

## Care and consolation

### Notes on the Bible readings

- In Acts 9.36-43, Peter acts as a shepherd and cares for Jesus' flock, just as Jesus commanded him on the beach (cf. John 21.1-19). Among the Early Church community in the town of Joppa, a port halfway between Jerusalem and Galilee, Peter already has a reputation as a man chosen by Jesus to do his work, as two men are sent to find him after a local woman dies.

- Tabitha (*Dorcas* in Greek) is the only woman in the New Testament called a disciple. Her pastoral care of others, including making clothes for poor widows, recalls Jesus' compassion.

- Peter is clear that the resurrection power that raises Tabitha belongs to Jesus. Prior to this passage, Peter is involved in healing a paralysed man and says to him, 'Jesus Christ heals you' (v.34). Through Jesus' resurrection and authority over sickness and death, others are healed to reveal the power of God. Unlike Jesus after the raising of Jairus' daughter (Luke 8.49-56), Peter is keen to spread the good news, and through both these healings new believers are added to the Church.

- We live in the same power of the resurrection, where death does not have the final word, and where even in our pain, sickness and suffering, the good shepherd's love draws us to a place of goodness and new life.

### Questions for reflection

- ▶ Where do you see 'good works and acts of charity' in action?
- ▶ What does 'caring like Jesus' mean in practice for you personally?
- ▶ In what other ways do we live in the power of the resurrection?



### A prayer of approach

*Jesus, loving shepherd, be near to us.  
Jesus, good shepherd, watch over us.  
Jesus, caring shepherd, be gentle with us.  
Jesus, consoling shepherd, walk with us.  
Jesus, commissioning shepherd, send us out:  
to be near others;  
to watch over others;  
to be gentle with others –  
and to walk with them in your name. Amen.*

### A reflective way into prayer

*Think about something you own that someone else made for you. Give thanks for that person, and reflect on what you could make to give away. Then pray: God of all giving and receiving, of all kindness and all thoughtfulness, thank you for all those who have shown us the generosity of your love. May their deeds inspire us, and your grace enable us to serve others, and to care – as you cared for us in Jesus. Amen.*

### A personal prayer

*God of hope and consolation,  
when death comes to someone I love, may I be brave –  
brave enough to cry,  
brave enough to reach out for comfort,  
brave enough to talk about the one I miss so much.  
And may I be strong enough to ask for help,  
strong enough to be there for others when they are grieving too.  
I ask this in the name of your risen Son, Jesus.  
Amen.*

For reflection and comment linking this week's Bible reading to the news, current issues and events, go to [www.rootsontheweb.com](http://www.rootsontheweb.com) and click on PostScript.



### Live your faith

From a newspaper cut out some pictures of difficult situations. Use them as a prompt to pray – that there may be someone who brings hope to those places.