

DAILY BIBLE READINGS:



These readings are related to the Lectionary readings for this Sunday. We invite you to take time each day to read the assigned Bible passage.

Sunday	Matthew 16:21-28	Take up your cross and follow
Monday	Matthew 10:32-39	Losing life to find it
Tuesday	Matthew 20:17-28	Jesus again predicts his death
Wednesday	Luke 9:57-62	The cost of following Jesus
Thursday	Philippians 3:7-16	Running towards the goal
Friday	1 Peter 4:12-19	Suffering as a Christian
Saturday	Psalms 101	The life of the righteous
Sunday	Matthew 18:15-20	Seeking reconciliation

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK:

Then Jesus said to his disciples: "If any of you want to be my followers, you must forget about yourself. You must take up your cross and follow me."

Matthew 16:24 (CEV)

SAY, PRAY AND BLESS:

A Prayer for the Week:

Lord Jesus, teach us to put you first, take up our crosses, and follow you. Amen.

Mealtimes Prayer:

For all we eat and all we wear, for daily bread and nightly care, we thank you, Heavenly Father. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May God keep your faith in Jesus alive and strong. May God help you to stay joyful and give you patience when times are hard. Amen.

CARING CONVERSATION:

Discuss in your household or small group:

- What is something you find difficult to do? What makes it so?
- Sometimes following Jesus involves suffering or difficulty. In what ways have you experienced this?
- Jesus says *“if you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it”* (Matthew 16:25). What do you think he means by this?

DEVOTIONS:

Look together at Romans 12:9-21. Make up a poster listing and illustrating all of the things these verses call upon Christians to do (e.g. love others, honor others, be joyful, pray, bless). Put the poster up in a prominent place. Pray for God’s help to live out these things in your home this week.

SERVICE:

This week, work together as a household to make small crosses out of note cards or popsicle sticks. Write the words *“Take up your cross and follow me”* on each cross. Commit to carrying your crosses with you this week as a reminder of Jesus’ call to follow him in all things.

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS:

When we hear the word *“disciple,”* most Christians think of the twelve disciples of Jesus, who journeyed with him from place to place in his ministry, and we associate discipleship with being away from home more than in it. But our homes are where we spend a great deal of time, so they are the primary context in which we are called to live out our faith. In the ups and downs of household life, our faith and character are shaped, tested and grown through our interactions with those who know our very best and our very worst. The call to take up one’s cross and follow Jesus is often not a call into unfamiliar places but to live differently with familiar faces. Romans 12:13 says: *“Share with God’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.”* Plan one way you can respond to this as a household this week.