

A stylized graphic of a flame in shades of pink and red, with a yellow-orange crescent shape at the base. The text is centered within the flame.

**SCRIPTURE UNION NORTHERN IRELAND
WEEK OF PRAYER 2024
DAILY GUIDE**



Thank you for taking part in SUNI's Week of Prayer.

In this guide you will find daily reflections
based on **Luke 5:1-11**.

We encourage you to read this passage daily, to meditate on his Word and pray that God will speak to you through it.

There are also daily responses for you to partake in, if you want to. However our heart is for you to soak in God's word and pray that he will reveal himself to you.

If you have a word of encouragement for the team at SUNI, please send an email to prayer@suni.co.uk.

DAY 1 - LISTENING TO THE MASTER

One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God. Luke 5:1

It is easy in this day and age to be listening to something 24/7. Maybe it's a podcast while you work, the radio in the car, an audiobook while you're cooking a meal or the latest release from your favourite artist on repeat while you do some internet shopping.

We have an abundance of opportunity to listen to anything we desire, we don't have to go far to find something to keep our minds busy.

We are told in verse 1 of a great crowd pressing in and crowding around Jesus to listen, what were they trying to listen to? *The Word of God*.

During our week of prayer at Scripture Union Northern Ireland we want to take time to listen, not to the everyday noise and the wealth of distraction that we have at our fingertips, but to our Heavenly Master. Are we pressing in?

We want to take time to feed on the Word of God, to be a part of the crowd, *pressing in*, to hear what God has in store for us, as His children, as His church and as Scripture Union.

As we strive to deepen our understanding of God's Word we rely on God's leading and his enabling.

Response:

Take some time to pray for our staff, council and ex-co that we would continue to be people who listen to the Master.

Today we encourage you to listen the Master for yourself. Choose 1 activity that you feel most comfortable with;

A) Lectio Divina; Psalm 1

- See the attached appendix for how to do this practice

B) A time of silence & solitude to allow our hearts to be open to God

- If you are not familiar with silence and solitude, start small, set a timer (3 minutes) to take time to sit in the silence and receive from God. If your mind wanders bring yourself back with a gentle reminder "God I am listening", "Come, Holy Spirit" "Thank You Jesus".

C) Take time to write your own Psalm of praise to God.

D) Go on a walk in nature, intentionally focusing on the Lord as you do this and just enjoy being with him. Our surroundings can help cultivate a practice of silence and solitude.

DAY 2 - OBEY THE MASTER

"And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." Luke 5:4

For many years God has been doing the impossible at Scripture Union. We have been blessed with a ministry that reaches children, young people and families from all over NI and He has continually shown us new ways to achieve this. God has called us to go further than before and to *launch in deeper* than we have in response to his mission. Although this has not been without challenge and obstacle, we have sought to remain obedient to God's leading and this is a practice we continue to pursue!

In Luke 5, Simon Peter is told to "put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch", what is his response? "Master..." Simon responds in his tiredness, in his weariness, seeming unhopeful for there to be fruit from their toil. Yet he obeys- he complies with Jesus' command. And his disbelief is met with abundant return, a return that requires involvement of others to receive it. A return that was almost too much to handle. Simon Peter, ashamed of his unbelief, is left in wonder and amazement at the feet of Jesus.

Have we ever found ourselves in the same position, limiting our expectations of what Christ could do, putting boundaries on the reach of our Father's hand?

Simon Peter reminds us that we have an all powerful God, a God who we are able to trust, and who can do immeasurably more than we could imagine. Even in our disbelief Jesus is at work. What are we asked to do in response? To trust and obey.

Obedying God's leading can seem overwhelming, we know all too well that there is a bountiful harvest to reap. However, we are not called to work "through the night", or to do even more, but to simply obey the leading of God and trust in His guidance. This can mean letting go of some things that aren't for right now to be able to step into the new things he has for each of us.

Response:

- A) Today we encourage you to reflect on the question; *"What is God asking you to do personally?"*
- B) We have some prayer points to help guide your prayers for SUNI as we think about the future;

Ministry Development - Pray for us as we consider future training and resourcing events such as SHINE & SHINE kids, Schools Ministry Conference, Base Camp and the growth of prayer spaces in schools.

Schools - Pray for growing relationships with schools and churches that we are not yet connected with and for the new opportunities that will bring.

Camps & Missions - Pray for us as we pursue development and growth in our current programmes and also seeking out new opportunities for future Camps and Missions. Pray that we would always be rooted in Biblical truth and that we would seek to honour God and his ways, being led by him in all we do.

DAY 3 - WORSHIP THE MASTER

"For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken." Luke 5:9

We believe in a God who provides, and provides in abundance. There has been so much of God's goodness to give thanks for and we want to take time to do that. Throughout the years we have seen God move in various ways, whether it be in schools ministry or in the multitude of summer programmes, we are left with no doubt that God is at work in Northern Ireland.

In Luke 5, we are given this amazing picture of fishing nets bursting with a large catch of fish. A catch that causes boats to sink and others to come to their aid to gather the bountiful supply. Simon Peter is left in a state of amazement and wonder. He falls at Jesus' feet and is in awe of all Jesus has done. Others also share in this awe and wonder. How often do we find ourselves adopting this posture? How often do we fall at Jesus' feet in complete amazement and gratitude for how he has provided for us?

We want to look back and reflect on what God has done in our lives and how he has shaped and led Scripture Union NI throughout the years. We want to give thanks for the many people who have heard the Good News of Jesus and developed lasting relationships with Him. God has provided financially and practically at each step of the way. We are continually amazed by the providence of God and want to thank him for how he has carried this organisation and used it for His glory. As we look back in praise we use this as encouragement and assurance, that we can stand expectant of God for the future. We praise him for his promises and all that He has in store!

Response:

A) Today we encourage you to reflect on the goodness of God, here are some suggested songs for you to listen to and worship God through;

Goodness of God - Bethel Music

Forever - Chris Tomlin

King of Kings - Hillsong Worship

B) We have some praise points to help guide your prayers for SUNI;

Ministry Development - Praise God for the development and growth of the team who help with training, resourcing, delivery, advice and support across the organisation. Give thanks for the development of SEN ministries in camps and missions, for all the resources and training opportunities but particularly 'Kids Quest RE Curriculum' in Primary Schools and SHINE in Post-Primary.

Schools - Praise God for SU Groups across NI and those who lead them. Give thanks for the growth of Prayer Spaces in schools. Also give thanks for the place and opportunities for RE lessons and assemblies in schools.

Camps & Missions - Give thanks for the ministry of SU Missions all over NI, for the many children and young people coming to faith through these programmes and for the devoted leaders who have faithfully served and developed these.

General - Give thanks for the everyday finance and admin, for the work of JP, Joanne, Ian, Jill & Stuart and God's abundant provision.

DAY 4 - TOGETHER WITH THE MASTER

"They signalled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink." Luke 5:7

Without God we have nothing and without His people, Scripture Union NI would simply not have the same impact that we have had over the years. We rely heavily on God's people sharing in our vision and partnering with us to share His Good News with Children, Young People and Families.

As we partner with people and as we all 'grab hold of the net', we want to invest in each other and nurture each other to continue in this mission and to be bold disciples of Jesus, to be well equipped and to be mobilised in this shared vision.

Luke 5 shows us how Simon Peter called upon others to come and help, to get involved in Jesus' miracle and to receive from the amazing abundance. Jesus doesn't call us to work in isolation but to steward the giftings we have received to work together for the building of his kingdom and the sharing of His Good News.

Scripture Union NI have been blessed with faithful followers joining in this movement, giving so freely of themselves for the glory of God in schools and communities all over Northern Ireland. We see our relationship with churches as vital partnerships as we seek to point more people to Christ. As we collaborate with other organisations to support churches, we praise God for his provision for so many seeking to serve God in so many ways. We want to mobilise and motivate people to pick up the command to 'go and make disciples', to grab the net and become faithful 'fishers', and with these partnerships that becomes all-the-more achievable.

We praise God for those he has provided and for those he will provide and ask for His enabling as we support and empower them.

Response:

A) Today we encourage you to reflect on your SU story, how God used many people before us and continues to use SUNI to make God's Good News known.

B) Take time to pray for

- **Church Partnership;** that across NI there is great unity among churches and that they would partner well and continue to work in schools & communities together. Pray for local churches in your area too.

- **Volunteer Engagement;** that we would continue to grow and develop all who work alongside us in SUNI in knowledge, skills and experience. We are so thankful for them, and all they bring to the ministry.

- **Chaplaincy;** for churches and organisations as we explore a more holistic approach to schools' ministry. Pray for the growth and impact as churches grow these relationships.

DAY 5 - FOLLOWING THE MASTER

“From now on you will be catching men.” And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.” Luke 5:11

One of the really powerful points of this moment from the gospels is how we see Jesus loving the people. From wanting to teach the growing crowds, to asking Simon Peter if he could get in his boat, to inviting his first disciples to follow him, Jesus was in the thick of it. And yes, we know that Jesus spent time on his own, that he retreated but in this moment, he was very present.

Jesus didn't send Simon Peter off in his boat to catch fish but Jesus went with him. He was there! Physically there. He probably helped pull up the nets that were full of fish. It would have been an adrenaline filled moment. It would have been an unbelievable moment. It would have been a messy moment. And Jesus was right there with them. The call is to launch out into the deep.

The open water can be a daunting place to enter. You are out of your depth, you can't see the seabed, water can be unforgiving and unpredictable. If we try and do this faith journey on our own, thinking we can manage through the challenges of launching into the deep by ourselves, we are likely to place ourselves in a vulnerable or even dangerous place.

For Simon Peter, he had Jesus with him in the boat along with his friends and fellow fisherman in a boat nearby. We launch out into the deep as a team, we do this together, acknowledging the various gifts, abilities and characteristics we each have.

We all launch into the deep with our questions, (none of which are too complex for God), with our concerns, (none of which are about to phase God) and with our limited understanding (which won't confuse God in what he asks of us).

We launch out into the deep with a strong sense of security and confidence knowing that the presence of God not only invites us to go deep but that his presence is with us, leading and directing us and showing the way to go and with him nothing is impossible.

Response:

Take time to pray for lives transformed in children, young people, families, volunteers and staff. Firstly for salvations, that people would come to faith, but also that our volunteers and staff would continue to be transformed as they serve and step into all God has for them. Pray that God would do immeasurably more than we could ask or imagine. Also pray that we would all be more expectant of God and more willing to respond.

If you are able, make space to do a prayer walk to reflect on all God has done this week and what he has spoken to you about.

LECTIO DIVINA - APPENDIX

(Taken from anglicancommunion.org)

Make sure you are sitting comfortably.

Breathe slowly and deeply.

Ask God to speak to you through the passage that you are about to read.

This is a way of praying that starts with our silence. We often make the mistake of thinking prayer is about what we say to God. It is actually the other way round. God wants to speak to us. He will do this through the Scriptures. So don't worry about what to say. Don't worry if nothing jumps out at you at first. God is patient. He will wait for the opportunity to get in. He will give you a word and lead you to understand its meaning for you today.

First reading of the passage: Listen

As you read the passage listen for a word or phrase that attracts you. Allow it to arise from the passage as if it is God's word for you today. Sit in silence repeating the word or phrase in your head.

Then say the word or phrase aloud.

Second reading of the passage: Ponder

As you read the passage again ask how this word or phrase speaks to your life and why it has connected with you. Ponder it carefully. Don't worry if you get distracted – it may be part of your response to offer it to God. Sit in silence and then frame a single sentence that begins to say aloud what this word or phrase says to you.

Third reading of the passage: Pray

As you read the passage for the last time ask what Christ is calling from you. What is it that you need to do or consider or relinquish or take on as a result of what God is saying to you in this word or phrase? In the silence that follows the reading pray for the grace of the Spirit to plant this word in your heart.

If you are in a group talk for a few minutes and pray with each other.