

A priest noticed that a member of his congregation spent a lot of time just sitting at the back of the church. He asked what the man was doing. The man explained that he looked at God and God looked at him.

(Based on a story told by John Vianney.)



A Blessing

May we know that
We and those whom we love are:
Loved by God;
Special to God;
Held in God's unfailing love.

May we know that
God smiles
On each one of us;
God delights
In our care for one another;
God gives gifts
To each one of us
Through one another.

May we know that
God watches over us
With great love
And invites us to
Work with God
For good
In all circumstances.

Amen

(from Grace Upon Grace by Angela Webb)



Basingstoke & Reading Circuit Prayers September to November 2023

Paying attention to God, as we gaze at God, God gazes at us.

Living, ever present God, teach us to recognise your constant presence in our lives. Enable us to recognise that we can spend time with you in silence, reflecting that in your loving presence we can draw close to you and listen for your voice.

Loving Lord teach us the power of silent contemplation and the difference it can make in our lives and in our relationship with you.

Amen

How are you looking at me, Loving God?

With the delight of a mother for her newborn babe?

With the compassion of a grandmother for her grieving daughter?

With the tenderness of a husband for his vulnerable wife?

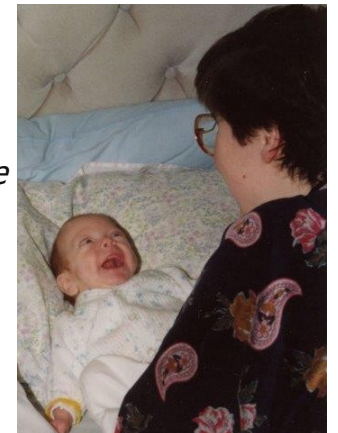
How are you looking at me, Loving God?

With a smile of one who is full of joy?

With the gentleness of one who is deeply concerned?

With the insight of one who knows the whole story?

How are you looking at me, Loving God?



Psalm 34: 1-10, 15-18 (NRSVA)

- ¹I will bless the LORD at all times;
his praise shall continually be in my mouth.
- ²My soul makes its boast in the LORD;
let the humble hear and be glad.
- ³O magnify the LORD with me,
and let us exalt his name together.
- ⁴I sought the LORD, and he answered me,
and delivered me from all my fears.
- ⁵Look to him, and be radiant;
so your^[a] faces shall never be ashamed.
- ⁶This poor soul cried, and was heard by the LORD,
and was saved from every trouble.
- ⁷The angel of the LORD encamps
around those who fear him, and delivers them.
- ⁸O taste and see that the LORD is good;
happy are those who take refuge in him.
- ⁹O fear the LORD, you his holy ones,
for those who fear him have no want.
- ¹⁰The young lions suffer want and hunger,
but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.
- ¹⁵The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous,
and his ears are open to their cry.
- ¹⁶The face of the LORD is against evildoers,
to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.
- ¹⁷When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears,
and rescues them from all their troubles.
- ¹⁸The LORD is near to the broken-hearted,
and saves the crushed in spirit.

I wonder how Christ's presence has calmed you in times of turmoil.

I wonder when you have seen someone's life change direction after an encounter with Jesus.

I wonder if you have known a time when God responded to your prayer in a way you didn't expect.

Settling down to pray

Become conscious of your breathing.

Breathe in the love of God,

Breathe out, let go of.....

Into God's loving care.

Know yourself held in the loving gaze of God.

Breathe.

Imagine Jesus smiling at you,

Maybe you smile back.

Breathe.

Imagine Jesus opening his arms wide in welcome,

How do you respond?

Breathe....Breathe...Breathe.

Prayers for our Circuit in a time of change

Recognising that there are a large number of changes in the Circuit this quarter – not only of new ministers, but also of new forms of church in several places following various amalgamations;

we pray for God's wisdom, guidance, energy and understanding to enable the people of our churches to relate well together, and for relationships between Ministers and people to be mutually affirming and encouraging, so that God's Kingdom may be reflected among us as well as in the on-going mission with which each church is engaged, through Jesus, Lord of us all, Amen.