



Create a peaceful space to pause, and allow yourself to feel God's presence alongside you, as near to you as your own breath. In following the reflection below, as a church we will draw closer to God and to one another as we grow in faith and deepen our sense of belonging to God.

### John 4:19-24

<sup>19</sup>The woman said to him, 'Sir, I see that you are a prophet. <sup>20</sup>Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.' <sup>21</sup>Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. <sup>22</sup>You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. <sup>23</sup>But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. <sup>24</sup>God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.'



This dialogue occurs during the meeting of Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well. Jesus has amazed the woman by describing her lifestyle, hence she calls him a prophet but wants to change the subject and raises the issue of where to worship. Jesus takes up the theme and basically says it is not *where* we worship but *how* we worship that is important. How relevant for us today. This was part of the lectionary for Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> March – the last Sunday before we stopped gathering together to worship in our church building. We have an amazing God who prepares us for a situation before we even know it will happen!

Many of us at Emmanuel have coped with change – worshipping in different church buildings and for all of us the change will come when we move into our new building in Upperton Road. God is already teaching us to realise that he is not constrained by buildings. Our God is Spirit, an omnipresent Spirit who is with us, accessible at all times in all places. He is waiting for us to worship Him now in our homes, worshipping Him in the quiet stillness we create so that we can bring our praise and thanks to him as well as our intercessions. He does not look at our surroundings but into our hearts and minds and pours out His loving care wherever we are. What a wonderful God we have.

**Prayer:** Lord God, we come before you to thank you that, though we may be confined to our homes, you are unconfined, limitless, omnipresent. We thank you that we can come to worship you now, knowing you will hear us and pour out your love into our hearts calming our fears and giving us peace.

We pray for all who have the coronavirus and those caring for them in their homes or hospitals. We pray for all researching the nature of Covid-19 and seeking to find a vaccine: give them insight and blue-sky thinking. We pray for all who are trying to keep the country running and people fed. May we all treat them with respect as they seek our own good.

As we pray this for our own country, we pray too for all countries around the world who are looking to the wellbeing and safety of their own citizens. Remind us that we are all your children: you are our Father.

In our hearts or aloud we can say the family prayer which unites us all. Amen