

## Do your duty?

### Notes on the Bible readings

- Jesus is teaching in the Temple and uses what he can see to illustrate his points. Firstly, he observes some scribes, and in contrast to the sympathetic scribe last week, accuses them of being primarily concerned with their own visibility and status, and the respect they are due. Then he watches people paying their Temple tax, which all Jews were expected to pay once a year for the maintenance and upkeep of the Temple. It was an unpopular tax and roughly the equivalent of two days' wages for a working man.

- Jesus comments on a widow dutifully making her contribution. She is often seen as a model of generosity, but she is poor and vulnerable, and may be more a victim of the greedy Temple authorities and those who parade about in long robes. Her giving is sacrificial as she has paid all that she had to live on.

- In 1 Kings 17, Elijah has announced a drought as judgement on Ahab, the corrupt king of Israel. He makes his way to Zarephath (modern day Lebanon) where he demands that a starving widow feeds him. As a result of her willingness to use her meagre resources to feed this stranger, she and her son are provided for throughout the drought.

- The poor widows in both stories give sacrificially and are blessed by God. Remembrance Sunday is a day on which we remember and honour those who sacrificed themselves to secure and protect our freedom.

For reflection and comment linking this week's Bible reading to the news, current issues and events, go to [www.rootsontheweb.com](http://www.rootsontheweb.com) and click on PostScript.



### Questions for reflection

- ▶ Today we remember those who gave their lives in conflict; what other forms of sacrificial giving are there?
- ▶ What form might your sacrificial giving take?



### A gathering prayer

*A hundred years ago today World War One ended. So we pray: Eternal God, you know the names of every man and woman, every child and every creature that lost their lives in the Great War. You know the names of those who are dying in conflicts around the world today. You know our names and call us to be peacemakers, generous and compassionate. Bless our time together now. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

### A prayer for others

*We pray for those whose duty has led them to a battlefield where they have lost their life.*

*God of the past, bless us with your peace.*

*We pray for those dying right now in conflicts provoked by greed and power.*

*God of today, bless us with your peace.*

*We pray for those entrusted with the care of our environment and its fragile resources.*

*God of tomorrow, bless us with your peace.*

*We pray for one another that we may live selflessly and generously for the good of all.*

*God of eternity, bless us with your peace. Amen.*

### A personal prayer

*God of all, I am neither rich nor poor, but comfortable – may that not turn to complacency.*

*I cannot change very much, and I challenge very little – may that not invite indifference.*

*I do not live sacrificially, but neither am I greedy – may that not lead me to be satisfied.*

*I do my duty, no more, no less – may I not avoid responsibility, but be your disciple in your world today – generous, compassionate and far seeing. Amen.*

### Live your faith

Research a new cause to support – one that is involved in caring for the poorest in society – and make a pledge of prayer, and either some time or money.