

Preparing the Soil

For week beginning on August 18th

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, mighty and immortal, you know that as fragile creatures surrounded by great dangers, we cannot by ourselves stand upright. Give us strength of mind and body, so that even when we suffer because of human sin, we may rise victorious through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen

II. Psalm 103:1-8 (Read this each day):

III. Daily Scripture Readings

Monday	Isaiah 58:1-9a
Tuesday	Isaiah 59:9b-14
Wednesday	Hebrews 12:1-13
Thursday	Hebrews 12:18-29
Friday	Luke 13:10-17
Saturday	Luke 13:22-30

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):

You have been reminded that Jesus Christ is your Lord and that you are God's servant. You are loved; you are forgiven; you are empowered and now you are sent to live as God's faithful one. 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 101	Zechariah 3,4,5	John 6:60-71
Tues.	Psalm 102:1-11	Zechariah 6,7,	John 7:1-13
Wed.	Psalm 102:12-22	Zechariah 8,9	John 7:14-24
Thurs.	Psalm 102:23-38	Zechariah 10,11	John 7:25-44
Fri.	Psalm 103:1-5	Zechariah 12,13,14	John 7:45-52
Sat.	Psalm 103:6-18	Ezra 1&2	John 8:1-11

For an introduction for Week 86 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 three 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 14 and 15 as they cover a little about life in the Babylonian Exile and what becomes important afterwards as the Jews return back home to Jerusalem.

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