

Preparing the Soil

For week beginning on May 26

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):

O God, form the minds of your faithful people into your one will. Make us love what you command and desire what you promise, that, amid all the changes of this world, our hearts may be fixed where true joy is found, your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

II. Psalm 97 (Read this each day):

III. Daily Scripture Readings

Monday	Acts 16:1-15
Tuesday	Acts 16:16-24
Wednesday	Acts 16:25-40
Thursday	John 17:1-5
Friday	John 17:6-19
Saturday	John 17:20-26

IV. Prayers

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):

Be held in the center of God's will today and know the joy, freedom, and power of walking by faith and in faithfulness. 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).

Mon.	Psalm 69:13-21	Jeremiah 45,46	Acts 17:29 - 18:7
Tues.	Psalm 69:22-29	Jeremiah 47:1 - 48:25	Acts 18:8-21
Wed.	Psalm 69:30-36	Jer. 48:26 - 49:16	Acts 18:22 - 19:5
Thurs.	Psalm 70	Jeremiah 49:17-39	Acts 19:6-20
Fri.	Psalm 71:1-8	Jeremiah 50:1-40	Acts 19:21-31
Sat.	Psalm 71:9-18a	Jer. 50:41 - 51:23	Acts 19:32 - 20:3

For an introduction for Week 74 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 Sessions 11 & 12 as they cover the not only the fall of both the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah, but also the message of the prophets during that time.

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