
GOD IN LOVE UNITES US: Prayer Guide

God in love unites us is the Report of the Marriage and Relationships Task Group 2019 www.methodist.org.uk/MandR19, discussed extensively at the 2019 Methodist Conference and commended for study and prayerful discussion throughout the Church. This week of Bible readings, meditation points and prayers are offered to support you as you consider the Report prayerfully, section by section, day by day.

In addition, there is a *Study Guide* to the Report available, which introduces each theme in the Report and poses questions for you to consider. The Report, *Study Guide* and a supporting film are available to order from **Methodist Publishing** or are provided online to download at: www.methodist.org.uk/MandR19

SUNDAY

“And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14, NRSV)

Embodied God, help me to live out the gift of joy as I spend time with you today.

To ponder

- God becoming flesh is an astonishing truth. Take a moment to allow yourself to be astonished.
- Jesus shows us how to be human, fully alive, living in harmony with God and God’s creation, and in loving relationship with other people. Allow Jesus to show you what that means in his life.
- Ask Jesus to show you how to be more fully and joyfully alive in your own life today.

Jesus, faithful friend, help me pay attention to your creative love alive in all of us, in our relationships with each other, in your Methodist Church and in your world.

MONDAY

“When God created humankind, he made them in the likeness of God. Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them ‘Humankind’ when they were created.” (Genesis 5:1-2, NRSV)

Creative God, help me to live out the gift of love as I spend time with you today.

To ponder

- We are all made equally in the image of God. Take a moment to recognise how God’s image is alive in you right now.
- God’s creative love is continually active within humankind. Where have you noticed God’s creativity in the people around you today?
- God creates us equal, but we are not treated equally. Where do you see inequality in your church or your community? Can you sit in God’s company, looking together at that inequality?

Jesus, faithful friend, help me pay attention to your creative love alive in all of us, in our relationships with each other, in your Methodist Church and in your world.

TUESDAY

“We love because God first loved us.”
(1 John 4:19, NRSV)

Loving God, help me to live out the gift of faithfulness as I spend time with you today.

To ponder

- God first loves us. For a moment rest in God’s love for you right now.
- God, in love, gives us the gift of our relationships with each other, and of our sexuality. Can you recognise how these gifts – of your relationships with others, and of your sexuality – have enriched your life?
- The best human relationships reflect the love God first shows us. Where has your life been blessed by relationships which reflect God’s generous love?

Jesus, faithful friend, help me pay attention to your creative love alive in all of us, in our relationships with each other, in your Methodist Church and in your world.

WEDNESDAY

“And looking at those who sat around him, he said, ‘Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.’”

(Mark 3:34-35, NRSV)

Father and Mother God, help me to live out the gift of kindness as I spend time with you today.

To ponder

- Jesus looks around the group and recognises everyone there as family. For a moment allow him to look at you as ‘mother, brother or sister’ too.
- Within our home, church and community families we know those who find talk of marriage and relationships difficult – those who live in difficult relationships, who are separated, divorced, widowed or unhappily single, who have been excluded from marriage. Sit with Jesus as he looks at these hurt mothers, brothers and sisters. What do you see in his gaze?
- Join Jesus in praying for the Church, that it might respond gently and kindly to the hurt members of Jesus’ family.

Jesus, faithful friend, help me pay attention to your creative love alive in all of us, in our relationships with each other, in your Methodist Church and in your world.

THURSDAY

“Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus...” (Philippians 2 4-5, NRSV)

Self-giving God, help me to live out the gift of gentleness as I spend time with you today.

To ponder

- Philippians speaks of a generous, self-giving God who seeks only for what is good for each of us. For a moment, become aware of God’s gaze on you, seeking only what is good for you.
- “All significant relationships should be built on self-giving love, commitment, fidelity, loyalty, honesty, mutual respect, equality and desire for the mutual flourishing of the people involved.” (*God in love unites us*) Allow yourself to notice when your own relationships and the relationships within your church and community have not lived up to this vision and ask for Jesus’ forgiveness and healing.
- Bring to mind all those in your family, friendships and church. Join Jesus in praying that all might be inspired and guided to live their sexuality and relationships in a way that reflects Jesus’ self-giving love.

Jesus, faithful friend, help me pay attention to your creative love alive in all of us, in our relationships with each other, in your Methodist Church and in your world.

FRIDAY

**“I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works; that I know very well.”**
(Psalm 139:14, NRSV)

All-knowing God, help me to live out the gift of generosity as I spend time with you today.

To ponder

- We are fearfully and wonderfully made by God. For a moment, rest in the company of God who is constantly creative within you.
- We sometimes find it difficult to recognise those we disagree with as also fearfully and wonderfully made by God. Ask God to show you something of how God gazes on those you disagree with.
- As Methodist churches discuss same-sex marriage, join Jesus in praying that we recognise each other as people fearfully and wonderfully made by God.

Jesus, faithful friend, help me pay attention to your creative love alive in all of us, in our relationships with each other, in your Methodist Church and in your world.

SATURDAY

“Let us therefore no longer pass judgement on one another, but resolve instead never to put a stumbling-block or hindrance in the way of another.”

(Romans 14:13, NRSV)

Unifying God, help me to live out the gift of peace as I spend time with you today.

To ponder

- We all know the experience of judging and being judged. For a moment rest in the presence of God who knows our biases and our hurts, and ask for God’s healing and help.
- Call to mind those within your church community with whom you disagree. Ask God for the ability to be generous, to not pass judgement, but to support them in their growth in faith.
- Join Jesus in praying for the Methodist Church, that it will be guided by God’s wisdom and a desire to help others flourish in the love and knowledge of God.

Jesus, faithful friend, help me pay attention to your creative love alive in all of us, in our relationships with each other, in your Methodist Church and in your world.