

## 1. Jesus is the way

John 14: 1-7

The disciples were filled with horror when Jesus told them about his departure. But it was unfounded, because he departed in order to prepare a place for them in the Father's house, so they would be with Him.

It is always nice to arrive somewhere when you are expected. A place where the bed is made, and the dinner is cooked. A place where there is someone who is looking forward to spending time with you. Jesus prepared a house just like that for the disciples and the people who believed in Him. It is not just a temporary home but an everlasting one.

When you venture home, it is good to know the way. Thomas and the disciples had gotten to know Jesus, so they also knew the way home. Thus, they also knew the Father. This home was not strange to either the disciples nor to us. It is a place that we recognize, because we know who Jesus is. It gives us a feeling of belonging. But Jesus is not only waiting in the door. He joins us on our way down the path of life in order to lead us to his and the Father's home.

### **Topics for prayer:**

We thank You for preparing a home for us.

We confess that our hearts can be filled with horror and unease when our faith fails us.

We pray that You will fill our hearts with faith.

We pray for the Church that it will lead people to Jesus in this country and all over the world.

## 2. Surprised on the way home

Luke 15: 11-32

Both the youngest and the oldest son were surprised on their way home that day. The youngest son was overwhelmed by the sight of his father rushing towards him and embracing him. He had prepared his speech; he wanted to apologise for squandering his father's fortune. Instead, he met his father who lavished his love on him. For that same reason, his brother was filled with anger and resentment. He condemned his brother for his dissolute lifestyle, and he blamed his father for his lavished love. He did not recognise that he had gotten what he had earned from the father. Therefore, he would not walk into the house.

In some situations, we look like the youngest brother who rejects God's love, because we want to create our own home and life following our own wishes and ambitions. At other times, we look like the oldest brother when we think that we can earn God's love by leading a good and moral lifestyle. But for all of us, it is all about surrendering to the love that God wishes to give to us, and to attend the party where He is the only host.

### **Topics for prayer:**

We thank you God because You lavish Your love on us.

We confess that we often reject Your love or think that we have earned it.

We pray that Your love will be visible in our lives.

We pray for the Church that it must be a place where both the youngest and oldest brothers can attend.

### **3. A long way from home**

Jeremiah 29: 4-14

When Jerusalem was attacked by the Babylonian kingdom, a great part of the people was removed from their homes. They became fugitives in Babylon and had to live as a minority in a culture with strange gods. Some people rebelled others assimilated to the new culture and the new gods. But in his letter to the fugitives, the prophet Jeremiah writes that they should build houses and settle down, plant gardens and start a family. They should seek prosperity for the town and pray to God for it. God had a plan that He would someday bring the fugitives back to their homes.

As humans, we live in a kind of exile. We were driven away from our real home in the Garden of Eden and from the relationship to God. As fugitives, we should neither assimilate to the culture around us, accept new gods or rebel against the authorities. Instead we should seek to do the best we can for the city in which we live and the people with whom we surround ourselves with. We must pray to God for our city and fellow beings. We can live with hope and the knowledge that God will someday bring us back to our rightful home and to the relationship with Him.

#### **Topics for prayer:**

We thank You God, because You have made plans to bring us home.

We confess that we often do not live our lives according to Your will.

We pray that You will help us to strive to bring happiness and prosperity to our city.

We pray for the people that make decisions on behalf of our city and country. May You give them knowledge to lead with wisdom.

### **4. An unexpected visit**

Luke 19: 1-10

Something was different that day in Jericho when Zach walked home. It was not the usual steps he took towards the entrance to his house. Jesus saw Zach in the middle of his messy life filled with sin and shame, and He wanted to visit him.

For many of us, such a visit could create a lot of thoughts and worries: Did I tidy up? Do I have anything to offer him? I hope he will not look into the office! Jesus wants to meet us right where we are, also in the corners in our lives that are dusty and that we would wish looked different. Jesus sees us and our lives with what it contains. Good and evil.

Zach's home was transformed from the day he let Jesus in. He saw his life from a different perspective which made him organize his life differently. Jesus also knocks on the door of our hearts, and he want to have a relationship to us.

#### **Topics for prayer:**

We thank You, because You see us and wish to have a relationship to us.

We confess that we all too often close the doors to our hearts to people that are in need.

We pray for boldness to let You and other people into our lives.

We pray for the people who are lonely, fragile and at risk.

## 5. Two homes

Letter of Paul to the Philippians 1: 21-24

You cannot blame Paul if his life was filled with anxiety and worry when he wrote the letter to the congregation in Philippi. He is imprisoned, and he does not know if the result of his trial will be martyr death. But Paul is not filled with anxiety and worry about his death. On the contrary, he writes that death is a victory for him, because it means that he is going to be together with Jesus in a concrete and complete sense. It is a companionship that he longs for. Simultaneously, he knows that if he is released, he can serve the congregation, and help them find joy in their faith and to be proud to be associated with Jesus.

Yearning to come home to the fellowship with Jesus is like yearning to come home from a longer journey to be with the people you love. But here Paul reminds us that life is not only a journey to be ended. With the life that we live among other people here on earth, we are called to serve people with joy in the faith of Jesus.

### **Topics for prayer:**

We thank you God that You conquered death.

We confess to You that life's adversity sometimes kills the joy of faith in us.

We pray that we will serve each other, so that we can rejoice in our faith in You.

We pray for the people that are persecuted and imprisoned because of their faith in You.

## 6. My cup overflows

John 4: 1-30

"There is something missing." Most people know this feeling of emptiness. A longing and thirst for something that we might not even know how to put in words.

The woman by the well felt the physical thirst and went to the well to quench this basic need, but she also knew a deeper thirst. When she met Jesus, he pointed towards the places in her life where she experienced emptiness. He knew about the parts of her life where she was afflicted, but he also knew how to ease the pain that she experienced. She yearned for love and discovered that the only one, who could satisfy this yearning and fill the void inside of her, was Jesus. She found a spring of water in Jesus that filled her up, and she became a spring of living water for the people in the town herself when she returned home to her town and told everyone about her encounter with Jesus.

### **Topics for prayer:**

We thank You, because You are the living water that fills us.

We confess that we try to fill the void in our own way instead of letting ourselves being filled by You.

We pray that You will be the spring of living water in us.

We pray for all people that believe in You, that they will spread hope and love in their homes and on their workplace.

## **7. The Christian fellowship as a home**

Mark 2: 13-17

The tax collector Levi was invited to follow Jesus and to be His disciple. He was invited into a fellowship of a mixed bunch of people, who had also chosen to follow Jesus. This bunch of people was in many ways the society outcasts, the ones that other people looked down upon. Jesus created a fellowship for these people, where they could feel at home. There was room for imperfect, vulnerable and sinful people around Him. Here you could be sure to be included if you could not find meaning by yourself.

The Christian fellowship can quickly become a gathering of people, who at first glance seem to be in control of their lives and their faith. That is when it becomes an excluding fellowship that does not manage to include the people, who, for some reason or other, have fallen out of line. We must at all times ask ourselves, how our Christian fellowship is reflecting the fellowship around Jesus, and we, as His disciples, can inspire other people to follow Him.

### **Topics for prayer:**

We thank You for inviting imperfect people onto the journey of faith.

We confess that our fellowship often fails to be inclusive.

We pray that Your Church will unite and be one with Christ.

We pray for all the people that are sick or live with a handicap. Help us fulfil their need for fellowship and closeness.

## **8. Finally home**

Revelations 21: 1-4

Sometimes it can be hard to grasp that we have a home that awaits us in Heaven. It is described as a place where sin and pain has ceased. In dark times we can long for this to happen. But in reality, it is not the absence of evil that makes Heaven a home for us.

In Heaven God will be present and we will live among us humans. Not like in the time of the temple, where God's presence had to be separated from the people in the inner chamber of the temple. He will not only be spiritually present. God will be present in Heaven in a concrete and physical sense. The Bible tells us that the city does not have .... God will one day make everything new and that will be a home for us. It will be a home like no other home we have experienced or known before. Because our true home is where God is.

He has promised to walk with us and lead us, also when the distance seems difficult to walk, so that we someday can stand together in Heaven and say: "Finally home".

### **Topics for prayer:**

We thank You for the hope of someday being with You.

We confess that we do not always wish to lead people to You.

We pray for everyone who seek You. Join them on the way to You.

We pray for the youth work in the churches. Guide the new generation on the journey to our final home.