



P R A Y

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MORNING PRAYER

OPENING YOUR DAY WITH GOD

Regular font: leader, Italicized font: group

OPENING PRAYER

O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will declare your praise. (Psalm 51:15 ESV)
Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit: as in the beginning,
so now, and evermore. Amen.

CONFESSION

CONFESS YOUR SINS TO THE LORD SPECIFICALLY AND THEN PRAY THE WORDS OF THE CONFESSION PRAYER BELOW.

Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry, and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will,
and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE AND PARDON

DECLARE CHRIST'S FORGIVENESS BY PRAYING THE SCRIPTURE BELOW.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins
and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9 ESV)
Amen.

THE MORNING PSALM

PRAY THE PSALM FOR THE MORNING TO THE LORD (p. 28). AFTER YOU FINISH SAYING THE PSALM, GIVE GOD GLORY USING THE PROCLAMATION BELOW.

Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit: as in the beginning, so now,
and evermore. Amen.

THE WORD OF GOD

STUDY OR MEDITATE ON THE WORD OF GOD. YOU CAN SIGN UP FOR
DAILY SCRIPTURE EMAILS AT [SCRIPTURE UNION \(SCRIPTUREUNION.ORG\)](http://SCRIPTUREUNION.ORG).

This is the Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

INTERCESSIONS

PRAY ABOUT THE AREA OF NEED TO THE LORD FOR EACH DAY OF THE WEEK.

SUNDAY

For all who fear God and believe in you, Lord Christ, that our divisions may cease, and that all may be one as you and the Father are one. For the peace of the world, that a spirit of respect and forbearance may grow among nations and peoples, we pray to you, O Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

MONDAY

For the mission of the Church, that in faithful witness it may preach the gospel to the ends of the earth. For the InterVarsity community, that we may boldly fulfill our mission on this campus, we pray to you, O Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

TUESDAY

For the university community, faculty, staff, students of every ethnicity and culture, that they may come to know Christ. For our city and for those who live in it, we pray to you, O Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

WEDNESDAY

For our enemies and those who wish us harm; and for all whom we have injured or offended, especially [insert name], we pray to you, O Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

THURSDAY

For a blessing upon all human labor, and for the right use of the riches of creation, that the world may be freed from poverty, famine, and disaster, we pray to you, O Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

FRIDAY

For the poor and the oppressed, for the unemployed and the destitute, for prisoners and captives, that they may be relieved and protected, we pray to you, O Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

SATURDAY

For those in positions of public trust, especially [insert name], that they may serve justice, and promote the dignity and freedom of every person, we pray to you, O Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

PRAYER FOR SALVATION

CHOOSE NAMES OF TWO NOT-YET CHRISTIAN FRIENDS ON CAMPUS WITH WHOM YOU ARE WILLING TO BUILD FRIENDSHIPS AND SHARE CHRIST. PRAY FOR THESE SAME TWO PEOPLE DAILY.

For [insert name] and [insert name], that they may come to a saving knowledge of Christ, we pray to you, O Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

PERSONAL NEEDS

For our needs, especially [insert need], and all other unspoken needs, we pray to you, O Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father which art in heaven,

Hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come,

Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

*And forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors.*

And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil. Amen. (Matthew 6:9–13 KJV)

CLOSING PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

GIVE GOD THANKS SPECIFICALLY FOR HIS WORK IN YOUR LIFE AND THEN PRAY THE PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING BELOW.

Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we your unworthy servants give you humble thanks for all your goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all whom you have made.

We bless you for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for your immeasurable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.

And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies, that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to your service, and by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.

EVENING PRAYER

STARTING YOUR EVENING WITH GOD

OPENING PRAYER

O God, come to my assistance;

O Lord, make haste to help me. (Psalm 69:2 DRA)

Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit: as in the beginning, so now, and evermore. Amen.

CONFESSION

CONFESS YOUR SINS TO THE LORD SPECIFICALLY AND THEN PRAY THE WORDS OF THE CONFESSION PRAYER BELOW.

Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from your ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against your holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done, and there is no health in us. But you, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders. Spare us, O God, who confess our faults. Restore us who are penitent, according to your promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord. And grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake, that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, to the glory of your holy Name. Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE AND PARDON

DECLARE CHRIST'S FORGIVENESS BY PRAYING THE SCRIPTURE BELOW.

As far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us. (Psalm 103:12 ESV)

Amen.

THE EVENING PSALM

PRAY THE PSALM FOR THE EVENING TO THE LORD (p. 28). AFTER YOU FINISH SAYING THE PSALM, GIVE GOD GLORY USING THE PROCLAMATION BELOW.

Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit: as in the beginning so now, and evermore. Amen.

RECOLLECTION

TURN YOUR MIND AND HEART BACK TO THE SCRIPTURE THROUGH WHICH GOD SPOKE TO YOU IN MORNING PRAYER AND REFLECT ON IT FOR A FEW MINUTES. YOU MAY WANT TO STUDY OR MEDITATE ON THE SCRIPTURES IF YOU HAVEN'T DONE SO IN THE MORNING (pp. 25–27).

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father which art in heaven,

Hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come,

Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts,

as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil. Amen. (Matthew 6:9–13 KJV)

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, stay with us, for evening is at hand and the day is past; be our companion in the way, kindle our hearts, and awaken hope, that we may know you as you are revealed in Scripture and the breaking of bread. Grant this for the sake of your love. Amen.

NIGHT PRAYER

CLOSING YOUR DAY WITH GOD

YOU MAY WANT TO GO THROUGH THE DAILY EXAMEN (p. 16) BEFORE THIS.

OPENING PRAYER

Our help is in the name of the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.

(Psalm 124:8 NIV)

The Lord Almighty, grant us a peaceful night and a perfect end. Amen.

CONFESSION

Almighty God, our heavenly Father:

We have sinned against you, through our own fault, in thought, and word, and deed, and in what we have left undone.

For the sake of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ, forgive us all our offenses; and grant that we may serve you in newness of life, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

NIGHT PSALM: PSALM 4

PSALM 31, 91, OR 134 MAY BE SUBSTITUTED.

- 1 Answer me when I call, O God, defender of my cause; you set me free when I am hard-pressed; have mercy on me and hear my prayer.
- 2 *"You mortals, how long will you dishonor my glory; how long will you worship dumb idols and run after false gods?"*
- 3 Know that the LORD does wonders for the faithful; when I call upon the LORD, he will hear me.
- 4 *Tremble, then, and do not sin; speak to your heart in silence upon your bed.*
- 5 Offer the appointed sacrifices and put your trust in the LORD.
- 6 *Many are saying, "Oh, that we might see better times!" Lift up the light of your countenance upon us, O LORD.*
- 7 You have put gladness in my heart, more than when grain and wine and oil increase.
- 8 *I lie down in peace; at once I fall asleep; for only you, LORD, make me dwell in safety.*

Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit: as in the beginning, so now, and evermore. Amen.

THE WORD OF GOD

"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

(Matthew 11:28–30 ESV)

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father which art in heaven,

Hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come,

Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil. Amen. (Matthew 6:9–13 KJV)

THE SONG OF SIMEON

SIMEON WAS A PROPHET WHO WAS TOLD BY GOD THAT HE WOULD DIE ONLY AFTER HE SAW JESUS. WHEN HE SEES JESUS AS A CHILD, HE PRAYS THIS PRAYER OF RELEASE. PRAY THIS PRAYER OF DISMISSAL TO SIGNAL THE ENDING OF THE DAY.

Lord, you now have set your servant free

to go in peace as you have promised;

For these eyes of mine have seen the Savior,

whom you have prepared for all the world to see:

A Light to enlighten the nations,

and the glory of your people Israel.

CLOSING PRAYER

Guide us waking, O Lord, and guard us sleeping; that awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep we may rest in peace. Amen.

WHY A PRAYER BOOK?

Prayer is an exciting journey in our relationship with God. We actually encounter our loving God and, in dialogue with him, become changed. Prayer is not a one-way conversation; rather it is a two-way dialogue with a God who loves us and longs to speak to us. As in all things, we need to learn to speak the language of prayer. “Lord, teach us to pray” is what the disciples ask Jesus in Luke 11:1 (NIV). The best place to start learning to pray is the Scriptures. It is not just about studying about prayer in the Scriptures but actually praying the Scriptures. Scripture teaches us the language of prayer. This prayer guide uses both Scriptures and spontaneous prayers as a way to grow us in our dialogue with God.

GETTING STARTED

FIND A QUIET TIME AND PLACE

Find a helpful gap of time to pray. You want to block off 15 minutes in the morning and about 15 minutes in the evening. If you are doing Scripture readings, you want to add an additional 15 minutes to your Morning Prayer or Evening Prayer. Your times may vary from day to day; make sure you schedule them in. If possible, try to have the same times set apart each day to pray.

QUIET YOUR HEART

Gather your thoughts and heart and relax in God’s presence. He is near you, waiting to talk with you and hear from you.

PRAY

Pray at a steady pace through the prayers in the prayer book to God, who is near you. Each prayer has various section headings outlined in bold. Pray steadily through them. If clarifying instructions are needed, they are provided in small caps. Pray your way through the entire prayer time (morning or evening or night).

PRAYING IN A GROUP

While you may pray this on your own, this prayer book also encourages praying in community. For example, if you are with friends during an evening meal, you may pray Evening Prayer together. The parts that are said by a leader are in regular font, and the parts that are said together are in italics. If you are praying the Psalm in a group, then the leader can say one line of the Psalm, and the group can say the second, and you can alternate your way through the Psalm. For Scripture, the leader should read a pre-picked passage of Scripture.

PRAYER TIMES

This prayer book contains Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, and optional Night Prayer. To begin, you want to start with Morning and Evening Prayer. There is no formula or secret reward in praying twice a day. Communities of God's people in Scripture and throughout history have prayed at natural breaks in the day. Morning and Evening Prayers seem to be helpful breaks for many of us. It is good to arrange your day around God.

MORNING PRAYER

Morning Prayer has an opening prayer, confession, word of assurance and pardon, morning Psalm, the word of God, intercessions, the Lord's Prayer, and a closing prayer of thanksgiving. Pray Morning Prayer to start your day with God. You may pray this anytime in the morning to early afternoon, depending on your schedule. *(15 min; 30 min with Scripture study)*

EVENING PRAYER

Evening Prayer has an opening prayer, confession, word of assurance and pardon, evening Psalm, a time of recollection, the Lord's Prayer, and a closing prayer. Pray Evening Prayer to start your evening with God. You may pray this anytime in the late afternoon to evening. *(5 min)*

NIGHT PRAYER

Night Prayer is prayed just before bed. It is also called Compline, which is from the Latin term for completion. Night Prayer is very short and has an opening prayer, short confession, a short Psalm and reading, and a few short ending prayers. Night Prayer is optional but effective at helping us close our day. You may want to combine Night Prayer with a practice of the Daily Examen on page 16. *(5 min)*

EXPLANATION OF SECTIONS

OPENING PRAYER

The opening prayer (a verse from a Psalm) begins praying by requesting God's help in our prayer time. It acknowledges our helplessness before God and our needing his help to pray.

CONFESSION

Our sins separate us from God, but we can enjoy our relationship with him when we are forgiven. The confession is from the 1979 *Book of Common Prayer*.

WORD OF ASSURANCE AND PARDON

We need assurance that God forgives us. Declaring the Scripture that he has done so is a way to receive his forgiveness.

PSALMS

The Psalms are prayers/poems to God that are inspired by the Holy Spirit. Jesus, during his ministry, prayed the Psalms. He teaches us that the Psalms point to him. The community of God's people for centuries has learned to pray using the Psalms. What better way to learn how to pray than learning from God's Word? *Mark 15:34; Luke 24:44*

THE WORD OF GOD

We read Scripture because it is the Word of God. It is the primary way that God personally speaks to us. There is no way to grow in our relationship with God without getting to know him through his Word. Reading Scripture is not just about gaining more information; it is about listening to God and being changed by him. It is important to have a Scripture plan so you can systematically read the Scriptures. Look at pages 25–27 to pick a way to move forward and be consistent with it.

Psalms 19:7–10; 2 Timothy 3:16–17

THE LORD'S PRAYER

When the disciples ask Jesus to teach them to pray, this is the prayer Jesus teaches them. It includes praying for God's will and name, forgiving others, and asking for our needs.

Matthew 6:9–13; Luke 11:2–4

INTERCESSION

Scripture calls us to pray for our needs and the needs of the world. Depending on the day of the week, pray for the needs outlined. As you pray through the week, you will be praying through a wide array of the world's needs. After that, courageously ask God for your needs, great and small.

1 Timothy 2:1–2; Matthew 6:8; Matthew 7:7–11

THANKSGIVING

We are commanded to give thanks in all circumstances. This thanksgiving prayer leads us in learning to daily give thanks to God in all circumstances.

1 Thessalonians 5:18; Philippians 4:6

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

I DON'T ALWAYS FEEL THE PSALMS I AM PRAYING. IS THIS BAD?

There are days when the scheduled Psalm will hit you right where you are. There are other days when you may be praying a happy Psalm while you are feeling miserable or vice versa. Praying that Psalm anyway helps us in two ways. First, it balances us to remember others who are in a desperate place though we are joyful, or it helps us pray joyful Psalms in faith even though we don't feel like it. Secondly, it keeps us from the danger of constantly being motivated by our feelings when we pray. Feelings are an important part of our humanity but must not always dictate our prayers. Otherwise, we will only pray when we feel like it. We need to remember that the Psalms are the prayers of Jesus. They lived in his mouth, when he was on earth and were fulfilled in his life. If we are unable to "find" ourselves in a Psalm or have a hard time praying them ourselves, we can always read them as prayers of Jesus.

ISN'T PRAYING WRITTEN PRAYERS "VAIN REPETITION" THAT SCRIPTURES WARN US AGAINST?

Jesus speaks against vain repetition referring to the idea that we think that we can get God's attention by saying a lot. Jesus himself prayed written prayers and even taught us to pray his prayer, known as the Lord's Prayer.

I LIKE PRAYING SPONTANEOUSLY. THIS GUIDE SEEMS TO USE WRITTEN PRAYERS. DOES IT MAKE ME LESS SPONTANEOUS?

Praying Scripture is a great foundation for praying spontaneously. We must not think that spontaneity is always authenticity. In fact, regularly praying Scriptures can enrich our spontaneous prayers to God throughout the day. Try remembering a verse from the Psalm of the day that stood out to you and pray it spontaneously throughout the day to God.

WHERE ARE THE PRAYERS IN THIS BOOK TAKEN FROM?

Most of the prayers in this book are from the Scriptures. There are a few, like the confession, intercessions, and thanksgiving, that are adapted from the 1979 *Book of Common Prayer*, which is a biblically sound collection of prayers that have been prayed for centuries.

THERE ARE SOME DAYS I FEEL GREAT AFTER PRAYING AND OTHER DAYS I DON'T. AM I DOING SOMETHING WRONG? ARE MY PRAYERS NOT WORKING?

Guard against the idea that you need to feel a high when you finish praying. You may have amazing prayer experiences sometimes, and at other times, they may feel ordinary. The secret is to keep praying (Luke 18:1–8). Remember you are seeking God not spiritual experiences.

I FEEL BORED WHEN I PRAY. IT'S HARD TO SIT STILL. WHAT DO I DO?

We live in a culture of noise. It is hard to quiet down to hear God and our thoughts. As you pray regularly, you will find it easier to be still. Sometimes the best answer to boredom is to keep at the life of prayer. In an entertainment culture, we are easily discouraged if the Scriptures don't constantly hit us or tickle our senses, so we may become captured by the need for novelty. Stay faithful to your rhythms of prayer and ask God for help.

DAILY EXAMEN

REVIEWING YOUR DAY WITH GOD

BY ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA

We long to see God in our daily life. The Prayer of Examen is a great way to end the day by relinquishing our day to Jesus. It is also a helpful way to discern God's abiding presence with us during the day. Practice this daily for a few minutes before bed.

1. INVITING GOD'S PRESENCE

Pray: *In the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Invite the Holy Spirit to help you during you walk through the day and shed his light.

2. CELEBRATING GOD'S GIFTS

Journal for a few minutes and recall God's gifts to you during the day (small and big things) in a spirit of gratitude. Give thanks for them.

3. REVIEWING THE DAY

Look back on your day in the presence of the Spirit like you are watching a video of the day unfold. Jot down the following:

Consolations: In what way did you cooperate with God's grace during the day? How did you draw close to him?

Desolations: In what way did you draw further away from God? What led you to withdraw from his presence? (Note not just things you did but experiences you had that may have caused this.)

4. OFFERING OURSELVES

Make an offering of your consolations and desolations to Jesus, whose presence is with you. Don't attempt to fix or explain. Just gift all the good and hard things of your day to Jesus.

5. PRAYING ONE THING

What is one thing you would pick among all your consolations and desolations that you want to talk to Jesus about? Invite Jesus into this area and process it with him.

Pray: *Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, so now and ever more. Amen.*

RETREAT OF SILENCE

FINDING GOD IN QUIET

Most wise Christians practice regular times away in which they seek to “gaze on the beauty of the LORD” and to meditate on him in his presence (Psalm 27:4 NIV). We call these “Retreats of Silence,” when we set aside a longer period of time, usually three hours. So what does a three-hour retreat look like?

1. It's important to identify a **PLACE** where you feel safe and uninterrupted—whatever it takes for you to pay attention to God.
2. **PACK** a lunch or snack, an iPod or phone, a journal, a Bible, and sometimes a book. Find a local park or church that is quiet and safe. Coffee shops aren't the best idea because the noise makes paying attention difficult.
3. Begin by **BREATHING** slowly and deeply. (5 min)
4. **EAT** your snack or meal slowly, savoring its taste. Appreciate the good gifts of creation. (30 min)
5. Listen to good **WORSHIP** music unless you find this distracting. This is drawing your attention toward God. (20 min)
6. Write in a journal or draw pictures or take a walk—the point is to **REFLECT** on where you are. **EXAMINE** your feelings and reactions to things, confessing when needed, and reflect on why you are drawn to these feelings and experiences. Invite the Holy Spirit to speak. (20–30 min)
7. Practice **LECTIO DIVINA** (p. 25) in a passage. Listen for God's **WORD** to you. (30 min)
8. Move to **PRAYER**. This could take several forms: journaling or a walk or art or quiet. Put down or reflect what you sense God said to you during the time. (30–40 min)
9. Pray in complete **STILLNESS**, coming back gently if your mind wanders. (10 min)
10. Finish with the Lord's Prayer and relish the **DEEP QUIETNESS** you feel inside.

SABBATH

RESTING FROM WORK

In a stunning move, God, who created the heavens and the earth, rested on the seventh day. Not because he needed to rest but as an invitation to us. Sabbath is a day for celebrating God. It is a reminder of who the primary worker in the world and in our lives is. It is God who keeps our lives and the world going. It does not depend on us. We are dispensable. In addition, the Sabbath is a celebration of our humanity. We are limited creatures, who need rest and refreshment. We are also so easily defined by what we do, and on the Sabbath, we cease work and get to celebrate who we are as the children of God, as opposed to our accomplishments (successes and failures).

SABBATH CONSISTS OF THREE THINGS

CEASING: Block off the day when you will have your Sabbath. For some people, Sundays are a great fit, and for others, it can be another day of the week or block of time. Make sure that it's marked on your calendar. Anticipate the Sabbath well and attempt to finish work you have scheduled. Turn off your email and whatever other electronic media that feel like work. Put away any projects or work-related materials. As you commence your Sabbath, begin with a prayer of surrender, giving your work to God and inviting him into your Sabbath day. Acknowledge that you are ceasing.

PRAYING: Sabbath is a great way to celebrate God. Take some extended time with God. Your daily prayer time may be quick. Sabbath is a great way to have some extended, relaxed times with God. Enjoy and relish his presence. Let him nourish and satisfy you. Process your life with him. You may want to check out the Retreat of Silence section of this book for a guided time (p. 17).

PLAYING: Even though we are not working, God is still running the world. This is good news because we are loved but dispensable. God doesn't need us to run our lives or the world. He invites us, and we get to be a part of it. When we realize our dispensability, we can relax and play. Think through what constitutes play for you. It may be sports, a book, good food, an extended nap, enjoying nature, spending time with good friends, or catching a movie. Take time to play well.

As you close your Sabbath, pray for God's grace and partnership to rejoin him in the work he has for you.

CONFESSION PRAYER

BRINGING YOUR SINS IN PRAYER TO GOD WITH A SPIRITUAL FRIEND

"Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed." (James 5:16 NIV)

We are all troubled with thoughts, actions, and inactions that lead us away from God and the full, abundant life he has for us. The practice of confession is not for condemnation or so we can experience a deep sense of shame! No, it is for our freedom and for healing that we are invited to enter into the regular practice of confessing our sins to one another and God. Confession is an act of courage to tell the full truth of your brokenness and also to have faith in Jesus, who fully forgives you of your sins.

We need the help of the Holy Spirit and the community in understanding the exact nature of our sins and entering into freedom.

PREPARE YOURSELF

Pray asking the Holy Spirit to help you see areas you have grieved him. Examine your conscience against a passage of Scripture, like the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20) or the confession prayers in this prayer book, and honestly reflect on your behavior in the past day or week. If you have more time, you may want to use a passage like the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7).

MEET WITH YOUR CONFESSION PARTNER/SPIRITUAL FRIEND

Find a confession partner of the same gender who you can trust and build an ongoing relationship. Establish a semi-regular schedule to meet with your friend. You may want to schedule no more than a half hour. Longer prayer times in mutual support begin idealistically but are very hard to sustain with the actual demands of life.

SPEND TIME IN CONFESSION AND PRAYER

Start your time with prayer. Then confess your sins specifically and to the point without explanations and rationalizations. Let your friend pray for Christ's forgiveness and his blood to cover you. Now do the same for him or her. This is not a time to offer advice or accountability but simply to help one another take your sins to Jesus for healing.

Prayer during this time can be for healing and freedom but also prayers of faith in God's forgiveness and compassion. These can be powerful times when the Holy Spirit brings great insight and healing. Say to each other after each person confesses and prays: *Almighty God, have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, keep us in eternal life. Amen.*

LISTENING PRAYER

LEARNING TO HEAR GOD'S VOICE

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."

(John 10:27 ESV)

It is a privilege of the children of God that we can hear the voice of the Good Shepherd.

When we make new friends, we do not immediately recognize our friends' voices on the phone. But after a couple of times, their voices become so familiar that the next time they call, we instantly respond to them. God's voice is similar to that. We become familiar over time with God's voice and in what ways he chooses to speak to us. We are unique people, and God will use his own ways to speak with us.

THE PRESENCE OF GOD

God wants to speak to us. He desires to reveal himself to us. It is difficult to hear from God when we struggle with whether he loves us and don't see him as a kind and compassionate Father who is for us. It is also difficult to hear from God when we believe he is far away and doesn't care. It is important to know and affirm a personal God, who knows us by name, who lives in us and around us, whose presence never leaves us. As we walk through our day, it is important to, first and foremost, cultivate a constant sense that God is with us.

THE WORD OF GOD

Primarily, God speaks to us through the Scriptures. As we read, study, and meditate on the Word, the Lord speaks clearly to us in the convictions we experience in his Word. However, God is not restricted to the Scriptures in how he meets us. He may choose an infinite number of ways to speak to us, but whatever he says will not contradict the counsel of Scripture. His voice will not add in any way to his ultimate revelation: Jesus Christ of the Gospels. Therefore, it is crucial that the Scriptures have a central and regular place in our spiritual lives.

In addition, God can and will use a number of different ways to speak to us. He can speak to us through creation, a piece of art, the wise counsel of friends, visions, dreams, preaching, a deep sense or impression, a sudden thought in our minds. He can use what is ordinary and daily to communicate what is extraordinary and eternal.

HOW DO WE CULTIVATE A LISTENING EAR?

1. Soak yourself regularly in the Scriptures.
2. As you walk through your day, recall constantly that God's presence is with you and near you. It is easier to hear from God when you believe that he is near you rather than far away.
3. Invite God to speak to you.
4. Practice times of silence and listening when you pray, especially when you are praying for others.
5. Take a risk by sharing with your community what you may be tentatively hearing from God, inviting their feedback. For example, you may say, "I have an image in my mind's eye" or "I have a sense that God may be saying_____." If the word is from God, the community will confirm it.
6. Obey what God tells you to do.
7. Don't compare yourself with how others hear God.
8. Test what you are hearing against the counsel of Scripture and community.

PRAYER MINISTRY

PRAYING WITH PEOPLE FOR THEIR NEEDS

Prayer ministry is a specific way we can have focused intercession with and for the need of a friend. The most crucial element is that you are **listening together** for how God might want to address that need.

Key Scriptures: Psalm 27:10; Mark 10:46–52; John 4:43–54; Colossians 2:13–15; Ephesians 6:10–20

HEAR AND UNDERSTAND (2–3 min)

1. START WITH THE QUESTION “What would you like Jesus to do for you?”

This will help the person clearly and succinctly share his or her need.

2. ASK ANY CLARIFYING QUESTIONS that would help you know how to pray.

- A. Don’t attempt to give advice.
- B. Don’t get into a long conversation.
- C. Become comfortable with each other and put the person at ease.

3. EXPLAIN THE PRAYER TIME.

- A. Mention that you will be listening together.
- B. Tell him or her you may ask if he or she is seeing, hearing, or thinking about something. That could be God speaking.
- C. Explain that it’s fine if he or she isn’t experiencing anything.
- D. Encourage him or her to keep his or her eyes closed and focused on God.
- E. Ask if it is okay for you to touch him or her.

PRAY

1. BEGIN THE PRAYER TIME. (*Done by the prayer minister.*)

- A. Invite the Holy Spirit to come and acknowledge his presence.
- B. Speak truth about God during the opening prayer.

2. LISTEN IN PRAYER. (30 sec–1 min)

- A. Listen together for:
 - I. Scripture
 - II. images

III. thoughts/phrases

IV. memories

- B. Ask the individual if he or she is hearing or sensing anything from Jesus.
- C. Share with humility and appropriate qualifiers what you heard from God.

3. PRAY AROUND WHAT YOU HAVE HEARD. The prayer minister allows what has surfaced to direct his or her prayers.

4. INVITE THE PERSON TO RESPOND TO GOD. The prayer minister makes space for the person to take the next appropriate step.

- A. Confess or repent
- B. Process emotion
- C. Ask questions
- D. Reject lies; receive truth
- E. Ask God for further clarification

5. REPEAT 2–4

ENCOURAGE (2–3 min)

1. NOTE ANY NEXT STEPS OF OBEDIENCE OR HELP. The prayer minister may debrief by asking the individual what he or she has heard and what next steps may be important to take.

2. REMIND HIM OR HER OF ANY SCRIPTURES OR WORDS FROM GOD. Feel free to write them down.

3. BLESS HIM OR HER AS GOD’S CHILD, possibly with anointing oil if he or she is interested. Say that the oil represents the presence of the Lord.

4. SEND HIM OR HER BACK INTO THE MISSION FIELD. This may depend on the person, but many people can go back to serving the Lord as he brings healing into their lives.

PRAYER WALKS

INTERCEDING FOR CAMPUS WHILE WALKING

Prayer walks are a way to intercede for campus while being physically present in the spaces for which you are praying. Praying as we walk from place to place helps us see how God connects with every part of our environment. We listen and allow the Spirit to lead us in praying for our surroundings. We pray for physical buildings and departments, spiritual issues, groups of people, areas of hurt, etc.

HOW TO DO A PRAYER WALK:

- Block off at least 30 minutes to pray.
- Grab a friend to pray with you. Prayer walks are most easily done in pairs or alone.
- Start your time by inviting the Holy Spirit and begin walking. As you walk and pray conversationally, be open to places God might be calling you to walk to or images or words the Spirit is giving you—or even people he might want you to talk to and pray with.
- Keep your eyes open as you pray so that you don't run into telephone poles and also so that you can be inspired to pray by what you are seeing. You may pray for strangers, particular people groups, departments, etc. It is an amazing experience to see what God will lead you to pray for as your eyes are open.
- You do not have to physically walk the entire time. As you feel led, you can stop, enter a building, sit down, or pray in a certain room. The point is to listen to the Spirit and interact with the campus for which you are praying.
- If you are with another person, alternate between silence and praying out loud but remain prayerful the whole time.
- Keep yourselves in prayer the whole time you are walking. Don't interpret or talk about other things. Just pray!
- Consider bringing a Bible in order to reference and pray Scripture. Also, bring a pen and paper to keep note of the topics of your prayer time.
- At the end of your 30 minutes, pray together to close.
- After your prayer time, you may want to talk with each other about what things God impressed on you during the prayer walk.
- Consider this question: is God calling you or your chapter to respond to anything you prayed about? If so, talk with your leaders or staff.

SCRIPTURE RESOURCES

1. SCRIPTURE READING PLAN

The advantage of systematically reading through the Bible is that it helps you grasp the full narrative of God and his purposes. You are not necessarily reading for depth but breadth. After you do the readings, it's helpful to reflect on what you have read.

SCRIPTURE UNION *scriptureunion.org*

Go to “Resources” in the top bar menu. Click on “Featured Resources” and scroll down to the “Encounter with God” section. Here you can read the daily reading online or sign up to receive the reading via email. A paper copy is also available to purchase. The daily readings include a short passage of Scripture, a meditation, and a question to reflect on. This will take you through the entire Bible in a five-year cycle.

2. SCRIPTURE MEDITATION

The advantage of meditating on Scripture is that it allows you to go deeper in one place in the Bible. You can really chew on and soak in a passage of Scripture till it becomes a deep part of your life. You are not primarily concerned with the quantity that you are reading and are okay moving at a much slower pace. For example, you may move slowly through several chapters of the Gospels over the course of several months.

This method is also known as **Lectio Divina**, which means Holy Reading.

If you are beginning in this journey, it is best to start with the Gospels or a portion of the Gospels. Set apart 15 minutes. Begin by asking God to speak to you. As you begin, use the steps below. But it's important to recognize that these steps are not stages in an orderly process. We may move from one step to another without realizing it, and we may find several steps coexisting at the same time. Also, be careful not to judge the quality of your experience. Sometimes our meditations take time to bear fruit. Below is a guide to what you should do.

A. READING

Read the Scriptures aloud to yourself, slowly savoring it as you read. When you come across a sentence, word, or phrase that catches your attention stop there. Linger on portions of the text that seem to speak to you in a special way. If nothing leaps out at you, pick a phrase.

B. MEDITATION

Lovingly and slowly repeat that small portion of text you have internalized. Through repetition, gently allow the text to percolate into your memory. Savor the text. Allow it to interact with your memories, hopes, and concerns. Meditate on how this text is being spoken personally to you by a loving God. Don't be afraid of "distractions." Simply acknowledge them and let go of them, always returning to the portion of the Scriptures you have taken into your heart.

C. PRAYER

Let the meditation on the Word lead you into a dialogue with the God who originally inspired the text and who has now used the Scriptures as a way of drawing you into his presence. Talk to him and share your responses to what he has said to you.

D. CONTEMPLATION

Rest silently in the presence of the Lord. Enjoy the sweetness of silent communion with the God who stands behind the Scriptures.

3. SCRIPTURE STUDY

This method of Scripture study, also known as inductive Bible study, strikes a balance between depth and breadth. It helps you analyze the Scripture for yourself and reflect on it personally. You will need a journal to record the fruits of your study.

Tackle a chapter or half chapter at a time. Study through a book of the Bible rather than random passages. No hurry, no deadlines, just the joy of hearing from Jesus in his Word.

THE FIRST DAY IN THE PASSAGE (15 MIN)

LOOK CLOSELY

- Read the passage carefully and write down specifics that you see, such as who is there, what is happening, when is it, where is it, and how is it happening.
- Circle or write down words, phrases, or ideas that connect by repeating, contrasting, being similar, going from the general to the particular, or stating a cause that leads to an effect.
- Put yourself into the passage. If it is a narrative, put yourself into the story. What do you see, smell, taste, or feel? Choose one of the characters and become him or her. If it is a letter or law section, imagine what it might have felt to get the letter or hear the law. If it is poetry, let the power of the poem and its images sweep over you.

- What questions do the passage raise in your mind? What words, phrases, or concepts don't you understand? Does the passage turn in any unexpected ways? What intrigues you? Write these questions down.

REFLECT

Step back and read the passage a few times again. Read it as if Jesus were standing right there with you (he is!). Ponder again the points that stand out to you in the passage. What does the passage say or point to about Jesus? Ask Jesus what he has for you personally in the passage. What area of your life is Jesus speaking to?

THE SECOND DAY IN THE PASSAGE (15 MIN)

Today you'll look at the same passage but from a different angle.

THINK DEEPLY!

- Divide the passage into thought units then paragraphs. See what sentences you think add up to a thought unit and mark that as a paragraph. (These may or may not be the same as the paragraphs in the version of the Bible you are using.)
- Write a brief title for each paragraph.
- Consider the questions you wrote yesterday. Look hard in the passage for insights into these questions. Also, look at the context of the passage. What comes before it and after it?
- One of the best ways to move toward answers to your questions is to look for connections among the paragraphs. Is there a word, phrase, or idea that repeats? Is there a contrast? Is there a cause in one paragraph and the effect in another? Is there a string of similar words, phrases, or ideas that run through a few paragraphs? Draw lines between the connected words or phrases to mark them. What do you think is significant about these connections? What light do they shed on possible answers to your questions?

SUMMARIZE

Look at your connections, questions, points of significance, and the context. Step back and ask yourself: What are the main points of this passage? What is the author trying to say? Why is this passage or story here? Try to write this in an integrative sentence.

HEAR FROM GOD AND ACT BOLDLY!

Look over your whole study from yesterday and today. Do you sense that God is speaking to any part of your life? Is there a promise to trust, a command to obey, or an example to follow or avoid? Is there a deeper insight into God or your experience with God? What action are you going to take in response to what God is saying to you?

DAILY PSALMS

JANUARY, APRIL, JULY, OCTOBER			FEBRUARY, MAY, AUGUST, NOVEMBER		MARCH, JUNE, SEPTEMBER, DECEMBER	
DAY	MORNING	EVENING	MORNING	EVENING	MORNING	EVENING
1	1	2	59	60	111	112
2	3	4	61	62	113	114
3	5	6	63	64	115	116
4	7	8	65	66	117	118
5	9	10	67	70	119:1–16	119:17–24
6	11	12	68:1–20	68:21–35	119:25–32	119:33–40
7	13	14	69:1–20	69:21–36	119:41–48	119:49–56
8	15	16	71	72	119:57–64	119:65–72
9	17	19	73	74	119:73–80	119:81–88
10	18:1–20	18:21–50	75	76	119:89–96	119:97–104
11	20	21	77	79	119:105–112	119:113–120
12	22	23	78:1–39	78:40–72	119:121–128	119:129–136
13	24	25	80	81	119:137–144	119:145–152
14	26	27	82	83	119:153–160	119:161–168
15	28	29	84	85	119:169–176	120
16	30	31	86	87	121	122
17	32	33	88	90	123	124
18	34	35	89:1–18	89:19–52	125	126
19	36	38	91	92	127	128
20	37:1–18	37:19–40	93	94	129	130
21	39	40	95	96	131	132
22	41	42	97	98	133	134
23	43	44	99	100	135	136
24	45	46	101	102	137	138
25	47	48	103	108	139	140
26	49	50	104:1–19	104:20–35	141	142
27	51	52	105:1–22	105:23–45	143	144
28	53	54	106:1–18	106:19–48	145	146
29	55	56	107:1–32	107:33–43	147	148
30	57	58	109	110	149	150



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