

# St Mark's at home

God is with us wherever we are...

## Are you ready?

To understand anything about this story we need to know something about the way a wedding happened (and still happens traditionally today) in the eastern Mediterranean areas. After a marriage agreement has been made at the bride's home, the groom returns to his father's home for about a year to create a living place there for them. After this he would come to collect the bride. This happened at night, by way of a torchlight procession to the bride's house. Although expected, no one would know the exact time of his arrival, so it was preceded by a shout to forewarn the bridal party. The bridesmaid would be waiting to light the way in for the groom.

The kingdom of heaven is like what happened one night when ten bridesmaids took their oil lamps and went to a wedding to meet the bridegroom. Five of the bridesmaids were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones took their lamps, but no extra oil. The ones who were wise took along extra oil for their lamps.

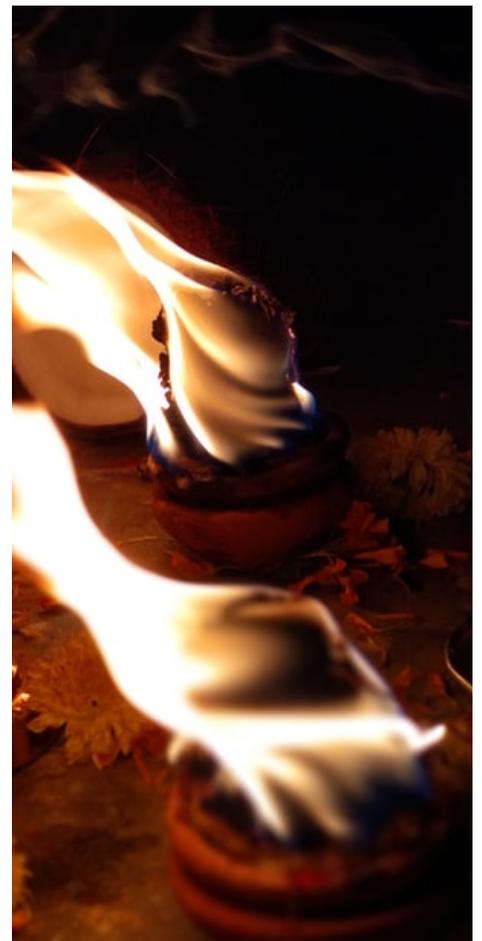
The bridegroom was late arriving, and the bridesmaids became drowsy and fell asleep. Then in the middle of the night someone shouted, "Here's the bridegroom. Come to meet him!"

When the bridesmaids got up and started getting their lamps ready, the foolish ones said to the others, "Let us have some of your oil! Our lamps are going out." The bridesmaids who were wise answered, "There's not enough oil for all of us! Go and buy some for yourselves."

While the foolish girls were on their way to get some oil, the bridegroom arrived. The wise girls who were ready went into the wedding, and the doors were closed. Later, the other bridesmaids returned and shouted, "Sir, sir! Open the door for us!" But the bridegroom replied, "I don't even know you!"

Jesus said, "So, my disciples, always be ready!"

- What does it mean to be ready for Jesus?
- Imagine all the preparation for a wedding- what would it be like, then, not to be allowed in?
- How can we love Jesus while we are waiting for his return?



1

ROMANS 12. 9-END

2

PSALM 115

3

MATT 25. 1-13

## A PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Lord, we want to have you at our beck and call.  
Our lives are busy and our time is precious  
and we do not like to be kept waiting,  
not even by you.

Our needs are pressing  
and we know what we want:  
we want you to come to our aid  
with haste and without delay.

Yet we have been slow to do your bidding.  
We have kept you waiting  
whilst we made excuses and attended to our own  
affairs.

We have wasted the time you have given us  
and passed up the opportunities you placed before  
us.

We have been caught unprepared  
when you called upon us  
at times we did not expect.

Forgive us.

Forgive our misuse of time.

Forgive our arrogance in thinking that you should  
fit in with our timetable  
instead of learning from yours.

Make us wise in our response to this precious gift of  
yours,

that we may know when and how  
to relax, to wait, to watch, to act.

So whether time is long or short,  
may we be ready to do your will. Amen.



**Keep in touch!**

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## A prayer for readiness...

O God, you call us to serve you  
in many, sometimes unexpected, ways:  
**help us to be ready.**

When someone needs us to lend a hand,  
**help us to be ready.**

When someone needs us to comfort them,  
**help us to be ready.**

When someone needs us to share what is ours,  
**help us to be ready.**

When someone needs us to act with courage,  
**help us to be ready.**

When someone needs us to be patient,  
**help us to be ready.**

When someone needs us to hear of your love,  
**help us to be ready.**

Lord God, you are always ready  
to hear us and help us.

May we learn from you and be ready  
to serve in your name. **Amen.**

Story by Angela Bryan/[engageworship.org](http://engageworship.org)

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[rootsontheweb.com](http://rootsontheweb.com)

The church building remains **open for private prayer on a Tuesday between 10am and 1pm.**

Do join us for a **short simple said communion service on Sunday evenings** at 6.30pm at the church. Numbers will be limited due to current restrictions. Please book online (by 5.30pm Sunday) or contact the Parish Office (by 2pm Friday) if you would like to attend and see our website for further details of the guidelines that will be in place.

We'd love to know how you are feeling about coming back to church and have a **quick survey** that we're asking you to complete. If you are unable to do this online please contact the office.

You can find a further material based on the theme of this week's readings on the St Mark's at Home page of the website and updated information on our **Facebook** page too.