

# *Service Sunday 2017*

## **Calls to Worship**

By Dana Cassell, BVS Unit #277

One: We gather this morning, face-to-face.

*All: We gather this morning, heart-to-heart.*

One: We gather to be face-to-face with God.

*All: We gather to be heart-to-heart with one another.*

One: As we enter into worship this morning, turn to your neighbors and greet them by name!

By Marie Maurice, BVS Unit #315

As Jesus our exalted head came to the world a humble obedient servant, let us come.

By Tim Heishman, BVS Unit #301

One: In difficult times,

*All: it can seem as though God is far away and cannot hear us.*

One: Yet God is not silent or distant.

*All: God speaks to us in many ways, places, and times.*

One: God is here, even now, longing to speak to us.

*All: We are here too: listening, and open to God's word.*

One: May God speak to us and *through* us today.

*All: We will listen to God and to one another, in eager expectation!*

By Deanna Beckner, BVS Unit #311

Males: We're here to be salt—seasoning that brings out the God-flavors of this earth.

*Females: We're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world.*

Under 40: God is not a secret to be kept.

*Over 40: God is putting us on a light stand.*

**All: Now that God has put us there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! We should be generous with our lives. By opening up to others, we'll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven.**

*Females: Brothers and sisters, we urge you to warn those who are lazy.*

Males: Encourage those who are timid.

*Over 40: Take tender care of those who are weak.*

Under 40: Be patient with everyone.

**All: See that no one pays back evil for evil, but always try to do good to each other and to all people.**

Males: May we speak kindly of one another and build each other up.

*Females: May we speak kindly of ourselves.*

Under 40: May we invite anyone into God's family who is willing to come.

*Over 40: May we follow God more passionately.*

**All: May we greet one another with a hello.**

## **Prayers**

By Dana Cassell, BVS Unit #277

God who knows each of our hearts,

Thank you for the many ways you allow us to talk with one another:

pen and paper;

phone calls;

email;

text messages;

video chat;

Facebook!

Instagram!

Snapchat!

And thank you for the many ways we can talk to you:

silence;

song;

prayer;

praise;

confession;

lament;

Thank you for all the ways you understand us, even when we aren't sure the best way to say it.

Thank you for sisters and brothers who hear our stories, and whose stories we get to witness, too.

And, God, forgive us for all the times we fail to listen, for all the times we are too busy thinking about ourselves to hear a friend, for all the times we forget to call or

say hello, for all the times we fail to communicate well with our families, for all the times we ignore these ways of sharing our lives with one another and with You.

In the name of Jesus, the one who makes all this heart-to-heart possible,  
Amen.

By Marie Maurice, BVS Unit #315

O Wondrous and Holy God, hear our prayer.

How can we hear your Word above all the clamor and chaos, the often overwhelming noise coming at us from every direction? How can we see the way you want us to take in the darkness of the world which at times seems to close around us? How can we walk forward without fear and trembling at what may lay ahead?

Only with you, oh God, our rock, our light and our salvation; only with your great love, your grace and never-ending calling out to us can we hope to continue. Help us to quiet our minds, slow our hearts to listen to your voice with our heart and soul so that your spirit may guide our next steps. Thank you that we don't have to know what may happen next year, next week or even tomorrow for we know of your eternal promise to care for us as we call to you and seek your will. We hear your voice and can know a little of the depth of your love for us. We accept the wondrous gift from you, paid for through the great sacrifice of our Lord, and we seek to share it with those who you place in our path each day. Open our hearts to show your love through a simple smile, a kind word, a touch, a prayer or an act toward meeting the needs of our brothers and sisters. We can't do it on our own. Lead on, O God! Amen.

By Emma Berkey, BVS Unit #304

Heavenly Father, thank you for creating us for relationships; relationships with family, friends, colleagues, and strangers, but especially a relationship with you. Lord, we know you want to communicate with us, and we long to hear your voice. Help us this week to put down our phones, turn off our televisions, and open your word to hear all you want to tell us. Let us be filled with your love as we discover who you created us to be. In your Son's holy name, Amen.

By Destinee Wells, BVS Unit #313

Patient God, help me to be patient myself. Help me stop, and truly listen to the needs of the people around me. Amen.

By Destinee Wells, BVS Unit #313

Holy Spirit, help me to be present. Turn of all of the worries, distractions, deadlines, and help me to simply be. Even just a moment let me feel your calm, peaceful, love. Amen.

## **Sendings**

By Destinee Wells, BVS Unit #313

This week, I challenge you to slow down, listen to world, or take time to notice something different in your normal routine. May you feel peace.

By Shelley Weachter, BVS Unit #315

Have you heard of Enoch? Very little is known about him; he lived to be 365 years old and had many children. Only one verse testifies to his goodness, "Enoch walked faithfully with God; then he was no more, because God took him away;" Genesis 5:24. He walked faithfully with God, so he was spared death. What do you want your one sentence descriptor to be? Let us learn and strive this week to leave a sentence like Enoch's; He walked faithfully with God.

Provided by Shelley Weachter, BVS Unit #315

1: I dream of a world that is free of captive people, of oppression, that healing may be for all...but I am only one.

2: I dream of bringing good tidings of change both possible and real that the world's poor may know hope...but I am only one.

3: I dream of binding up the brokenhearted, those whose spirits have been destroyed in the struggle that never ends...but I am only one.

4: I dream of opening prison doors and freeing those so tightly bound by prejudice, fear, and hate...but I am only one.

**All: I am only one, but with you and other sisters and brothers who care, we are many. Let us go forth together with the Spirit of God upon us all and fulfill our dreams.**

(From *For All Who Minister* Pg. 98-99)

By Deanna Beckner, BVS Unit #311

Like the first page of a special book or the first rustic red brick put in place to build a church, so today is to the rest of our lives. There is work to be done. There are friends to be made. There is God's love to spread. May we make our time purposeful, bettering our own lives and the lives of others. May we not take God for granted, but instead trust in God to be with us and lead us through service. Go now, with the love of Christ and the excitement of what is to come.

## Poems

By Paige Butzlaff, BVS Unit #313

"Hello, my child"

With me, no pen

With me, no ink

Just words from my heart

That flow and create a link

From I, your Creator

To you, my lovely child

But what shall I say?

In this crazy life that is wild

So much to tell you

So many ways to show you my love

But alas, I must send

A sign of peace, with a white dove

Peace reigns forth as a sign of the Spirit

Along with others, like love and joy

Or the goodness you feel

When you give a child a new toy

The fruit of love is service,

Which is compassion in action

With this I will use

To create some splendid traction

To move people in my midst

Saying greetings to each other

And blend people with families

Ones without a sister, father, brother or mother

Give your love

Give your time

Say hello in the morning

And goodnight during the nighttime

With a soft kiss  
Or a gentle hug  
I'll send my love along  
Just to make sure you're all warm and snug

"Peace to you my friends"  
Is where I will leave you now  
From hello to goodbye, always near  
This I say, promise and avow

By Penny Radcliff, BVS Unit #311

*Blessings*

- B**      Become a blessing – reach out to others  
          *... we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord  
          Jesus himself said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."  
          Acts 20:35*
  
- L**      Love your family, friends and the unlovable  
          *Love one another as I have loved you, so you must love one  
          another. John 13:34*
  
- E**      Embrace every experience and make new memories  
          *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those  
          who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.  
          Romans 8:28*
  
- S**      Savor your surroundings – the sights, sounds, smells, and tastes  
          of living  
          *So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the  
          glory of God. I Corinthians 10:31*
  
- S**      Search for new friends, new opportunities and new challenges  
          *If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever  
          you wish, and it will be given you. John 15:7*
  
- I**      Invest in yourself – eat, sleep, and exercise in healthy ways

*Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own. I Corinthians 6:19*

- N** Nullify negativity with a positive attitude and a grateful heart  
*Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. I Thessalonians 5:16-18*
- G** Give simply – a smile, a touch, an encouraging word  
*Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. II Corinthians 9:7*
- S** Serve others humbly using your God-given talents  
*Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men. Ephesians 6:7*

## **Reflections**

By Marie Maurice, BVS Unit #315

*God Speaks to Us*

Thank God for our ability to hear him! God calls us in the quiet patter of soft rain, in the booming thunder of a mighty storm, in the whisper of the quaking trees. We are reminded of all that our Holy God has done for us as we take a quiet moment of self-reflection. When we are quiet and focus our thoughts on God, on God's will, the Holy Spirit within us speaks to our soul. The Spirit often pricks our conscience to act out God's love in our everyday encounters with others who cross our paths. God speaks through his Word, speaks through his people, speaks through his whispers, to encourage us, instruct us, correct us, and guide us. What must we do to be better listeners? The act of listening necessary for true communion is desperately needed and is often sorely lacking.

We need to quiet all the noise of this world that clamors around us, layer on layer at times, 'til people are shouting to be heard above the rest. How can we hear God? "Be still and know that I am God!"

Putting into practice what you have heard, remain humble with a teachable heart to hear God's word.

By Marie Maurice, BVS Unit #315

*We Speak to Others in Love*

Consider the Path Not Taken ...

As we walk the paths of our world, we pass people, sometimes one by one, sometimes in crowds. Each one we pass is someone God created in his image. Each of them is so loved by God that he willingly sacrificed his son. Each of them God calls to come to him, and it is his desire that as many, who will hear, will come.

Not all people who need the testimony of God's love through us are where we go in our typical daily lives. Do we seek to go out of our way to visit those who live in neighborhoods we don't typically enter? There are those who are isolated by the struggle to know our language and those who languish in nursing homes or even in their own silent homes all alone. Those in prison and those living in the park nearby or under the highway underpass are also our brothers and sisters. God loves them so; His redemption plan is for them too. Are we serving God answering the small voice from within if we turn our head and walk away or just drive by in the comfort of our automobiles? Would our Lord lower his eyes and go on by without a word, a touch, a smile or an act of kindness?

We, who are so loved by our great and faithful creator, are called to share his love, deep and persistent as it is, with others around us. We can show God's love through a kind smile, a word of encouragement, a sympathetic ear to hear their sorrows and troubles, rejoicing with them in their joys, holding nothing of God's love back from those who cross our paths each day.

Serving the Lord means to serve God's beloved people right where they are, wherever we are. How much have we been loved by God, blessed by Him throughout our lives?! How God has loved us even through seasons when we have turned away from him! Think on this!

Let us go today letting God's love shine through us to each one we encounter, be they friend or stranger.

By Shelley Weachter, BVS Unit #315

"God's glory is at stake..." an idea presented in a book by Joni Eareckson Tada. Everything we do and every interaction we have reflects God. As Christians, we spend our lives learning how to better reflect God; we strive to resemble Jesus more and more. Each moment, we have to intentionally decide to glorify God. Each



moment, depending on how we choose to act will either glorify God or it will not. Take Tada's statement and complete the sentence.

God's glory is at stake when I talk or argue to my parents/siblings/spouse.

God's glory is at stake when I gripe and complain about doing chores.

God's glory is at stake when I discipline my children/students.

God's glory is at stake when I ignore my neighbors.

God's glory is at stake when...

We could fill in the blanks all day. Our actions seem to carry more weight when thought about in this way. How would our relationships look if we tried to glorify God in all we do? Would our lives align more with the scriptures presented today? Try it out this week and experience the difference when relationships are built with a focus on God.

Provided by Shelley Weachter, BVS Unit #315

The following selection is an excerpt from an article written by Charles Swindoll, a Christian author, preacher, and leader at Dallas Theological Seminary.

"Some years back, I was snapping at my wife and children, choking down my food at mealtimes, and feeling irritated at those unexpected interruptions through the day. Before long, things around our house reflected the pattern of my hurry-up style. After supper one evening, the words of one of our daughters gave me a wake-up call. She wanted to tell me something important that had happened to her at school that day. She hurriedly began, 'Daddy-I-wanna-tell-you-somethin'-and-I'll-tell-you-really-fast.' Realizing her frustration, I answered, 'Honey, you can tell me . . . and you don't have to tell me really fast. Say it slowly.' I'll never forget her answer: 'Then listen slowly.'"

One must wonder if God ever feels like Swindoll's daughter, watching us speed through life waiting for us to slow down. God wants a relationship with us, and just like any other functional relationship, we must devote time to the other person. We must give them our undivided attention and listen to what they are telling us. Why would we give less to God than our peers?

<https://bible.org/illustration/listen-slowly>

## **Stories**

Provided by Emily Tyler, BVS Unit #265

"Just Push"

One night while a man was sleeping, God awoke him and explained to the man that he should push against the large rock in front of his cabin with all his might. So, the man did, day after day. For many years, he toiled from sun up to sun down, his shoulders set squarely against the cold, massive surface of the unmoving rock, pushing with all his might.

Each night the man returned to his cabin sore and worn out, feeling that his whole day had been spent in vain. He asked himself, "Why kill yourself over this? You are never going to move that rock. I'll just put in my time, giving just the minimum effort and that will be good enough." And that is what he planned to do until one day he decided to make it a matter of prayer and take his troubled thoughts to God. "God," he said, "I have worked so hard and have done what you have asked. Yet, after all this time, I have not even budged that rock by half a millimeter. What is wrong? Why am I failing?"

God responded compassionately, "My child, when I asked you to serve me and you accepted, I told you that your task was to push against the rock with all your strength, which you have done. Never once did I mention to you that I expected you to move it. Your task was to push. And now you come to me, with your strength spent, thinking that you have failed. But, is that really so? Look at yourself. Your arms are strong and muscled, your back sinew and brown, your hands are calloused from constant pressure, and your legs have become massive and hard. Through opposition you have grown much and your abilities now surpass that which you used to have. Yet you haven't moved the rock. But your calling was to be obedient and to push and to exercise your faith and trust in me. This you have done. I, my son, will now move the rock."

At times, when we hear a word from God, we tend to interpret what we hear into what might best suit us, when actually what God wants is just simple obedience and faith in him. By all means, exercise the faith that moves mountains, but know that it is still God who moves the mountains.

<http://www.inspire21.com/stories/faithstories/JustPush>

Provided by Shelley Weachter, BVS Unit #315

"The Importance of Dorothy"

During my second month of college, our professor gave us a pop quiz. I was a conscientious student and had breezed through the questions until I read the last one: "What is the first name of the woman who cleans the school?"

Surely this was some kind of joke. I had seen the cleaning woman several times. She was tall, dark-haired and in her 50's, but how would I know her name?

I handed in my paper, leaving the last question blank. Just before class ended, one student asked if the last question would count toward our quiz grade. "Absolutely," said the professor... "In your careers, you will meet many people. All

are significant. They deserve your attention and care, even if all you do is smile and say 'hello.'"

I've never forgotten that lesson. I also learned her name was Dorothy.  
<http://mytnnews.com/blog/2012/07/24/four-short-heartwarming-stories-that-will-make-you-think-twice-about-how-to-treat-others/>

## **Suggested Hymns (From *Hymnal: A Worship Book*)**

Provided by Marie Maurice, BVS Unit #315

"O Master let me walk with thee" (357)

"Open my eyes that I may see" (517)

### Other suggestions:

"Will you let me be your servant" (307)

"For Christ and the church" (416)

"Here I am, Lord" (395)

"Lord, listen to your children" (353)