

relationship with people -- and wants that divine-human relationship to improve our human relationships and our human communities. ... Today's reading expresses the intensity of God's desire for relationship. How does it feel to think of God's intense desire for relationship with you?

Saturday, 11/28/09 – Read Hosea 11:6-9

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: As the prophet Hosea reflects on the nature of God, he images an inner dialog within God. God's disappointment and anger rise first. And then there is a "softening" as God's compassion rises. ... How do you think of God? Do you think God really wants relationship with us, with you? Does God really want our human communities to "do justice"? Does God have compassion for us even when we fail? ... How do you think of God? Jot down some of your thoughts.

Sunday, 11/29/09 – Read Micah 7:18-20

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Today's reading is the concluding passage of the prophet Micah. Micah describes and denounces the quality of our human communities. And he is clear that there are real consequences when we fail to do justice in all our relationships. But Micah is also clear that God's final word is forgiveness, compassion, restoration, and renewal. ... Have you ever experienced that? In the midst of your failure, have you discovered the compassion of God? Describe that experience, and in your prayer today give thanks.

My Faith Journal, November 22, 2009

You Asked for It, #11

The Good Community

God's dream for us & our communities.

Deuteronomy 8:7-10

Leviticus 19:9-14

God's desire for relationship with us – with you.

Isaiah 49:14-16

Justice, Mercy, Humility.

Micah 6:6-8

Each day this week, take a few minutes. Begin with PRAYER. Then READ through the Bible passage indicated on the inside of this guide. WRITE down your own thoughts, reactions, observations. ANSWER THE QUESTION to begin connecting the Bible with your life. Use additional paper or your own notebook if you need more space to write.

The Good Community

Monday, 11/23/09 – Read **Deuteronomy 8:7-10** and **Leviticus 19:9-14**

My Observations _____

A Question to Answer: What kind of life does God want for people? The Hebrew scriptures often describe that life of abundance and wellness. It is also God's intention that all the people participate in this good life. Read again through today's two passages. Let yourself feel the richness of life described in Deuteronomy 8. Then note the marginal persons mentioned in Leviticus -- and note that God expects us to extend extra care to include them in the fullness of life. ... What people are marginal today? Name one way that marginal persons could be better included in the good life God intends for all people?

Tuesday, 11/24/09 – Read **Malachi 3:5**

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: The Hebrew prophets were harshly critical of the lifestyles they observed and the way people lived. The people did not live up to God's instructions about how to live together. ... Do you think God would be critical of our society today? Would God be critical of our lifestyles? ... The widows and orphans of ancient Israel were people without resources, people who could not take care of themselves. They were vulnerable people. Who would you count among the vulnerable people today? Name one thing we could be doing to meet God's expectations regarding the treatment of vulnerable people?

Wednesday, 11/25/09 – Read **Amos 2:4-8** and **Amos 5:21-24**

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: The prophet Amos was graphic in his description of Israel's failure to live up to God's commands. For example, when the rich made a loan to a poor person, they took the poor person's clothes "in pledge," that is, as collateral. (Amos 2:8) ... Amos sees this as a violation of "justice." What is justice? How would you define justice, that condition God wants for our human communities? ... What will you do this week to let "justice roll down" like a waterfall?

Thursday, 11/26/09 – Read **Micah 6:6-8**

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Both prophets Amos and Micah noticed that the people tended to think that religious observance fulfilled their relationship with God. Burnt offerings, offerings of rams and oil -- these were among ancient Israel's religious practices. ... In today's reading Micah claims that the way we treat others and the way we participate in community is more important than specifically religious observance. What God requires is doing justice, loving kindness (or mercy), and walking humbly with God. ... Do you ever use religious observance as a way of avoiding these more important requirements? Can you be specific?

Friday, 11/27/09 – Read **Isaiah 49:14-16**

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: It's easy to read these old Hebrew prophets and conclude that they were simply unrealistic, that they were stuck in a negative and judgmental attitude. But what these prophets saw was that God desperately wants