



# Just Church Bible reading scheme

*This list includes just some of the many Bible passages that speak of God's priority, concern and identification with the poor. Read and reflect on a verse each day while your church is running the Just Church programme. You can use the verses printed here, or if you have time, read the passages more completely in your Bible.*

## God's concern for the poor

- **Deuteronomy 26:5–9** (They) treated us harshly and afflicted us, and imposed hard labour on us... the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction and our toil and our oppression; and the LORD brought us out of Egypt.
- **Job 5:11–16** The lowly he sets on high and those who mourn are lifted to safety... He saves the needy from the sword in their mouth; he saves them from the clutches of the powerful. So the poor have hope, and injustice shuts its mouth.
- **Job 34:17–19** Can he who hates justice govern? ... Is he not the One who ... shows no partiality to princes and does not favour the rich over the poor, for they are all the work of his hands?
- **Psalms 10:14–18** You have been the helper of the orphan... You will incline Your ear to vindicate the orphan and the oppressed.
- **Psalms 12:5** "Because of the oppression of the weak and the groaning of the needy, I will now arise," says the Lord. "I will protect them from those who malign them."
- **Psalms 72:12–14** For he will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted who have no-one to help. He will take pity on the weak and the needy and will save the needy from death. He will rescue them from oppression and violence, for precious is their blood in his sight.
- **Psalms 140:12** The Lord will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and justice for the poor.
- **Psalms 146:5–7** Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob... who executes justice for the oppressed; who gives food to the hungry.
- **Isaiah 25:4** You have been a defence for the helpless, a defence for the needy.
- **Isaiah 41:17** The afflicted and needy are seeking water... I will not forsake them.
- **Jeremiah 9:23–24** "Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom... or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight," declares the Lord.
- **Luke 1:52–53** He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty.
- **Luke 4:16–21** He came to Nazareth... (and) read... "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He appointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are downtrodden, to proclaim the favourable year of the Lord..."
- **Luke 6:20–21** Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.
- **Luke 7:22** So he replied to the messengers, "Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor."
- **James 2:5** Did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?

## The priority of the poor

- **Proverbs 21:3** To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable than sacrifice.
- **Isaiah 1:15–17** When you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide my eyes from you ... I will not listen...! Stop doing wrong, learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow.
- **Isaiah 10:1–3** Woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees, to deprive the poor of their rights and withhold justice from the oppressed of my people, making widows their prey and robbing the fatherless...
- **Amos 5:21–24** I hate, I despise your religious feasts... your assemblies... [your] offerings I will not accept ... But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!
- **Micah 6:8** He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

## God's commands concerning the poor

- **Leviticus 19:10** Now when you reap the harvest, you shall not reap to the very corners of your field, neither ... gather the gleanings of your harvest... vineyard ... the fallen fruit ... leave them for the needy and for the stranger.
- **Deuteronomy 15:7** If there is a poor man among you ... you shall not harden your heart, nor close your hand to your poor brother; but you shall freely open your hand to him.
- **Deuteronomy 24:17–22** Do not deprive the alien or the fatherless of justice, or take the cloak of a widow as a pledge... When you are harvesting in your field and you overlook a sheaf... Leave it for the alien, the fatherless and the widow, so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.
- **Deuteronomy 26:12** When you have finished paying the complete tithe... then you shall give it to the Levite, to the stranger, to the orphan and the widow.
- **Nehemiah 5** (All of the chapter)
- **Proverbs 31:8** Open your mouth for the dumb, for the rights of all the unfortunate. Open your mouth, judge righteously, and defend the rights of the afflicted and needy.
- **Isaiah 1:16–17** Stop doing wrong, learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow.
- **Isaiah 58:6–7** Is this not the fast which I choose, to loosen the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free, and break every yoke? Is it not to divide your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into the house; when you see the naked, to cover him...?
- **Jeremiah 22:3** Do justice and righteousness, and deliver the one who has been robbed from the power of his oppressor. Also do not mistreat or do violence to the stranger, the orphan, or the widow.
- **Jeremiah 22:13–17** “Woe to him who builds his palace by unrighteousness ... making his countrymen work for nothing, not paying them for their labour... Did not your father ... defend the cause of the poor and needy, and so all went well. Is that not what it means to know me?” declares the Lord. But your eyes and your heart are set only on dishonest gain, on shedding innocent blood and on oppression and extortion.
- **Matthew 5:42** Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.
- **Luke 3:11** Let the man with two tunics share with him who has none, and let him who has food do likewise.
- **Luke 12:33** Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves purses which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near, nor moth destroy.
- **James 1:27** Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

### Blessings on those who serve the poor

- **Deuteronomy 15:10** You shall give generously to [your poor brother], and your heart shall not be grieved when you give to him, because for this thing the Lord your God will bless you.
- **Psalms 41:1** Blessed is he who has regard for the weak; the Lord delivers him in times of trouble.
- **Proverbs 22:9** He who is generous will be blessed, for he gives some of his food to the poor.
- **Isaiah 58:10** And if you give yourself to the hungry, and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then your light will rise in darkness, and your gloom will become like midday.
- **Jeremiah 7:5–7** If you do not oppress the alien, the orphan, and the widow, and do not shed innocent blood ... then I will let you dwell in this place.
- **Matthew 19:21** If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.
- **Luke 14:12–14** When you give a reception, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, since they do not have the means to repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.

### Consequences of not serving the poor

- **Exodus 22:21–27** Do not mistreat an alien or oppress him... Do not take advantage of a widow or an orphan. If you do and they cry out to me, I will certainly hear their cry... If you lend money to one of my people among you who is needy, do not be like a moneylender; charge him no interest. If you take your neighbour's cloak as a pledge, return it to him by sunset, because his cloak is the only covering he has for his body... When he cries out to me, I will hear, for I am compassionate.
- **Isaiah 10:1–3** Woe to those who... deprive the needy of justice, and rob the poor of My people of their rights...
- **Jeremiah 5:28** [The wicked] do not plead the cause, the cause of the orphan, that they may prosper; and they do not defend the rights of the poor.
- **Ezekiel 16:49** Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had arrogance, abundant food, and careless ease, but she did not help the poor and needy.
- **Ezekiel 22:29, 31** The people... have wronged the poor and needy and have oppressed the sojourner without justice...
- **Amos 2:6–7** For (the) transgressions of Israel... I will not revoke the punishment; because they sell the righteousness for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals – they who trample the head of the poor into the ... earth.
- **Amos 5:11** Therefore because you trample on the poor ... you have built houses ... but you shall not live in them...

## Biblical attitudes for believers toward the poor

- **Leviticus 19:15** You shall do no injustice in judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor nor defer to the great.
- **Proverbs 29:7** The righteous is concerned for the rights of the poor.
- **Matthew 6:2–4** When therefore you give alms ... do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.
- **Matthew 6:24** You cannot serve God and Money.
- **Acts 2:44–45** All those who had believed were together, and had all things in common; and they began to sell their property and possessions, and share them with all, as anyone might have need.
- **Acts 4:32–35** All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.
- **Galatians 2:10** They only asked us to remember the poor – the very thing I also was eager to do.
- **Ephesians 4:28** Let him ... performing with his own hands what is good, in order that he may have something to share with him who has need.
- **James 2:5** Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?
- **1 John 3:17** But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?

## God's identification with the poor

- **Proverbs 14:31** He who oppresses the poor reproaches his Maker.
- **Proverbs 19:17** He who is gracious to a poor man lends to the Lord.
- **2 Corinthians 8:9** For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.
- **Matthew 25:31–46** "I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me."  
Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, "Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You drink? And when did we see You a stranger, and invite you in, or naked, and clothe You? And when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?" And the King will answer and say to them, "Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me."