

Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> July

Welcome and Introduction

Hymn/Song: Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

Bible Reading: Luke 15 verses 11-32

Hymn/Song: Our God Is A Great Big God <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eaXPXWBcE3I>

Talk

A Moment of (guided) Reflection

Prayers

Hymn: Dear Lord and Father of Mankind

Closing Prayer

Devotion/Thoughts (which will be expanded on in the service)

Who Is Prodigal?

If you were to research the definition of Prodigal, you might be surprised. As church goes, if you are like me, you will always associate the younger, wayward Son as being the definition of Prodigal and yet the dictionary definition is:

*adjective*

1. spending money or using resources freely and recklessly; wastefully extravagant.  
"prodigal habits die hard"
2. having or giving something on a lavish scale.  
"the dessert was prodigal with whipped cream"

*noun*

1. a person who spends money in a recklessly extravagant way.

So you can see that yes, the youngest Son is Prodigal in his actions but have you ever considered whether there are more characters in the story who are behaving in an equally Prodigal way?

Is the eldest Son Prodigal too? See his words in Luke 15:28-29, "The older brother became angry and refused to go in...he answered his Father, 'All these years I have been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders.'" Has the eldest Son given of himself in a lavish, arguably reckless way? He has only had eyes for one purpose, to fulfil his perceived understanding of his Father's wishes. That sounds equally Prodigal to me.

And what about the Father, is he Prodigal too? See the words in Luke 15:31, " 'My son', the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours.' Are these really the words of a Father who owns a large estate, who has servants and staff and land and monies. Would you not expect that person to be shrewd and steeped in business acumen accounting wisely for income and expenditure? Quite the opposite it would appear, everything I have is yours, take it for all I really want is to be with you.

And so finally, what about ourselves? Are we Prodigal too? There is a human condition that is biased towards scarcity instead of abundance and the story of the Prodigal family is one that whispers to us: give, give, give because our loving Father who has eternal storehouses says to us, 'I am always with you and all I have is yours.'