



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.

Bible Passages for Reflection

No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. (*John 15:13*)

The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all they done and taught. And he said to them: 'Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while'. For many were coming and going, and they had no time even to eat (*Mark 6: 30-31*)

Be still, and know that I am God (*Psalms 46:10*)

'Stay Safe' has now become an expression with which we are only too familiar. Whilst many of us are able to put into practise this expression, many others working on a variety of 'front lines' are not. For them, the expression 'Stay Safe' is both a wish and hope. It also reminds them (and indeed all of us) of our vulnerability in the face of Covid-19. Many people in different ways and circumstances are self-sacrificing out of a deep sense of compassion. Some sadly have paid the ultimate sacrifice. Some have volunteered to go back to work recognising the risks that this entails. Each of these people, with differing religious beliefs or none at all are in different ways practising unconditional, self-giving Christ-like love. Christ of course did not 'Stay Safe'. He controversially healed on the Sabbath, overturned temple tables, and "set his face" resolutely to travel to Jerusalem known for its persecution of prophets.



But what of those of us who for different reasons have to stay safe for the common good?

Our task in this health crisis is a different one to the 'risk-takers'. They need our prayers both of thankfulness and intercession. So do those who for a variety of reasons are finding this lockdown experience very stressful and frightening.

We 'Stay-Safers' are discovering and rediscovering different ways to keep in touch and support our families, friends and acquaintances, some of whom are having to self-isolate or are in grief. The telephone has come back into prominence, and for some of us social media can enable 'electronic hugs' to be communicated!

We also need to be gentle with ourselves, thankful for the love and support we are receiving and prepared to be more still and reflective. This can enable us to 'touch' the quiet centres deep within us which can sustain us in these challenging times. We may well, at such moments empathise with the Psalmist's advice to slow down – "Be still, and know that I am God."

Prayer:

Loving God, we give thanks and pray for those prepared to be vulnerable for the sake of the unprepared vulnerable.

We give thanks for the example of a 'risk-taking', life-laying-down Christ.

We give thanks for those who are exercising the discipline of 'staying safe', for the safety of others.

And we pray that we may all find ways of being gentle with ourselves so as to discover the strengthening we all need in these times.

We ask this in the name of Christ. **AMEN.**

