

## 1 Welcome

It is a great privilege to lead you in a time of worship and reflection on Scripture in these uncertain times. There are many voices clamouring for our attention and we need to pause and become aware of God's presence and recognise His steadying hand working to bring order from the chaos.

Find a comfortable place to sit where you will not be disturbed. In addition to your Bible, you will find it helpful to have a notebook or diary to record what God is saying to you.

## 2 Call to worship

*<sup>1</sup>In the beginning, when God created the universe, <sup>2</sup>the earth was formless and desolate. The raging ocean that covered everything was engulfed in total darkness, and the Spirit of God was moving over the water.* (Genesis 1:1-2)

Spend a few minutes thinking about this verse. What picture does it create in your mind?

## 3 Prayer

Our prayer is taken from Psalm 29. If you are able, read this psalm aloud.

<sup>1</sup>Praise the Lord, you heavenly beings; praise his glory and power.

<sup>2</sup>Praise the Lord's glorious name; bow down before the Holy One when he appears.

<sup>3</sup>The voice of the Lord is heard on the seas; the glorious God thunders, and his voice echoes over the ocean.

<sup>4</sup>The voice of the Lord is heard in all its might and majesty.

<sup>5</sup>The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars, even the cedars of Lebanon.

<sup>6</sup>He makes the mountains of Lebanon jump like calves and makes Mount Hermon leap like a young bull.

<sup>7</sup>The voice of the Lord makes the lightning flash.

<sup>8</sup>His voice makes the desert shake; he shakes the desert of Kadesh.

<sup>9</sup>The Lord's voice shakes the oaks and strips the leaves from the trees while everyone in his Temple shouts, "Glory to God!"

<sup>10</sup>The Lord rules over the deep waters; he rules as king forever.

<sup>11</sup>The Lord gives strength to his people and blesses them with peace.

What picture does this prayer create in your mind

## 4 Scripture passages

**Acts 19:1-7** Paul ministers to believers in Ephesus

**Mark 1:4-13** Jesus is baptised by John and is tempted by Satan

## 5 Beginnings

1. Our call to worship and the two Scripture passages speak about beginnings. A beginning is the commencement of a new reality that changes what presently exists into something that is better and/or greater.

- (a) In Genesis 1, we read how God turned chaos into an ordered universe.
- (b) In Mark 1, we read how God sent His “own dear Son” into this world to identify with sinful human beings (by being baptised) so that they may live in victory over sin (temptation in the desert).
- (c) In Acts 19, we read that Paul taught believers that God’s intention is to empower believers to live in victory through the presence of the Holy Spirit.

## 6 Reflection

1. As we read Scripture, it becomes clear that God’s intention is to empower human beings to act as His representatives in our deeply troubled world. God wants to use us to usher in “new beginnings” for men, for women, and for children.
2. Reflect on your own life. Have you invited God to lead you into a new beginning. This means that you say to God, “Not my will, but your will be done in my life!”
3. Do you have family members and/or friends who are struggling to deal with the circumstances they live in? God wants to give them a new beginning! Write their names in your note book and ask God if there is some thing He wants you to do for them.

## 7 Prayer of intercession

Pray the Lord’s Prayer aloud (Mathew 6:9-13),

<sup>9</sup>Pray then in this way:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

<sup>10</sup>Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

<sup>11</sup>Give us this day our daily bread.

<sup>12</sup>And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

<sup>13</sup>And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one.

## 8 Benediction

*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us, now and evermore*