

Morning Prayer  
4 Pentecost A / Proper 9 A

You have my  
attention: which is  
a tenderness, beyond  
what I may say. And I have  
your constancy to  
something beyond myself.

The force  
of your commitment charges us—we live  
in the sweep of it, taking courage  
one from the other.

~ Denise Levertov, "The Marriage"

*Lord of heaven and earth whose son came eating and drinking,  
exposing the rivalry that tears the world apart;  
may we share his feast and his friendship  
and lay our burdens in his liberating arms;  
through Jesus Christ, Wisdom's child. Amen.*

Lord, in this shared time we offer ourselves to each other.  
We offer our skills and talents – not because of pride in our abilities  
*but in joyful recognition of your overflowing bounty.*

Psalm of the Day: 45:10-17 [ *The Message* ]

"Now listen, daughter, don't miss a word:  
forget your country, put your home behind you.  
Be *here*—the king is wild for you.  
Since he's your lord, adore him.  
Wedding gifts pour in from Tyre;  
rich guests shower you with presents."

(Her wedding dress is dazzling,  
lined with gold by the weavers;  
All her dresses and robes  
are woven with gold.  
She is led to the king,  
followed by her virgin companions.  
A procession of joy and laughter!  
a grand entrance to the king's palace!)

"Set your mind now on children—  
don't dote on parent and grandparent.  
You'll set your children up as royalty  
all over the earth.

I'll make you famous for generations;  
you'll be the talk of the town  
for a long, long time."

Reading of the Day with Reflection: Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30 [*The Message*]

16-19 "How can I account for this generation? The people have been like spoiled children whining to their parents, 'We wanted to skip rope, and you were always too tired; we wanted to talk, but you were always too busy.' John came fasting and they called him crazy. I came feasting and they called me a lush, a friend of the riffraff. Opinion polls don't count for much, do they? The proof of the pudding is in the eating."

25-26 Abruptly Jesus broke into prayer: "Thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth. You've concealed your ways from sophisticates and know-it-alls, but spelled them out clearly to ordinary people. Yes, Father, that's the way you like to work."

27 Jesus resumed talking to the people, but now tenderly. "The Father has given me all these things to do and say. This is a unique Father-Son operation, coming out of Father and Son intimacies and knowledge. No one knows the Son the way the Father does, nor the Father the way the Son does. But I'm not keeping it to myself; I'm ready to go over it line by line with anyone willing to listen.

28-30 "Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."



We pray this morning for those who withstand name-calling and misunderstanding...

We pray for those who find it necessary to denigrate others...

We pray for those with the courage to be themselves, even when it makes them look ordinary...

We pray for those who are worn out, burnt out, tired of it all...

We pray for those who are ill or depressed and for those who care for them...

We pray for the Church as we try to live by the rhythms of grace...

We pray for those who are dying and for those who have died and for those who mourn...

God of refreshment, please welcome those for whom we pray and those whom we have forgotten. In this season when many try to take their rest, teach us to let go and to ease into the rhythms of grace you provide endlessly to all your creatures. We pray this through the one who offered such graceful care to all whom he encountered, your good Christ. *Amen.*

Some of the above drawn and adapted from: Steven Shakespeare, *Prayers for an Inclusive Church* (Church Publishing, 2009), 30; Ruth Burgess, *Fire and Bread* (Wild Goose, 2006), 240.