

'Stay with Me'

Reflections and Prayers for Maundy Thursday evening

You might want to find somewhere quiet to spend time in prayer and reflection. If the weather is OK, how about finding a spot in your garden, or on your balcony or doorstep?

*You will need: a **candle** (in a holder, if you're going to be outside), and something to light it with; a **Bible**; a **cross**, or a picture to remind you of God's presence with you.*

Opening reflection

As you begin, light your candle.

Listen...

There is a waiting
a gathering of darkness
a hand in the shadows

Listen...

There are soldiers on the road
a High Priest dining
a temple guard pacing

Listen...

There is a lonely pray-er
disciples sleeping
angels struggling, holding back

Listen...

There is a cup overflowing
a Redeemer willing
and all heaven crumbling

Listen...

There are footsteps arriving
a betrayer among the trees
a flash of eyes
and a kiss...

Roddy Hamilton

Psalm 23

You might want to sing this familiar hymn, or find a version you can listen to, or just spend time reading the words prayerfully.

***The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want.
he makes me down to lie
in pastures green; he leadeth me
the quiet waters by.***

***My soul he doth restore again;
and me to walk doth make
within the paths of righteousness,
even for his own Name's sake.***

***Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,
yet will I fear no ill;
for thou art with me; and thy rod
and staff me comfort still.***

***My table thou hast furnished
in presence of my foes;
my head thou dost with oil anoint,
and my cup overflows.***

***Goodness and mercy all my life
shall surely follow me;
and in God's house forevermore
my dwelling place shall be.***

Francis Rowe, 1650

Jesus prays in the garden

If there is more than one of you, you might want to split this between different voices. You might want to either sing or listen to the Taizé chant, 'Stay with me' (you can find it on YouTube).

When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives... They went to a place called Gethsemane; and Jesus said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray."

Stay with me, remain here with me.

Watch and pray, watch and pray.

Sit here while I pray.

The sorrow in my heart is so great,
it almost crushes me.

Stay here and keep watch with me.

Father, I have shown your glory on earth;

I have finished the work you gave me.

I have given my disciples your message
and the world... it hated them.

Yet I don't pray

that they may be taken out of the world.

I pray that they may be kept from evil.

Stay with me, remain here with me.

Watch and pray, watch and pray.

Are you sleeping?

Can you not even keep awake for an hour?

Father, I pray not only for my friends,
but for all who believe their words.

I pray that they may be one,
just as you and I are one.

Father, the world does not know you,
but I know you and they know you.

So that the world may believe
that you sent me,
may they be one...
may they be one.

Stay with me, remain here with me.

Watch and pray, watch and pray.

Keep watch and pray.

Don't be drawn by temptation.

The spirit is willing,

but, oh, the flesh...

the flesh is weak.

Father, if it is possible...

take away this cup of suffering from me...

but let it not be what I want.

Let it be what you want.

Stay with me, remain here with me.

Watch and pray, watch and pray.

Are you still sleeping?

Are you still taking your ease?

The hour has come for the Son of Man
to be handed over to sinful people.

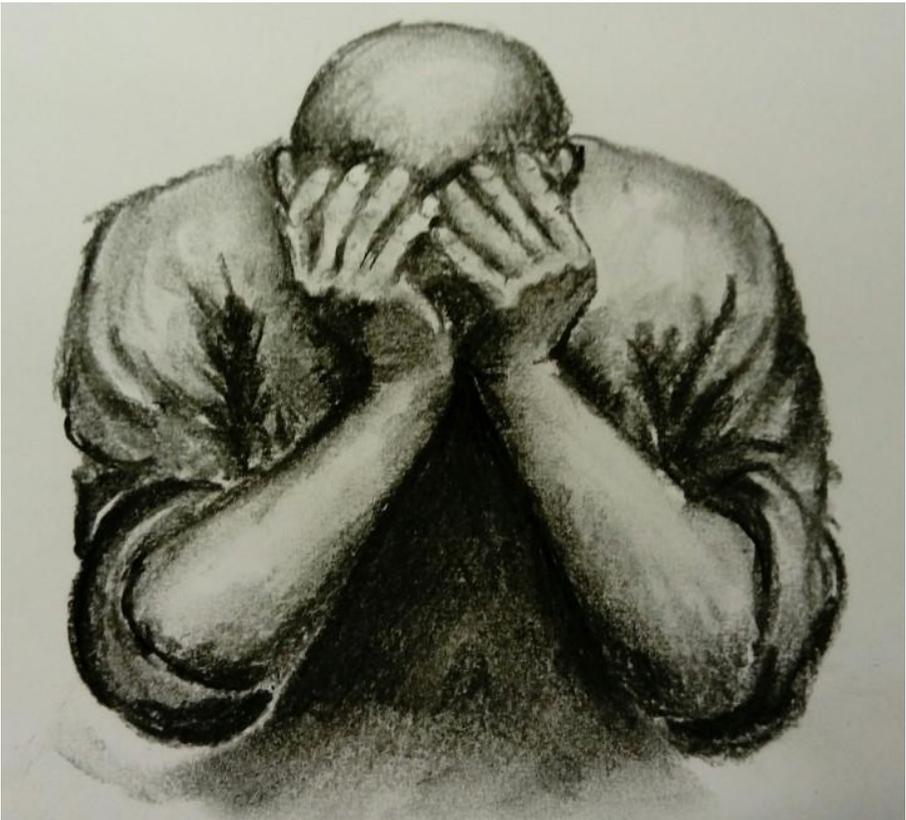
Get up, let us go!

Look, here comes the one who is to betray me...

'The Gospel of the Watch'

Spend some time slowly reading the story from Jesus' arrest to Peter's denial (Matthew, chapter 26, verses 47-75)

*Spend some time in **silent prayer and reflection.***



Psalm 22

Spend some time slowly reading these words, words Jesus prayed from the cross. You might want to hold your cross as you read.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
I have cried desperately for help,
but still it does not come.

*During the day I call to you, O God,
but you do not answer.
I call at night, but get no rest.*

Yet you are the one enthroned as the Holy One,
you are the one whom Israel praises.

*Our ancestors put their trust in you;
they trusted you and you saved them.*

They called to you and escaped from danger;
they trusted you and were not disappointed.

*But I am no longer a man: I am a worm;
I am despised and scorned by everyone.*

All who see me, jeer at me;
they stick out their tongues and shake their heads.

*'You relied on the Lord, why doesn't he save you?
If the Lord likes you, why doesn't he help you?'*

It was you who brought me safely through birth,
and when I was a baby, you kept me safe.

*I have relied on you since the day I was born,
and you have always been my God.*

Do not stay away from me!

Trouble is near and there is no one to help.

*Many enemies surround me like bulls,
like fierce bulls from the land of Bashan.*

They open their mouths like lions,
roaring and tearing at me.

*My strength is gone
like water spilt on the ground.*

*My bones are out of joint,
my heart is like melted wax.*

My throat is dry as dust, my tongue sticks to my mouth.
You have left me for dead in the dust.

*A gang of evil men surrounds me.
Like dogs, they close in on me,
tearing my hands and feet.*

O Lord, don't stay away from me!
Come quickly to my rescue.

*Save me from the sword;
save my life from these dogs.*

Rescue me from these lions.

I am helpless before these wild bulls.

*I will tell my people what you have done.
I will praise you in the assembly.*

Praise him, you descendants of Jacob!
Worship him, you people of Israel!

*He does not neglect the poor:
he answers when they call for help.*

Future generations will serve him;
and will speak of the Lord to those following them.

*People not yet born will be told:
'The Lord saves his people.'*

Concluding reflection

Listen...

Listen in the silence...

There are a faithful few –
more women than men –
who will see this through
to the bitter end
and beyond...

The sun will yet dawn anew
and in the garden of death
a whisper of life will be heard...

So stay at home...

But keep faith...

And keep listening...

When you're ready, blow your candle out and leave your 'quiet space'.

'Peter wept' is by Revd Ally Barrett

<https://reverendally.org/2020/03/26/passiontide-and-holy-week-in-pictures/>