

The Sacrament of a Cup of Coffee

A sacrament is often described as “an outward and visible sign of an invisible grace”. They are rituals that draw us closer to God. Jesus was often sharing meals with people in everyday living, gifting hospitality openly across dinner tables, and investing in relationships. Putting to one side that sacraments are acts of Jesus that the disciples were similarly commanded to do, then I think there is full validity in the idea that there should be a sacrament of a cup of coffee. You know that moment from coffee advertisements when someone wraps their hands around the warm cup, takes a sip, and their shoulders lower and all the worries in the world are laid to rest – that is communion with the divine. More than that though, sharing a cup of tea or coffee with a friend draws us closer to one another and to God.



You are invited to share in this simple time of prayer, worship, sacrament, as we share this journey of life together.

May the mystery of the presence of God and the reality of relationship with God dwell in your midst. May you be strengthened in love and find courage for living as you share this time together.

Arrange a time to share a cup of tea or coffee, or a drink with a friend. After greeting each other and checking in, you are invited to begin with the prayer below and follow the liturgy.

Prayer:

God of life,
we give thanks for this time that is set apart to spend together.
Bless our conversation.
May we be open to one another and to you this day.
May we be attentive to one another and to your Spirit.
We offer this time to you.
Amen.

Select a question or two from the suggestions below to share together:

- What has brought you joy this week?
- What has been difficult?
- Have you ever climbed a mountain? If so, when and where? What was that experience like?
- Have you ever gone on a long journey or pilgrimage? If so, when and where? What was that experience like?

Reading: Psalm 121

¹ I lift up my eyes to the hills—
from where will my help come?

- 2 My help comes from the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.
- 3 God will not let your foot be moved;
God who keeps you will not slumber.
- 4 God who keeps Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.
- 5 The Lord is your keeper;
the Lord is your shade at your right hand.
- 6 The sun shall not strike you by day,
nor the moon by night.
- 7 The Lord will keep you from all evil;
the Lord will keep your life.
- 8 The Lord will keep
your going out and your coming in
from this time on and for evermore.

Consider:

This psalm has sometimes been called “The traveller’s psalm”. It picks up on the image of a traveller journeying. We hear the psalmist cry out: “from where will my help come?” This plaintive cry is one of desperation. The response comes in two ways. First, is that the psalmist remembers the promise of God’s presence (verse 2). The second is from the voice of another (verses 3-8). When we hear the psalm this way we are reminded that we cannot be self-sufficient; our illusion of power is stripped away. We need to be able to seek help. We need God’s presence, our connection with God, and we need the community to sustain us on the journey.

- In what ways can you relate the psalmist?
- When have you needed the support of others? In what ways have you experienced God’s protection?

While being about a specific journey, or pilgrimage, this psalm is also about the great journey of our whole living. The final verse brings our attention to the words of hope for us for our whole lives – this expands this psalm out from the particulars of a specific moment in our lives, and creates the assurance of God’s presence from the moment of our birth through until our death and even beyond. The final verses affirm:

8 The Lord will keep
your going out and your coming in
from this time on and for evermore.

- What does it mean that your life is enfolded in the love and grace of God?
- In this time of suffering and fear for the most vulnerable in our world, what does it mean for God to “keep our going out and coming in”? How does the assurance of God’s presence change how we live in these times?

Prayer:

You are invited to share prayer concerns with each other. The church has a long tradition of praying for the world, for our nation, our neighbourhood, our community, our family and friends and ourselves. Imagine concentric circles, or ripples on our pond, that start at the outer edge and move in closer to our living. God is present in our conversation so you may

choose to simply discuss places that are suffering or needing prayer this day. When you have finished this time of prayer say "Amen" together.

Before we go:

You are invited to thank one another for setting aside this time to spend with one another and with God. Here are some ideas for ways to do this:

- I learnt something new when you shared about...
- I didn't know.... about you. I'm glad to get to know you better.
- I hadn't thought about...this way before. Thank you for your sharing your insights.
- Thank you for praying with me. I will continue to pray for the situation ofthat you shared with me.

Blessing:

Before you part ways you are invited to offer a blessing to each other. One at a time pray the following blessing for each other:

May you know the sustaining love of God and the peaceful presence of the Spirit,
this day and always. Amen.