

Preparing the Soil

For week beginning on August 19

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):

Holy God, your word feeds your people with life that is eternal. Direct our choices and preserve us in your truth, that, renouncing what is false and evil, we may live in you, through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

II. Psalm 138 (Read this each day):

III. Daily Scripture Readings

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| Monday | Joshua 24:1-13 |
| Tuesday | Joshua 24:14-28 |
| Wednesday | Ephesians 6:10-20 |
| Thursday | John 6:1-21 |
| Friday | John 6:22-50 |
| Saturday | John 6:51-71 |

IV. Prayers

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| Monday | For those in need of healing from <i>Yellow Pages</i> |
| 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):

I bind myself today to the strong name of Jesus. My God, I call you to the center of my life. Come to me, stay with me, all the day long. 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).

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).

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|---------------|-----------------|----------|---------------|
| Mon. | Psalm 102:1-11 | Judges 3 | Mark 12:13-17 |
| Tues. | Psalm 102:12-22 | Judges 4 | Mark 12:18-34 |
| Wed. | Psalm 102:23-38 | Judges 5 | Mark 12:35-44 |
| Thurs. | Psalm 103:1-5 | Judges 6 | Mark 13:1-13 |
| Fri. | Psalm 103:6-18 | Judges 7 | Mark 13:14-27 |
| Sat. | Psalm 103:19-22 | Judges 8 | Mark 13:28-37 |

For an introduction for Week 34 readings, see SOTH's webpage (shepherdofthehill.com), find the sidebar button entitled "Read Through the Bible Program". The same introduction is also found on the Shepherd of the Hill Facebook page.

If you need some help understanding the Bible texts you are reading, try the Augsburg Fortress *Lutheran Study Bible*. Google "Augsburg Fortress Lutheran Study Bible" to buy through the Augsburg Fortress Publishing.

If you want a narrated version of the Bible, try out the audio Bible version from Bible Gateway (<https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/audio/>) or download the Bible Audio app from your app store.

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 Session 7 to understand the danger of idolatry for the Israelites. Check out Session 8 as an introduction to the Book of Judges.

Join us as we deepen our knowledge of God's word.