

A Time of Prayer: Listen

September 2024 Edition

LISTENING FOR DIVINE SPARKS: A BIBLE STUDY GUIDE FOR SEPTEMBER 2024

To facilitate group meetings in person or on Zoom, this month's Bible study is also offered as [PowerPoint slides](#) that can be downloaded and modified.

OPENING PRAYER

Almighty God, thank you for the faithful service of those you appointed to go ahead of you to spread your love and your message to those around them. We pray that you would help us to do our part to continue sharing your love and message to those around us: in our parishes and community where you have put us. Guide us to the places where you want us to go and bless our efforts to further your kingdom here on earth. In your holy name we pray, **Amen.**

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

Luke 10:1-11 "The Mission of the Seventy"

<i>New Revised Standard Version, Anglicised (NRSVA)</i>	<i>The Message (MSG)</i>
10 After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. 2 He said to them, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest. 3 Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. 4 Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. 5 Whatever house you enter, first say, "Peace to this house!" 6 And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. 7 Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the labourer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to	Later the Master selected seventy and sent them ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he intended to go. He gave them this charge: "What a huge harvest! And how few the harvest hands. So on your knees; ask the God of the Harvest to send harvest hands. "On your way! But be careful—this is hazardous work. You're like lambs in a wolf pack. "Travel light. Comb and toothbrush and no extra luggage. "Don't loiter and make small talk with everyone you meet along the way.

house. 8 Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; 9 cure the sick who are there, and say to them, “The kingdom of God has come near to you.” 10 But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, 11 “Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you. Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near.”

“When you enter a home, greet the family, ‘Peace.’ If your greeting is received, then it’s a good place to stay. But if it’s not received, take it back and get out. Don’t impose yourself.

“Stay at one home, taking your meals there, for a worker deserves three square meals. Don’t move from house to house, looking for the best cook in town.

“When you enter a town and are received, eat what they set before you, heal anyone who is sick, and tell them, ‘God’s kingdom is right on your doorstep!’

“When you enter a town and are not received, go out in the street and say, ‘The only thing we got from you is the dirt on our feet, and we’re giving it back. Did you have any idea that God’s kingdom was right on your doorstep?’

LECTIO DIVINA

Ask someone to read the NRSVA translation of the passage aloud.

Allow for several minutes of silence as each bible study participant contemplates the passage. As the passage is read a first time, notice which word(s), sentence(s), or image(s) catch their attention. The group can decide how long the period of silence should last, but in the *Lectio Divina* tradition, it is substantial (a minimum of 3-5 minutes is suggested, perhaps working up to a longer interlude).

Invite participants to briefly share with one another those word(s), sentence(s), or image(s) stirring them. Encourage participants to avoid interpreting or expanding on them at this time, but simply to state them out loud. Explain that time for reflection and discussion will follow later in the prayer time.


Have another person read the MSG translation of the passage aloud, followed by a second period of silence and invite participants to share again. This time, ask participants to notice which word(s), sentence(s), or image(s) catch your attention, but also consider what idea(s), feeling(s) or reflections may emerge.

Have a third person re-read the NRSVA version aloud again, followed by a final period of silence and invite participants to reflect on what they think is being drawn to their attention by the Holy Spirit. There are no right or wrong answers. Consider the following questions:

- *What can we say and do to be messengers of peace on behalf of Christ?*
- *Can we today declare the same ancient words: “the kingdom of God has come near you”? If so, what actions would that make a visible reality? What actions are inappropriate?*
- *What are some of the places the Lord may be sending our congregation and our diocesan church to go to as we hear this passage today?*

CLOSING PRAYERS

O Holy God, you breathe your life-giving Spirit into this parish and diocese and call us to join together in mission for the spreading of the Gospel: show us the people to whom we should go and the path we should travel; help us to understand the deep longings of their hearts, and enable us to feed them through the living presence of



Jesus Christ our Saviour, in whose power we set forth and in whose Name we pray.
Amen.¹

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.

CAPTURING THE DIVINE SPARKS KINDLED

- Consider the four steps helpful in identifying and capturing any divine sparks that have come up:
 1. Listening
 2. Capturing
 3. Sharing
 4. Acting
- Consider whether there were sparks kindled during this prayer session. Ask a participant to write down any important ideas that emerged and ensure that there is group consensus around what is captured.
- Who do these sparks need to be shared with at this time? Find a way to share the insights gained with those who need to hear them.

ADDITIONAL BIBLE STUDY RESOURCES

- Amy G. Oden, Visiting Professor of Early Church History and Spirituality at the Saint Paul School of Theology invites us to put into practice what Jesus commands his disciples to do: “root our lives in these two proclamations — “Peace to this house!” and “The kingdom of God has come near.””
<https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/ordinary-14-3/commentary-on-luke-101-11-16-20-4>

¹ Prayers from “Litany for the Mission of the Church” (Episcopal Church’s *The Book of Occasional Services*, 2018.)