament. The readings will be given for Monday through Saturday. Sunday will be a day of rest (and catch up if needed).

Mon.	Psalm 7:1-9	Genesis 9	Matthew 4:12-25
Tues.	Psalm 7:10-17	Genesis 10:1-11:9	Matthew 5:1-16
Wed.	Psalm 8	Genesis 11:10-12:9	Matthew 5:17-26
Thurs.	Psalm 9:1-10	Genesis 12:10-13:18	Matthew 5:27-42
Fri.	Psalm 9:11-20	Genesis 14-15	Matthew 5:43-6:4
Sat.	Psalm 10:1-11	Genesis 16-17	Matthew 6:5-18

If you need some help understanding the Bible texts you are reading, I suggest buying the Augsburg Fortress *Lutheran Study Bible*. Just Google “Augsburg Fortress Lutheran Study Bible” to buy through the Augsburg Fortress Publishing website.

A good online resource is called “Enter the Bible” (enterthebible.org). It is produced by Luther Seminary. This website can give you information about each book of the Bible. Take some time and explore.

Another good source of information is a Bible study that I did two years ago entitled “See Through the Scriptures.” Each of the lectures were videoed. Go to shepherdofthehill.com, click on the tab “Deepen Your Faith”. Look under the heading “Reading and Understanding the Bible” for “See Through the Scriptures.” Check out Sessions 1-3.

Join us as we deepen our knowledge of God’s word, while getting to know Jesus as his apprentices.