



# LENT

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PRAYER,  
AND THE  
PRESENCE OF GOD

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# Hebrews 1:3

“This is the One who—imprinted with God’s image, shimmering with His glory—sustains all that exists through the power of His word. He was seated at the right hand of God once He Himself had made the offering that purified us from all our sins.”



This prayer and worship guide is our gift to you this Lenten season. In it are prayer practices, wisdom from scripture, and other resources to help guide you in the place of prayer over these 40 days. Use this guide during Ash Wednesday, then daily, weekly, or however the Spirit is leading you to ***know and worship God, in spirit and in truth.*** We pray this is not just a rite or tradition, but a transformational season of prayer and experiencing the life of Jesus as we invite His Majesty and Mystery into our everyday lives.



# Ash Wednesday

Reflection, Encounter, Repentance

Ash Wednesday starts Lent by focusing our hearts on repentance and prayer, through personal and corporate confession. It is an ancient invitation to reflect on the life of Jesus, His death and resurrection, and what this means to us as believers. Pondering the lost concepts of Mystery and Majesty, we are better able to see God *rightly* as we embrace and remember the death and resurrection of Jesus.

***Tonight***, we gather together and trust Holy Spirit to lead and guide our Ash Wednesday experience, and to reveal the life and teachings of Jesus to us over these 40 days of Lent.

- ***As worship begins, invite Holy Spirit to lead you in reflection and confession of your sins.***
- ***“Father, You alone know how often I have sinned in wandering from Your ways, in wasting Your gifts, in forgetting Your love. Have mercy on me, O Lord.”***
- ***For families with small children you can ask, “Is there anything in your heart or mind you want to ask Jesus to forgive you for?”***

You can write down anything you want to confess individually or as a family below:



# Ash Wednesday

## COMMUNION

Continue reflect and connect with Jesus as worship continues. A worship leader will open the communion time with prayer. **When you are ready**, communion is available to you at one of the tables around the room. Please choose a table, take a piece of bread, and dip it into the juice (do not drink directly from the cup).

Pray a simple prayer of your own, or choose one of the following.

**For families with small children: “Thank you Jesus for Your gift of salvation. We eat this bread and drink this juice to remember Your love for us.”**

**“Jesus, thank You for the sacrifice You made for me. As I come to Your table, I am filled with gratitude. Your love and mercy are overwhelming. Help me to remember Your suffering and the price You paid for my salvation. Let my heart overflow with thankfulness. May this Communion remind me of Your endless love. Amen.”**

**“Dear Lord, we approach Your table with humility, recognizing the sacrifice of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Sanctify this bread and juice, and let them be for us the body and blood of our Savior. May this communion strengthen our faith, deepen our love for You, for one another, and renew our spirits.”**



# Receiving the Ashes

Receiving ashes during Lent is more than just a physical act. It's a symbolic gesture of repentance, a way to show remorse for our sins and confess our deep need for forgiveness and salvation. It's an outward symbol of the inward confession of belief in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

- ***Take a moment and reflect*** on your own mortality and shortcomings. Sit in a space of repentance over your sin, confess to Jesus your neediness, welcoming His presence, His love, His correction and care.
- ***For families with small children*** you can invite them to hold your hand in prayer as a family, just like Jesus offers His hand to us in the learning process, in prayer and walking with Him through life. *Remind them, just like the ashes remind them, they are not alone; they belong to a family and to Jesus.*

Feel free to meditate on and pray this prayer from Psalm 51, individually or as a family, before you walk towards the altar in repentance.

***“Have mercy on me, O God,  
according to your unfailing love;  
according to your great compassion  
blot out my transgressions.  
Wash away all my iniquity  
and cleanse me from my sin...Cleanse me with  
hyssop, and I will be clean;  
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow...”***

- Approach the altar when you are ready to receive the ashes.



# After the Ashes: Prayers and Petitions

*You may feel led to use these prayers during the remainder of our time tonight. As individuals, couples and families, ask Holy Spirit to teach you how to connect with God in prayer over the next 40 days.*

## *An Ash Wednesday Prayer*

God of mercy and grace,

As I enter this sacred season of Lent, I come before You with a humble heart. Search me and reveal the ways I have turned from You. In Your kindness, lead me to true repentance, that I may return to You with sincerity and love.

As ashes mark my forehead, let them remind me of my need for Your forgiveness and the hope found in Christ.

Strengthen me to walk this Lenten journey with a heart open to Your refining work. **In Jesus Name, Amen.**

## *A Simple Prayer for Honesty and Sacrifice*

Dear God, You created us from the earth and saved us through Jesus. As we start these 40 Days with ashes on our foreheads, please bless our journey through Lent with Your holy companionship. Help us remember that we are not perfect and need Your forgiveness, help and love.

During this Lent season, guide us to follow Your paths so we can encounter You, embrace Your life, and live in love.

**In Jesus' Name, Amen.**



# A Prayerful Response

## *A Prayer for Forgiveness and New Beginnings*

Dear God, who loves everyone and forgives those who are sorry for their mistakes: We ask you to help us have kind and humble hearts. We want to feel sorry for the wrong things we've done and learn from our mistakes. Please forgive us for our sins. We ask this in the **name of Jesus, amen.**

## *A Reflection of Accountability and Hope*

Dear Savior, Your light reveals the truths we often try to hide. We seek Your guidance as we confront the challenges within ourselves and our community. Over these forty days, help us achieve clarity in both mind and spirit. Equip us with the fortitude to face our greatest fears and recognize our shortcomings. May our commitment to eliminate unproductive habits enable us to focus on meaningful reflection and genuine connection. We ask for Your boundless mercy to reshape us, bringing us true fulfillment as we reflect on the sacrifice of Jesus. We place our trust in Your unwavering support and surrender our concerns and aspirations to You. **In Jesus' name, Amen.**



# Your Lenten Journey

Over the next 40 days, we are engaging in a season of reflection, repentance, and encountering the Presence of God. This is a period of *intentional longing for the presence of Jesus* in our everyday lives. As we look towards Easter morning, we will move through life slowly, give sacrificially, and deny our fleshly desires in order to better connect with Him- His life, death, and resurrection. You will find devotional insights on the presence and pursuit of God, with additional prayer practices and scripture meditations in this booklet- **let the Holy Spirit guide you.** Resist any urge to hurry or become regimented in this process of knowing God as a friend and companion through life. Our 2025 Micro-Practice challenges can easily be done daily, as individuals, small groups, or families.

***Scan the QR Code to access the 40 day Micro-Practice Challenge!***



**Ponder the following questions that will help shape your Lenten journey.**

- ***What do I want to experience with God between now and Easter morning? As an individual? As a family? As a church?***

A place to start:

***For families with small children:***

Scan the QR code below to access a video explaining Lent. Then follow up with the next page on your guide when the time is right.





# The Gift of Time

Teach us to number our days so that we may truly live and achieve wisdom. Psalm 90:12

Sometimes it feels impossible to do all that is required of us. Work, family, friends, social structures, healthy living...at the end of most days we can feel exhausted and overwhelmed at the thought of waking up and doing it all over again. But what if Jesus really meant what He said, “seek first the Kingdom, and all of these things will be added unto you...” ? (Matt. 6:33)

Let's do a little math to put it into perspective...

***If you live 75 years, you have 658,000 hours on earth.***

- 105,408 spent in childhood
- 184,464 spent sleeping
- 163,800 spent working
- 23,424 spent in classroom education
- 92,232 spent eating, bathing, etc.
- Total = 569,328 hours

This leaves about 89,472 hours in your entire life that can be considered “free time” - a little less than four hours a day. These hours might look like household chores, family time, watching T.V., entertainment, hobbies, overtime... The Believer who attends *at least three* worship services *each week* for 63 years will spend 11,466 hours in worship of God - 1/2 hour a day. If he or she has a 1/2-hour quiet time each day for 63 years, he or she will spend one hour a day in activities that are strictly devoted to God. This does not include any additional service in ministries. To be clear- the Believer who is super-faithful in private and public worship, prayer, and study will spend only two years and seven months in God's service during his 75 years on Earth!

“But, what if we tithed  
our time?”

-Dr. Scott Stripling

7 days a week = 168 hours

10% = 16.8 hours

658,000 earth hours = **65,800 Kingdom hours!**

***What would life look like if even a portion these hours belonged to God, first?***

As you ponder these facts, ask the Holy Spirit to show you how to seek first the Kingdom. Ask-seek with your whole heart- what it is God wants to enjoy with you! His plan and promise in the place of prayer is three-fold: it is **sustainable, enjoyable, and effective**. (Psalm 16:11)

A place to start:

Together with the Lord, ask these simple questions. Remember- you aren't achieving this in your own strength! Boldly approach the throne and ask for help in navigating this season with questions like:

- ***How do I make room in my life to establish a real, healthy, enjoyable relationship with God?***
- ***How do I carve out time in my calendar to be with God, or be about His business?***
- ***How do I include my family, friends, community in this process?***

# Let it Go...

As we enter Lent, it's a good time to think about what we might give up to strengthen our connection with the gospel and grow in our faith. This season is a chance to work alongside God, focusing on ways to follow Jesus more closely and live in a way that brings joy to Him.

**Take a few minutes today to sit quietly and ask Holy Spirit, “What do You want me to let go of during these 40 days?”**

While giving up certain foods can be meaningful, there are many other options to consider—like spending less time on social media, cutting back on sweets, shopping less, or stepping away from habits that distract us. This time encourages us to let go of our usual comforts and turn to Jesus for support when we need it (Hebrews 4:16).

Feel free to write down what you plan to give up in the space below. Sharing this with your family can lead to great conversations and help everyone feel more connected during this reflective season.

“God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ”  
Eph. 2:4-5

# + Embrace it..

Establishing a regular practice of prayer can be one of the most enriching and meaningful aspects of your spiritual journey. It serves as a foundation for a fulfilling and Spirit-led life. If you or your family are new to this practice, there's no need to worry! Even the disciples sought guidance from Jesus, asking, "Teach us how to pray."

If you find yourself experiencing feelings of shame or guilt, invite Holy Spirit to free your mind and provide you with peace as you embark on this journey of connecting. God's Holy Spirit acts as our teacher, comforter, and counselor—essentially, our divine helper. (John 14:26)

Take a moment to ask the Holy Spirit to help you feel His presence beside you, offering both tenderness and strength. Seek the courage to allocate time in your daily schedule to connect with God for the sake of deepening your relationship with Him. Write down that time here as a commitment to engage in this transformative practice: \_\_\_\_\_.

## A place to start:

***For individuals and families:*** Pray a family prayer out loud in the morning, before meals, or before bedtime. *Choose a time and stick to it!* Pray with the knowledge that you have God's Spirit coming alongside you to empower and teach you in this practice of prayer.

### ***A resource we love:***

*The Practice of the Presence of God,*  
Brother Lawrence



scan QR code  
for link to purchase





# A Life of Prayer

*What does that even mean?!* Sometimes prayer can seem confusing and complicated. It can feel odd or forced, leaving us longing for the satisfaction, peace, and power the gospel promises. Many times this causes us to give up the pursuit of Jesus in the place of prayer. But what if it didn't have to be complicated? **What if prayer is the most *simple practice or discipline we could engage in with God?***

Brother Lawrence was a 17th century Carmelite monk who wrote a book all about the simplicity of prayer, kindly demystifying Paul's words "*pray without ceasing*" in I Thess. 5:16-18.

He writes:

"I have abandoned all particular forms of devotion, all prayer techniques. My only prayer practice is attention. I carry on a habitual, silent, and secret conversation with God that fills me with overwhelming joy."

- **What would life look like if you began to simply give God your attention as often as possible?**
- **What if, in letting go of your current view of God and prayer, you simply began to ask to know Him more, to show Himself and the benefits of your salvation in His Word and in everyday life?**
- **Ask yourself this honest question: Am I willing to make room in my life - my heart, soul, and mind - for an ongoing conversation with God?**



# The Examen Prayer

*“And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” Colossians 3:17*

The examen is a simple way of reflecting and praying through the day. Originally attributed to Ignatius of Loyola, it is a daily practice or discipline of prayer that embraces our need for Jesus and denies our self ambitions. The faithful practice of the examen will cultivate a deeper awareness of God’s presence and His voice in our everyday lives.

***“God our Lord would have us look to the Giver and love Him more than His gift, keeping Him always before our eyes, in our hearts, and in our thoughts.” -Ignatius of Loyola***

When we pray the examen, we review our day with God. There are various questions we can ask to facilitate this review, but at its core, the examen is sharing our day with Jesus and seeking his direction in prayer. It is not a reflection on sin. The prayer of the examen is an examination of our awareness of God’s presence. It may lead us to confession of sin, but it has a broader focus. It is a detailed reflection on the presence and movement of God in our ordinary lives.

Ignatius of Loyola taught that experiencing God’s presence should lead us to act accordingly! The result of the examen for Ignatius was God’s active direction in our lives. We can practice the examen very intentionally to become what Ignatius called **“contemplatives in action.”**



# Praying the Examen

*A Simple Way of Praying The Examen\**

**Rest-** take a breath. Remember God is always present. Trust in the presence of God. Rest in it. God is with you. He is in you. He loves you right where you are. *Resist the urge to rush.*

**Replay-** think over your day like a movie replaying in your head. *Notice* what you are *noticing*. What made you happy? What made you anxious? What made you angry?

**Rejoice-** thank God for those things which are obvious. But also thank Him for non-obvious things- random acts of kindness, being healthy, the weather, a positive song or meal. Relish and savor these moments in gratitude to God.

**Repent-** say sorry to God for moments that come to into your mind as you review the day- getting involved in gossip, reacting with a tone that was aggressive, lacking compassion in a situation, ignoring a need, not responding to a nudge. Receive His forgiveness afresh.

**Reboot-** make a decision in your heart to live for Jesus tomorrow and ask for grace to see His presence more clearly.

\*The Examen can take five minutes or one hour. If you do it once - it will be useful - if you do it every day, it can bring transformation. However, be careful that it doesn't become another duty. Think of it as a way to dialogue with God in friendship – holding the practice in context of relationship.





# A Life of Prayer

Learning to pray, or finding a new way to connect with God in our prayer life, requires us to embrace honesty and openness with ourselves and with Him. In the Old Testament, we meet David, a young shepherd boy who would go on to become the King of Israel. God referred to him as “a man after My heart... who pleases Me” (1 Samuel 13:14, Acts 13:22). David expressed his deepest thoughts and feelings through the Psalms, offering us a candid glimpse into his close relationship with God.

Yet, David's story is not without its struggles; he faced significant moral failings as a murderer, an adulterer, and a warrior. This complexity raises a profound question: how could someone with such a troubled past still be called a man after God's own heart?

Psalm 51 reveals David's heartfelt repentance and sorrow. His words invite all of us, especially those grappling with our own shortcomings, to seek refuge in God's presence and lean on His grace. This Psalm teaches us that we need not only forgiveness for our sins but also healing from the emotional and mental scars they leave behind. It reminds us that to overcome the burdens of sin, we must ask God to create in us a pure heart and restore a steadfast spirit within us.

A place to start:

- ***Read through Psalm 51 on the next page and underline words or phrases that stand out. Ask God to create a clean heart in you and renew your spirit with His compassion and love as you meet with Him in scripture.***
- ***For families with small children: ask the question, “how does it make you feel to know- though you were born sick with sin, Jesus has cured you??***

## Psalm 51 *The Voice Translation*

“Look on me with a heart of mercy, O God, according to Your generous love. According to Your great compassion, wipe out every consequence of my shameful crimes.

Thoroughly wash me, inside and out, of all my crooked deeds. Cleanse me from my sins. For I am fully aware of all I have done wrong, and my guilt is there, staring me in the face. But still, You long to enthrone truth throughout my being; in unseen places deep within me, You show me wisdom. Cleanse me of my wickedness with hyssop, and I will be clean. If You wash me, I will be whiter than snow...

Create in me a clean heart, O God; restore within me a sense of being brand new. Do not throw me far away from Your presence, and do not remove Your Holy Spirit from me. Give back to me the deep delight of being saved by You: let Your willing Spirit sustain me.”

# Repentance

*turning or returning towards...*

Here is an example of a prayer of repentance based in Scripture. You can pray this one, or write one from your own heart/mind. You can find other topics of prayer in scripture and use this format, or one from the previous pages.

***Families can write their own prayer together, draw a picture of what/how they are experiencing the Scripture, or even compose a song or poem. There is no "box," just follow the Spirit.***

## **1 John 1:9**

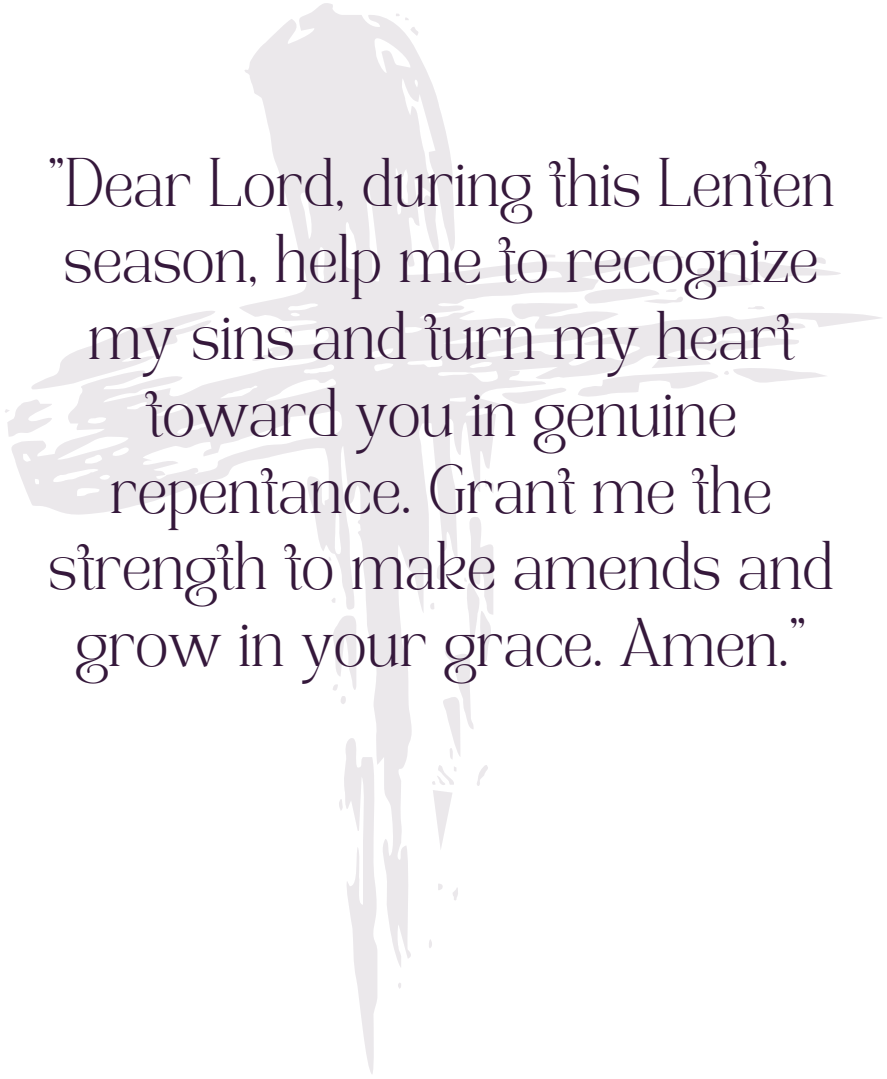
*"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

Father, You are forever faithful and I am thankful for Your steadfast love and faithfulness toward me. I confess that I have not been faithful in all things and I have committed sins against You. I am sorry. I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway (Romans 7:19). Father, I repent for my sins. I purposefully and intentionally turn away from my sins and, with the power of Your Holy Spirit living within me, I walk toward and pursue holiness. Thank You, Father, that through Jesus Christ, you forgive me and cleanse me from all unrighteousness. Your mercy endures forever! Guard me, Lord, from repeating these sins so that my life may glorify you and bring others into the knowledge of you.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

## A Prayer of Repentance:

"Dear Lord, during this Lenten season, help me to recognize my sins and turn my heart toward you in genuine repentance. Grant me the strength to make amends and grow in your grace. Amen."





# Praying Scripture

One of the most effective ways to pray is by sitting with God in His Word, by the power of the Holy Spirit, for revelation of Jesus (*the Word made flesh*)! When we pray using Scripture, we can be sure that we are on the right track. When we ask the Holy Spirit to **show us** the heart of our Father and the ways of our Savior within the pages, He is faithful, *even delighted!*, to do so.

## A place to start:

Ask the Lord to walk with you through these verses about prayer. There is no rush! Ask/write down any questions you might have...linger, wait, listen, breathe...

*Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 5:16 – 18)*

*But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. (Matthew 6:6)*

*At all times, pray by the power of the Spirit. Pray all kinds of prayers. Be watchful, so that you can pray. Always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. (Ephesians 6:18)*

*Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. (Mark 11:24)*



# Praying Scripture

A simple method for praying through any Scripture:

- Spend some time quieting your mind and directing your thoughts to Jesus- the Word made flesh.
- Choose a passage in scripture, begin to read it and pray it back to God silently. Focus your prayer on/with God's Holy Spirit within you.
- Don't forget you get to *have a conversation* with God about His word! This brings joy and gratitude.
- It can be helpful to make a list of questions about the passage or verses. Ask Him about the "who, what and how."
- Remain on a phrase as long as you want to with the Lord- there is no rush! Stay with what the Spirit is revealing to you. You can write it down or even record a voice memo.
- As God's Holy Spirit moves, move slowly through the passage and enjoy with curiosity and wonder as Holy Spirit teaches you through Scripture.



# A Life of Prayer

In Matthew 5, Jesus teaches about the Kingdom of Heaven and what it looks to live a life pleasing to God. He explains further in chapter 6 *how* to go about living that life. He shares in verse 6, “*But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.*” He then goes on to teach the same prayer from Luke 11 (The Lord’s Prayer.)

The things we *do* to please God must *be* about pleasing God first and foremost. It requires humility to recognize that our motivation for “doing for” God, is utterly dependent on our “being with” God, enjoying what CS Lewis called a “*robust inner life*” with Him. The inner life we nurture and cultivate with God is the single most important thing we will do upon the earth. It influences every relationship, every circumstance, and every season of life. If we want His rewards more than the fleeting rewards of this world, we must **lay down** our devotion to human attention, human praise, or public accolades that eventually lead to pride. We must **pick up** a practice of the secret place.

## A place to start:

Spend time with Jesus in His Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5,6,7). Review the scripture reading techniques on the previous page. When something stands out to you, or grabs your attention, or makes you scratch your head!, write it down on the next page to ponder and talk to God about.

### **For families and individuals:**

Scan the QR code to access a 20 minute audio version. Listen and share what stands out, pray for one another to go to the secret place and talk/listen to God about these points.







# ✝ A Life of Prayer

When your heart is set on the secret pace - *cultivating your inner life with God* - you are free to explore the unique way God communicates with you AND how you were made to communicate with Him. Author Gary Thomas calls this discovering our “Sacred Pathways.” He gives helpful and broad categories in his book:

**Naturalists** Enjoy God in the midst of creation and discover spiritual truths in nature

**Sensates** Enjoy God through sensual experiences; sights (like art), sounds (music), smells, and more

**Traditionalists** Enjoy God Through Ritual and Symbol

**Ascetics** Enjoy God in Solitude and Simplicity

**Activists** Enjoy God Through Confrontation & “love in action”

**Enthusiasts** Enjoy God with Mystery, Wonder, and Celebration

**Contemplatives** Enjoy God Through Adoration

**Intellectuals** Enjoy God with the Mind

A place to start:

***Ask yourself, “how do I enjoy God, and experience Him enjoying me?” Really give it some thought!***

Read through this list and select a few ways you enjoy being with God. *Remember*: We rarely rely on a single approach to connect with God every time. Your life of prayer will evolve and grow, like any healthy relationship, over time.

**Resource We Love:** Simple study guide on Sacred Pathways by Adalee Lewis that helps you go on a journey of discovering your unique, enjoyable practice of prayer.



# An Upsetting Faith

*For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love. Galatians 5:6*

Have you ever pondered what this faith has done in your life? What has changed about you and/or your life, since you've become a follower of Jesus? **Take a moment right now and do some internal "inventory" with God's Spirit helping you.**

If we consider the life of Paul, faith in Jesus was a very upsetting faith. It upset his plan, upset his hard-earned religious education, his understanding of God. It turned him into a radically different person altogether! This faith laid hold of Paul's life and brought it into submission to Jesus. There was a *finality* about it he expresses in his letter to the Philippians:

***"I want to know Him inside and out. I want to experience the power of His resurrection and join in His suffering, shaped by His death...and nothing will stand in my way because He has grabbed me and won't let me go."*** Phil. 3:8-14

When we truly encounter Jesus and profess to genuinely believe in Him, He sets our feet on a high vantage point. A place no one else could prepare for us. From that high place of truth, we view every single aspect and experience of our lives. It reshapes our hearts and realigns our actions, making us small, God big, and Jesus unspeakably precious and vital to our lives.

## **Ponder:**

***How are you different today than when you started walking with Jesus?***

***What needs to be upset in your life currently?***



# It Takes Time.

AW Tozer, the beloved 20th century pastor and author writes, “***a thousand distractions would woo us away from thoughts of God, but if we are wise, we will sternly put them from us and make room for the King and take time to entertain Him.***”

The temptation to make our relationship with God judicial, or transactional, rather than personal can be very strong. However, our willingness to cultivate a relationship with God is directly in reference to our strength as believers.

How well can you trust or obey when you don't know the Person you're attempting to trust and obey? How can you throw away your own ideas about life and faith and love if you don't know Whose ideas you're embracing? How can you truly follow if you don't know the Person leading you?

Contemplate Jesus words in John 14:13-26:

***Anyone who loves Me will listen to My voice and obey. The Father will love him, and We will draw close to him and make a dwelling place within him... I have spoken these words while I am here with you. The Father is sending a great Helper, the Holy Spirit, in My name to teach you everything and to remind you of all I have said to you.***

- **Ask** the Holy Spirit to be your Teacher and your Guide as you continue this Lenten journey.
- **Ask** for Help- a holy desire to know God personally.
- **Ask** for a deep understanding of God- the One who chooses to draw near to you, to make a home in you.



# Take Time to Know God

*Prayer Practice: Breath Prayer*

Breath Prayer is a beautiful practice that connects with our everyday lives through the simple act of breathing. *Our breath is the first thing we do when we enter this world, and it is also the last thing we do when we leave it.* Throughout the Bible, breath holds significant meaning. In the very beginning, God breathes life into humanity, and as Paul writes in 2 Timothy, Scripture itself is “God-breathed.” Interestingly, the words for “spirit” in both Hebrew (*ruach*) and Greek (*pneuma*) also translate to “breath.” ***This shows us that breath is vital not just for our physical existence, but also for our spiritual well-being.***

The practice of Breath Prayer has roots in the early Christian community of the Desert Mothers and Fathers. They used this practice as a way to “pray without ceasing.” (1 Thess 5:17). By taking a short passage from Scripture, we can breathe in the first part of the text and breathe out the next part, repeating this rhythm. This simple yet profound prayer practice invites us to connect with God in a meaningful way.

Breath Prayer is simple and easy to do. All you need is God’s Spirit, a short scripture phrase, and your breath, which you have with you all day! It’s great to practice in quiet moments, and research shows that just 12 minutes of deep breathing daily can help clear your mind. But you don’t have to limit it to quiet time—try it while doing everyday tasks like washing dishes or commuting. This way, even ordinary moments can become holy fellowship with Jesus.



# Take Time to Know God

*Prayer Practice: Breath Prayer*

## **Prayer Practice:**

- Choose a scripture phrase. It can be a verse from the Bible or a line of praise and petition (one common formula is a name for God followed by your desire, such as “Spirit, peace”). You could also use the inward breath to name what you would like to receive and the outward breath to state what you would like to release.
- Breathe in and out, with the first part of your prayer coming to mind on the inward breath and the latter half connecting with the outward breath.
- Continue your prayer for a set period of time or until you feel you have reached a sense of inner stillness as you dwell in the presence of God.
- **Remember:** Breath prayer is a form of prayer that involves repeating a short phrase or Scripture passage in harmony with your breath. It is a way to center thoughts and intentions on God. Here are some examples of breath prayers to get you started:

## **Example Practice:**

1. *Inhale* while praying “Lord Jesus”, *exhale* with “have mercy on me”.
2. *Inhale* “The Lord is my shepherd,” *exhale* “I have all that I need.”
3. *Inhale* “You are my refuge and strength,” *exhale* “my very present help in trouble.”
4. *Inhale* “You are my shield,” *exhale* “I trust You to help me.”
5. *Inhale* “I give my burdens to You;” *exhale* “You will take care of me.”.



# Reflection

## Prayer Practice

Reflection is a key component in our spiritual formation. Millenia ago, King David prayed in Psalm 139:23-24: ***“Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”***

Trevor Hudson, a scholar on Ignatian spirituality, has said, ***“We don’t change from our experience, we change when we reflect on our experience.”*** If you want to get the most out of this prayer practice, you need to reflect on what prayer has meant to you or what role it has played in your relationship with God. Take some time to journal out your answers to the following three questions. There is space provided on the following page

- *Note: As you write, be as specific as possible. While bullet points are just fine, if you write it out in narrative form, your brain will be able to process your insights in a more lasting way. There are no right or wrong answers- this is a time to remember and reflect with Jesus.*

- ***Where did I feel resistance in prayer?  
Internally or externally?***
- ***Where did I feel delight?***
- ***Where did I most experience God’s nearness?***





# 30 Minutes with God

*Prayer Practice: Scripture Guided Reflection, 5 min segments  
Ready to spend an hour with God? Increase each step to 10min or  
repeat the practice.*

**Step 1: Preparation** Find a quiet and comfortable space for prayer.

- Take a few deep breaths, inhaling God's peace and exhaling distractions
- Open your Bible to *Psalm 23*

**Step 2: Connection** - Begin by acknowledging Jesus' presence:  
"Jesus, I believe you are here with me."

- Express gratitude for His love and grace in your life.
- Ask Holy Spirit to guide and empower your prayer time.

**Step 3: Reflection** - Read the selected Bible passage slowly, allowing the words to sink in.

- Reflect on how the passage speaks to your current situation or challenges.
- Ask Jesus to reveal Himself to you through the passage.

**Step 4: Conversation** - Share your thoughts, feelings, and desires with Jesus.

- Listen for His gentle whispers, nudges, or insights.
- Respond to His leading, surrendering your will to His.

**Step 5: Intercession** - Lift up your church staff, congregation, and community to Jesus.

- Pray for guidance, wisdom, and empowerment for ministry.
- Ask Jesus to pour out His love and grace upon those you serve.

**Step 6: Rest** - Take a few moments to simply rest in Jesus' presence.

- Allow His peace to settle over you.
- Close your prayer time with a simple "Amen" or "Thank You, Jesus"





# The Gaze of Our Souls

*Those who look to Him are radiant; their faces  
are never covered with shame. Psalm 34:5*

2 Chronicles 16:9 says that God is always on the alert, His eyes moving “to and fro,” constantly on the lookout for people who are totally committed to him. When you choose to meet with God in prayer, to gaze upon His beauty and spend intentional time with Him, you discover this comforting truth: ***His eyes were already on you. Seeing you, knowing you, loving you. When you look at Him, He is already looking at you.***

Over 600 years ago, Nicholas of Cusa wrote some seriously spiritually flavorful words about Jesus and the place of prayer. ***“Thou never cease to behold me, yes, even in the secret places of my soul. With Thee, to behold is to give life; ‘tis unceasingly to impart sweetest of love...to feed me...to kindle my yearning...to make me drink of the dew of gladness...to infuse me with the fountain of life...”***

Building a close relationship with God means looking to Him and being aware of His presence in our lives. This practice is straightforward yet deeply meaningful; it involves turning our thoughts towards God and being mindful of His love and care. It's amazing to think that God, who is full of patience, love, and mercy, has made this connection possible for us. Thanks to Jesus' sacrifice and the Help of the Holy Spirit, we have the opportunity to enjoy intimacy and fellowship with God.

## ***Prayer Practice:***

Spiritual director Marjorie Thompson tells the story of a conversation between an eighteenth-century priest and an elderly peasant who would sit alone for long hours in the quiet of the church. When the priest asked what he was doing, the old man simply replied, ***“I look at Him, He looks at me, and we are happy.”*** ***Throughout your day, have this simple conversation with God. How does it feel to be aware of His awareness of you? His attention, affection and love?***

# Gazing at Him through Scripture

*Prayer Practice: Holy Spirit led Scripture Meditations*

## **Prayer Practice:**

Read through the scriptures and ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate the one that is for you, for today. Then read it several times, emphasizing different aspects of the text. Use page provided to write down any observations or inspirations you experience with God. *This practice can be repeated multiple times over Lent and beyond.*

***Likewise, when you pray, do not be as hypocrites who love to pray loudly at synagogue or on street corners—their concern is to be seen by men. They have already earned their reward. 6 When you pray, go into a private room, close the door, and pray unseen to your Father who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you. Matt. 6:5-6***

***Since we have a great High Priest, Jesus, the Son of God who has passed through the heavens from death into new life with God, let us hold tightly to our faith. For Jesus is not some high priest who has no sympathy for our weaknesses and flaws. He has already been tested in every way that we are tested; but He emerged victorious, without failing God. 16 So let us step boldly to the throne of grace, where we can find mercy and grace to help when we need it most. Heb. 4:14-16***

*\*more scriptures on the next page*



# Gazing at Him through Scripture

*Prayer Practice: Holy Spirit led Scripture Meditations*

***Celebrate always, pray constantly, and give thanks to God no matter what circumstances you find yourself in. (This is God's will for all of you in Jesus the Anointed.) Don't suppress the Spirit. Don't downplay prophecies. Take a close look at everything, test it, then cling to what is good. 1 Thess. 5:16-21***

***Pray always. Pray in the Spirit. Pray about everything in every way you know how! And keeping all this in mind, pray on behalf of God's people. Keep on praying feverishly, and be on the lookout until evil has been stayed. Eph. 6:18***

***Keep your gentle nature so that all people will know what it looks like to walk in His footsteps. The Lord is ever present with us. Don't be anxious about things; instead, pray. Pray about everything. He longs to hear your requests, so talk to God about your needs and be thankful for what has come. And know that the peace of God (a peace that is beyond any and all of our human understanding) will stand watch over your hearts and minds in Jesus, the Anointed One. Phil. 4:5-7***

***Trust in God. If you do, honestly, you can say to this mountain, "Mountain, uproot yourself and throw yourself into the sea." If you don't doubt, but trust that what you say will take place, then it will happen. So listen to what I'm saying: Whatever you pray for or ask from God, believe that you'll receive it and you will. When you pray, if you remember anyone who has wronged you, forgive him so that God above can also forgive you. Mark 11:22-25***





# Holy Week

*...And the ransom he paid was not mere gold or silver. He paid for you with the precious lifeblood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God." 1 Peter 1:18-19*

Read through the Scriptures, with the help of the Holy Spirit, and journey with Jesus in His final days until His resurrection. Consciously seek Him. Welcome the Help of His Spirit- allow yourself to be slow, intentional, and open to His ministry. **Families and small groups can ready these scriptures and discuss over a meal.**

## MONDAY

***Jesus curses a fig tree, cleanses the temple***  
Matthew 21:12-22, Mark 11:15-19, Luke 19:45-48, and John 2:13-17.

## TUESDAY

***Jesus calls out religious leaders and speak from the Mt. of Olives*** Matthew 21:23-24:51, Mark 11:20-13:37, Luke 20:1-21:36, and John 12:20-38.

## WEDNESDAY

***The Bible doesn't say what Jesus did, but scholars speculate that He and his disciples spent this day resting in Bethany in anticipation of Passover described in***  
Matthew 26:12-14, Mark 14:10-12, and Luke 22:3-6, where Judas agrees to betray Jesus.

## THURSDAY

***Passover in the Upper Room, first communion, and betrayal*** Matthew 26:17-75, Mark 14:12-72, Luke 22:7-62, and John 13:1-38.

## FRIDAY

***Trial, Crucifixion, Death, and Burial on Good Friday*** Matthew 27:1-62, Mark 15:1-47, Luke 22:63-23:56, and John 18:28-19:37.

## SATURDAY

***The tomb***  
Matthew 27:62-66, Mark 16:1, Luke 23:56, and John 19:40.

## SUNDAY

### ***Resurrection!!!***

Matthew 28:1-13, Mark 16:1-14, Luke 24:1-49, and John 20:1-23.

# Don't Stop Now

What wings are to a bird, and sails to a ship, so is prayer to the soul.

*Corrie Ten Boom*

What you have accomplished with Jesus in these pages is part of the discipline of prayer- which is *never* without everlasting rewards. He is your ultimate reward, but there are benefits to your salvation He wants to enjoy with you here on the earth! Prayer is the special, secret place God wants to share with you. He wants to walk with you and your family, your friends, your church and community. From this foundation, it's our prayer that the Holy Spirit will continue to move in your heart and mind, move in your relationships, as you draw near to the One you love. From this place- seeking Him first- all other things will be added unto you. Peace, rest, joy, harmony in your relationships, abounding grace, mercy and faithfulness will take root in your life and the evidence of God's grace will be all over you. The gospel will go forward in your life because you can't help sharing the glory of Jesus!! *Remember: you are not working to earn your place in God's family- you were crafted in the Image of the Invisible God, set apart for good works in Christ Jesus, and made for intimacy with Him. **Don't stop now!*** All of heaven is rooting for you- the great cloud of witnesses cheering you on- towards the goal of closeness with Jesus and a life on fire with His gospel. The Prayer Ministry is here to support you in this eternal pursuit of the Beautiful Man, Jesus- your church family believes in the story God is writing with your life. Don't give up!!! You were made for this kind of life.

*Prayerfully,*  
*The Prayer Ministry of Grace Fellowship*



# Save the Dates

*Upcoming opportunities to gather, worship, and pray*

April 13<sup>th</sup>      Women's Palm Sunday Experience

April 13-20<sup>th</sup>      Holy Week

April 20<sup>th</sup>      Sunrise and Easter Services

May 1-5<sup>th</sup>      National Day of Prayer &  
Fire on the Altar

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