

## Everyone matters

### Notes on the Bible readings

- In the Exodus passage, we see a God who is angry with his people for so quickly forgetting who their rescuer is. It would be just for him to deal with them in any way he chooses, yet he seemingly lets his heart be turned by Moses, who pleads for mercy. Could it be that God's heart was always to show mercy, but through this encounter, Moses' heart is stirred to compassion for the people?

- The theme of mercy is further explored in both Psalm 51 and 1 Timothy 1, where we see God's unending mercy towards those who have lived in ways contrary to God's rules. Even in the face of theft, murder, persecution and violence, our God is one of second chances and starting over.

- In the parables from Luke we see this mercy in action. To Jesus' peasant audience, possessing either 100 sheep or 10 gold coins would have been almost unimaginable. The shepherd and the woman might not even have noticed that they were missing one individual item, but these stories help us to glimpse a God who notices the missing; who wants the 'one' to be restored to the many; who potentially takes a risk to go and find them. All undeserved, all on account of his great mercy to us.

- As we reflect on these stories, what would God's heart for us be? Would he want us to be stirred into mercy as we notice the missing and take our own risks to see his community restored?

### Questions for reflection

- ▶ How quickly do you notice what is missing in this picture?
- ▶ How quickly do we notice who is missing in our community?
- ▶ What can we do to be more active in noticing the missing?



### A prayer of thanksgiving

Heavenly Father, we thank you for being God of both the bigger picture and the tiny details. No creature in your creation is too insignificant to escape your notice; no person is too unimportant to be missed by you. We thank you for your care and concern for all who have gone astray, and for taking the risk to seek them out. Amen.

### A prayer for others

The cares of the world can draw us away from you, Lord.  
Like a coin falling into the shadows,  
sudden misfortune enters our lives and we are lost,  
rolling away from all that held us safe.  
We pray for all those affected by serious illness,  
breakdown of relationships or loss of employment.  
The temptations of the world can lead us astray, Lord.  
Like sheep sighting a patch of greener grass,  
we go after what is new and more exciting.  
We pray for all who are tempted away  
from what is right, meaningful and good.  
Where darkness has descended, Lord,  
when more attractive propositions beckon,  
we pray that people won't forget you –  
because you won't forget them.  
And as you love and care for us,  
so may we look out for one another –  
to seek and to bring safely home. Amen.

### A personal prayer

Help me not to mind my own business, Lord. My brother or sister's absence from our community is my business. Help me to notice those who have drifted away. Grant me the courage to risk going after them, and show me what I must do. Amen.

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.



### Live your faith

Think about what God is like and how Jesus helps you to imagine him.