

PLUGGED IN

THE LESSON: JOHN 15

*To give to all Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, true knowledge and understanding of thy Word;
and that both by their preaching and living they may set it forth and show it accordingly,
We beseech thee, good Lord.*

The Anglican Church is served and led by three kinds of ministers: bishops, priests, and deacons. In their various roles, these ministers lead us in worship, teach and preach the Gospel, provide pastoral care to the flock, preside over the sacraments, and offer examples for us in godly living. This is a tall order and St. James cautioned his readers, saying that those “who teach will be judged with greater strictness” (3:1).

In a similar way, the service of consecration for bishops offers this exhortation: “Be to the flock of Christ a shepherd, *not a wolf*; feed them, *devour them not*”. That may strike you as a peculiar thing to say in a moment when we are celebrating new ministry. But while we offer gratitude for those who serve the Church, we also recognize that not all who do so represent the Good Shepherd faithfully. As a community, we need to support, encourage and pray for our leaders to help them truly follow after the example of Jesus.

The petition from the Litany recognizes the central importance of right preaching and holy living in our ministers, both of which flow from being plugged into the Word, Christ himself. In the Gospel of St. John, Jesus calls his disciples to “*abide in him*” (15:4), a call that is most urgent for those who lead others in the faith, so that they can say with St. Paul, “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1).

AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON'T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE “FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES”, WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON'T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER.](http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer))

Every day this week, pray by name for the deacons, priests and bishops who provide spiritual leadership to your parish. Begin by praying with the words of the petition in the Litany and then add your own prayers, and/or other prayers from the Prayer Book and from scripture.

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through this collect.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who hast purchased to thyself an universal Church by the precious blood of thy dear Son: Mercifully look upon the same, and at this time so guide and govern the minds of thy servants the Bishops and Pastors of thy flock, that they may lay hands suddenly on no man, but faithfully and wisely make choice of fit persons to serve in the sacred Ministry of thy Church. And to those who shall be ordained to any holy function give thy grace and heavenly benediction; that both by their life and doctrine they may set forth thy glory, and set forward the salvation of all men; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(PRAYER FOR THOSE WHO ARE TO BE ADMITTED INTO HOLY ORDERS, BCP PAGE 46)

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JOHN 15: **RELATIONSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITY**

Jesus said, ¹“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine dresser. ²Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. ⁵I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. ⁹As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. ¹⁰If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. ¹¹These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

¹²“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. ¹⁷These things I command you, so that you will love one another.