

KEEPING CONNECTED AGAIN! 2

24th January 2021



THE TABLE OF SHOWBREAD IN THE TABERNACLE REMINDED THE ISRAELITES THAT GOD WAS WITH THEM AND WOULD PROVIDE FOR THEM. IN JESUS WE SEE THE SAME PROMISE FULFILLED BY HE WHO IS 'THE BREAD OF LIFE'

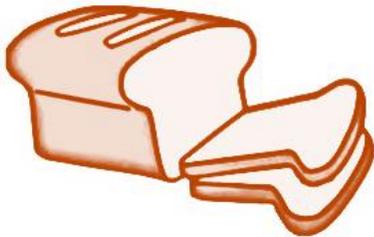
READINGS:

JOHN CH6 V25-59

BREAD OF LIFE

EXODUS CH37 V10-16

THE TABLE



PRAYERS

Heavenly Father, thank you for sending your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to be the Bread of Life for the world. Forgive us for elevating earthly appetites above devotion to you. Feed us with the knowledge of Christ so that we recognize our sin and gladly repent in his name Merciful Father. You heard the prayers of your people in the wilderness and fed them with bread from heaven despite their sin. Graciously hear us today and feed us too with the Bread of Life from heaven, even as our Lord Jesus Christ who fed the multitudes with bread, for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

● Take a moment to pray for all those affected by coronavirus in whatever way, the NHS and frontline workers, the world and church near and far- lift to God the people and places that lie heavy upon your heart

"Give us today our daily bread."

Matthew ch6 v11

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY

Bread for Life

Ask the children to imagine that they are really hungry. *'Imagine that you haven't had any food for two days. What would that be like? How would your stomach feel?'*

Have a number of items in a bag, a real mixture, but no food. Ask the children to unpack the bag and lay out the items- ask them if each one would satisfy their tummy. The answer will be 'No!' each time.

Hide some slices of bread (buttered if you like!) and *play 'hot and cold'* until they find them, when found ask if that would help their tummy and of course the answer is 'YES!'

Eat the bread together and share this message:

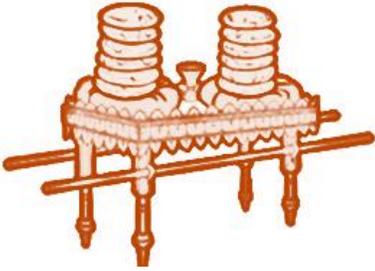
When we are hungry in our stomachs, we need food, like this

bread. Only food will satisfy that type of hunger, yet there is another type of hunger. It is a hunger for LIFE – a hunger for meaning, for peace, for love. This hunger is for a real and full LIFE. The life God gives cannot be filled with things (hold up some items from the bag) the Bible says that only Jesus can satisfy that type of hunger. ***The Bible says that Jesus is the Bread of Life.*** We need food to fill our stomachs and make us healthy but we also need Jesus who is the bread that will satisfy by giving us spiritual strength and an exciting purpose to our lives- to live for God's glory.

Pray: 'Thank you Father that you give us what we need to live. Thank you for Jesus, the Bread of Life. Thank you that he is the one who can satisfy our hunger for a life of joy, love, peace and purpose. Help us to trust him, follow him and know him as our friend. We ask this for your glory, Amen.'

DEVOTIONAL

Sustaining Bread



The kitchen table is a special place. Not just because of the sustenance received there, but also because of the cherished interaction that takes place, or at least used to, and hopefully will again before too long, with family and friends over a shared meal. Our experience of mealtime enables us to better appreciate the symbolism of the Table of Showbread in the Tabernacle. Located on the right, or north, side of the Holy Place, made of acacia wood and overlaid with pure gold. A rim encompassed the outside of the tabletop, and four legs with four attached gold rings supported it. When it was time to move, poles would be slipped through the rings to carry it. Also, plates, dishes, jars, and bowls were made of gold and placed upon it, some being used for drink offerings and some to hold frankincense for ceremonial use.

The primary purpose of the Table was to hold ***the bread of the presence***, which was set before God as an offering. Each Sabbath, the priests would replace the loaves from the previous week with a fresh batch of bread, twelve loaves were arranged into two rows of six, representing the twelve tribes of Israel. Along with the other elements of the Tabernacle, the Table highlights the covenantal relationship between God and his people. This relationship is based on God's provision. God is Creator and covenant Lord who has promised to redeem and care for his people. We too can know this God, as the source of our lives, he gives us our daily bread, like *manna* in the wilderness. But even more so, he is the source of our eternal life. The Table provides a symbol of the abundance of God's promises.

The Table also highlights the intimate fellowship that exists between God and his people. Scripture points to a shared meal as a time of close fellowship and an important example is Abraham's meal with God himself in Genesis ch18 or when Moses did likewise in Exodus ch24. After God gave the law, Moses and the elders went up the mountain to eat a meal with the Lord, and we are told of the beautiful intimacy of that event. Eating in the presence of God revealed that Israel was intimately known and loved by him and the Table points to this clearly, the loaves acting as a food offering to God and were later eaten by the priests of the people. The Table therefore became a perpetual reminder of the fellowship that God shared with his people. Something we too can appreciate by looking at the Table and what it points forward to.

These, like so many Old Testament pictures are shadows of better realities that have come in Jesus. He is the fullest expression of the Tabernacle, and the Temple, as the presence of God among his people. Through Christ, God provides life to the church both now and eternally. ***The bread of the presence*** ultimately points to Jesus as the bread of heaven, he is the bread of life, the true heavenly *manna*, and everyone who eats his flesh and drinks his blood, in other words: believes in him, has eternal life and the assurance of God's presence with them always. This act of feeding upon Christ by faith is symbolised in the Lord's Supper, which is not restricted to priests as ***the bread of the presence*** was. At the new covenant meal, all believers now engage in intimate fellowship with the triune God, and together, the church sees that they are known and loved by him. The Lord's Table also points forward to the glorious marriage supper of the Lamb, where Christ and His church will fellowship forever. This is the table that God is preparing for those who love Him, better than that, those who are loved by him.

Yet even though the Lord's Supper is very important, a means of grace where God blesses and strengthens his people, and ought to be observed by every believer, we don't only encounter God at the Communion Table. Because of Jesus we can know God at all times, and remember, even when it doesn't feel like it, he is there, not far away and distant, but right here as bread upon the table. This same God, through his Son, promises to give us our daily bread, not all that we want, but certainly more than we need, so we are sustained in body and spirit to take our next step.

***Daily, O Lord, our prayers be said,
as You have taught, for daily bread;
but not alone our bodies feed, —***

***supply our fainting spirits' need.
O Bread of Life, from day to day
be all our comfort, food and stay!***

ANNOUNCEMENTS

KEEPING CONNECTED AGAIN!

An update, like this one, will be emailed out each Friday and delivered to folk who don't have internet connection or an easy way of accessing it.

'PREACHING TO THE CHOIR'

Each Thursday evening at 6:30pm, while we are closed for services, we will upload a recording of a little midweek- '*Preaching to the Choir*'. This will include a few musical items, prayer, reading and devotion- looking at bits of 2 Corinthians ch1 & 2. This is not a replacement of our Sunday service, yet is accessed the same way via the website or YouTube, but an additional opportunity to share in for the next while.

OPEN CHURCH

The church building is open for private prayer on Fridays 10am-12noon. There is also the facility to drop off offering envelopes.

PRAYER LINK

While Morning Watch cannot meet at the moment the Prayer Link will still be circulated, sent out this incoming week, if you have any prayer requests please pass them along and if you would like a copy of the Prayer Link emailed or delivered please ask

ZOOM BIBLE STUDY

The Zoom Bible study continues each Monday evening at 7pm, this season we are exploring the Gospel of Luke together, everyone is very welcome!

BIBLE CLASS

Bible Class will continue on Zoom on Sunday mornings at 11:30am, all p7s and up are welcome- if there is anyone who hasn't joined in yet it would be great to have you, please get in touch.

SPRING COMMUNICANT'S CLASSES

I would hope to get organised to start the Spring Communicant's Classes shortly. Any members of the congregation, young or not so young, who may be thinking about becoming a communicant member of the church, or would like to join in as a bit of a 'refresher' please speak to me as soon as possible.

GET IN TOUCH

Please do not hesitate to get in touch

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