



**Hymn StF 36** (Ted Smith)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DTfESpt74lg>

There's a quiet understanding  
When we're gathered in the Spirit,  
It's a promise that he gives us,  
When we gather in his name.  
There's a love we feel in Jesus  
There's a manna that he feeds us,  
It's promise that he gives us,  
When we gather in his name.

And we know when we're together,  
Sharing love and understanding,  
That our brothers and our sisters  
Feel the oneness that he brings  
Thank you , thank you, thank you, Jesus,  
For the way you love and feed us,  
For the many ways you lead us;  
Thank you thank you , Lord.

### **Prayer of Adoration**

Thank you, God, for sending your son Jesus who is the Good Shepherd. Thank you, that he laid down his life to bring forgiveness and reconciliation to the world. Thank you, that every good gift comes from you and by the power of your Spirit we know your living presence. May we ever praise you Father Son and Holy Spirit Amen.

**Bible Reading** Psalm 23 (StF 805)

### **Prayer of Confession**

Heavenly Father, you sent your son to show us your way, but we wander on paths of our own choosing. *Lord have mercy.* Lord Jesus, you came as light and life, but we often choose the ways of darkness. *Christ have mercy.* Holy Spirit, you have comforted us, but we do not always comfort each other. *Lord have mercy.* **Silent Prayer.** Thanks be to God that by the love of Christ Jesus our lord we are forgiven. *Amen.*

**The Gospel Reading** Mark 6.30-34, 53-56.

### **Reflection**

Today's Gospel reading book-ends Mark's account of the feeding of the five thousand. It is not, however, the feeding that links the two passages, but Jesus' desire to find peace and space with the disciples and his failure to do so.

In Mark 6.7 and onwards we read that Jesus calls the twelve, gives them authority over unclean spirits and sends them out, two by two, to exercise his ministry in the surrounding countryside. We read that they proclaim repentance, cast out many demons, and anoint with oil many sick people and cure them. Our Gospel opens with their return, excited, elated and eager to tell Jesus what they've done. His response....."come away to a deserted place all by your yourselves and rest a while", must surely have been music to their ears.....

But a large and needy crowd have other ideas; for while Jesus and the disciples sail across the lake, the crowd runs around the shore and gets there before them.

Jesus' compassion is endless, he sees them as sheep without a shepherd, and he begins to teach them many things. There is now no opportunity for the disciples to tell Jesus what they've been up to, or for him to ask them questions. They have been proclaiming the Kingdom of God but at present there is simply no time just to be with Jesus. Coping with the demands of people is, perhaps another important lesson in their apprenticeship.

Today's reading omits Jesus' feeding of the five thousand, his retreat into the mountains to pray and his appearance to the disciples, walking on the water. We go straight to Gennesaret, where Jesus' presence triggers off an avalanche of sick, troubled and needy people, and Mark tells us that they "begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed."

Wherever Jesus goes he brings hope and people flock to him, his compassion is boundless and he spends himself on behalf of people who are sick and needy.

Greta Garbo pleaded to be alone, to escape from public attention and find peace and quiet. It would be easy to focus on the inability of Jesus and his disciples to “come away to a deserted place.”, and to stress the need for Christians to be make time to be alone with Jesus.

For every would-be Greta Garbo figure, who longs to find windows of peace and seclusion in a busy life, there is a least one other person who is alone, who longs for company, human contact and the warmth of friendship; perhaps more than ever as we emerge from the Covid Pandemic.

*How do you think the Church might get the balance right in both offering peace and seclusion in a busy life and offering the warmth of friendship to the lonely?*

*(The Shattering of Loneliness by Erik Varden is a book that has helped many in these days of Pandemic).*

**Hymn StF 481** (Stuart Townsend)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eIQQayhpak>

The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want;  
He makes me lie in pastures green,  
He leads me by the still, still waters,  
His goodness restores my soul

He guides my ways in righteousness,  
And he anoints my head with oil;  
And my cup - it overflows with joy,  
I feast on his pure delights.

*And I will trust in you alone,  
And I will trust in you alone,  
For your endless mercy follows me,  
Your goodness will lead me home.*

And though I walk the darkest path  
I will not fear the evil one,  
For you are with me, and your rod and staff  
Are the comfort I need to know.

### **Prayers of Intercession.**

We pray for the breaking down of barriers between nations, tribes and faiths and for mutual tolerance and goodwill.  
We pray for the healing of divisions within communities and families and for those who work to reconcile the divided.  
We pray for strangers in our midst and for all who work for inter-racial and inter-faith understanding.  
We pray for all who are suffering in body mind or spirit.  
We pray for the very busy, who are in desperate need of refreshment.  
We pray for the lonely who long for company and to hear a human voice .  
May our prayers not be just empty words, but may they include the offering of our lives to help bring about the things for which we pray. Amen. *Our father ....*

**Hymn StF 58** (Robert and Dawn Critchley)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DnXCj5p0GOc>

Lord, I come before your throne of grace;  
I find rest in your presence  
And fullness of joy.  
In worship and wonder  
I behold your face  
Singing what a faithful God have I.

Lord of mercy you have heard my cry;  
through the storm you're the beacon,  
My son in the night.  
In the shelter of your wings  
Hear my heart's reply.  
Singing what a faithful God have I.

What a faithful God have I.  
What faithful God  
What a faithful God have I  
Faithful in every way.

Lord all sovereign, granting peace from heaven,  
Let me comfort those who suffer  
With the comfort you have given.  
I will tell of your great love for as long as I live,  
Singing what a faithful God have I.

### **Blessing**

The Blessing of God the Creator, Jesus the Good Shepherd and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit be yours this day and ever more. Amen.