

Worship Material
Let God be God
Material from Roots Bible Study
Sunday 21st July

Begin with an opening prayer

Lord, you are with us wherever we go.
Your presence constantly encourages us
to step out into new adventures.
Forgive us when we try to limit you.
Make us ready to respond to your voice,
and to seek the new things to which you call us.
Amen.

Read 2 Samuel 7:1-14a

Bible notes

David built his city as a centre of unity and identity for the one people of Israel. He had built a palace and a walled stronghold. Now, he wanted to build a temple for God to dwell in, like the temples that housed the deities of other nations. He planned an extravagant house built of costly cedar, a fragrant wood imported from Lebanon. He demonstrated his wisdom, as king, by consulting with the prophet Nathan, now appearing for the first time in the narrative. Nathan would play a major role in David's life, encouraging and challenging when necessary.

Nathan offers his own advice, which is then corrected by God's voice. It's important to notice the prophet's humility as a marker of an authentic servant of God. God takes the initiative by making it clear that homelessness is the right choice for now, maintaining the itinerant identity shaped during the years in the wilderness. The leaders of those years were wandering shepherds of their people, and David is also the 'shepherd king'.

The Lord developed the prophecy, expanding promises to David. There is an expectation that David was prepared to trust God for the future on the basis of his previous experience of support. This sits within the covenant relationship within which God holds David, as David holds the people. God makes three promises, as was the case for Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3). First, there is the promise of a name, a kingly reputation during Israel's golden age. Secondly, God promises a safe place and rest for the people, which the prophets would rephrase as shalom. Third, there was the promise of a 'house' for David. This is an ironic reversal of God's refusal to allow David to build a temple. At the same time, it carries the deeper meaning of a dynasty, successors for David for ever. This prophecy will be fulfilled in the history recorded in 1 and 2 Kings, which forms a continuous narrative and identifies the son who will be permitted to build a house for the Lord.

Prayer

God of the past and the future;
of our present questions and our future hopes:

help us to rest in your call to us,
in whichever season we find ourselves in;
and help us to trust that you will provide for us
in the future as you have in the past.

Amen.

A prayer to conclude

God of all our days,
our beginning and our end,
help us to walk with you;
to trust you at every turning of the way;
to follow where you lead us;
and to go where you send us.
In all the ups and downs of life,
in times when we are certain about what we need to do
and in times when we doubt that you are with us,
open our ears to hear your voice;
open our eyes to see you at work,
and open our hearts to trust you in every step of our journey.

Amen.