

Being Church

2020

Prayer & Worship Resources for our time Part 1



Lord Teach us to Pray

Prayer is a challenge for all of us, but in our current circumstances, we need more than ever to turn our focus to God, who is our strength, and our hope.

As our lives are turned upside down, and our hearts and minds churn with the consequences of COVID19, perhaps a solid and reassuring starting place for our prayer is to begin with what we do **know** and **can do**.

Jesus' response to the disciples' cry, "Lord, teach us to pray" was to give them the words and model of the **Lord's Prayer**.

So, take a moment. Take a calming breath. And pray what you know.

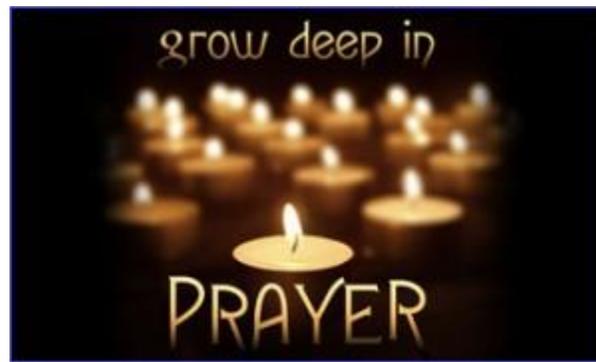
Pray the familiar words alone or together with others in your home. Pray it over the phone as you connect with wider family and friends. Recite it, read it out, write it down, and reflect on its meaning. It is **meaningful**, not **meaningless**. So say what you mean and mean what you pray!

Then try another step, expanding with specific concerns. For example, add your personal petitions after each phrase. Or try modelling your own words on Jesus' pattern as we see Eugene Petersen has done here in *The Message*:

**Our Father in heaven,
Reveal who you are.
Set the world right;
Do what's best— as above, so below.
Keep us alive with three square meals.
Keep us forgiven with you and forgiving others.
Keep us safe from ourselves and the Devil.
You're in charge!
You can do anything you want!
You're ablaze in beauty!
Yes. Yes. Yes.**

The Lord's Prayer "can be like a Christmas tree, on which we hang our own "decorations", our own prayers. Or it can be like a map: The directions are there, but we must take the trouble to travel, to pray them."

(Peter Kreeft, *Fundamentals of Faith*. Ignatius Press 1988)



Sometimes a symbolic focus or action can be a springboard to prayer, a reminder of God's word, or a prompt to take time out to rest a while. Today, light a candle, settle quietly, and allow the candle's flame to encourage you in prayer.

Let the **warmth** of the flame remind you of your heavenly Father's love, for *How great is the love the Father has lavished on us that we should be called children of God. (1Jn3:1)*

Consider the **light** of the flame burning brightly and give praise that Jesus is light. He said, *I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life. (Jn 8:12)*

Delight in the **energy** of the flame burning as you give thanks for the Holy Spirit's enabling: *They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. (Acts 2:3-4)*

Then pray (any or all of):

- speak from your heart
- pour out your feelings
- tell Jesus your worries
- read out a psalm (eg Psalm 33)
 - say the Lord's Prayer
- go for a walk in the garden
 - dance
 - draw
 - be still
 - listen

follow God's prompting, Rest from the troubles that burden us, Trust in God who is faithful

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. (2Cor13:14) Amen

The joy of the Lord is your strength.

(Neh 8:10)

Although we are living in a time of worldwide crisis, let's remember that the God we worship is full of love and compassion, faithful and unchanging, and with us in our suffering. His joy is our strength. And in that strength, we can bring "a sacrifice of praise" – we can SING! even if we don't feel like it.

We have seen people singing to one another from balconies in Italy. Let's firstly sing praises to God! And through our joyful worship also be uplifted in our spirits and encourage others in our households. We can also be blessed as we realize we join in with other Christians around the world, united in the Holy Spirit, and accompanied by the angels in heaven, all praising God.

¹⁵ Our part, then, is this: to bring, through him (Jesus), a continual sacrifice of praise to God – that is, mouths that confess his name, and do so fruitfully. (Hebrews 13:15 NTE)

This is a time to sing and make music with heart and voice to God because he is good, and he is with us and for us. *Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, ²⁰ always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Eph 5:19b - 20)*

Jesus produces love, peace and JOY within us as the fruit of his Spirit. They don't originate in us and they are not dependant on the outward circumstances of our lives. So, come before the Lord our God, enter the "courts of his presence" as you lift up your voice in this time of trouble. SING!, sing in your home and your car, sing with your family, sing and praise God.

Habakkuk 3:17-19 (NLT)

*¹⁷ Even though the fig trees have no blossoms,
and there are no grapes on the vines;*

*even though the olive crop fails,
and the fields lie empty and barren;*

*even though the flocks die in the fields,
and the cattle barns are empty,*

*¹⁸ yet I will rejoice in the LORD!
I will be joyful in the God of my salvation!*

*¹⁹ The Sovereign LORD is my strength!
He makes me as surefooted as a deer,
able to tread upon the heights.*

Psalm 100 (NIV) A psalm. For giving grateful praise.

¹ Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.

² Worship the LORD with gladness;
come before him with joyful songs.

³ Know that the LORD is God.

It is he who made us, and we are his
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

⁴ Enter his gates with thanksgiving
and his courts with praise;
give thanks to him and praise his name.

⁵ For the LORD is good and his love endures forever;
his faithfulness continues through all generations.

Some song suggestions:

Hymn: The Hymn of Joy (words below)

Rend Collective song: Joy of the Lord (Find it on YouTube)

Chorus: Rejoice in the Lord Always

The Hymn of Joy (Henry Van Dyke)

Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee
God of glory, Lord of love
Hearts unfold like flow'rs before Thee
Op'ning to the Sun above
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness
drive the dark of doubt away
Giver of immortal gladness
fill us with the light of day

All Thy works with joy surround Thee
Earth and heav'n reflect Thy rays
Stars and angels sing around Thee
centre of unbroken praise
Field and forest, vale and mountain
Flow'ry meadow, flashing sea
chanting bird and flowing fountain
call us to rejoice in Thee

Thou art giving and forgiving
ever blessing, ever blest
well-spring of the joy of living
ocean-depth of happy rest
Thou the Father, Christ our Brother—
all who live in love are Thine
Teach us how to love each other
lift us to the Joy Divine

Mortals join the mighty chorus
which the morning stars began
Father-love is reigning o'er us
brother-love binds man to man
Ever singing, march we onward
victors in the midst of strife
joyful music lifts us sunward
in the triumph song of life

The Daily Office - Prayer at Fixed Hours

For a structured approach to prayer, a pattern to follow, or a framework from which to launch into your own prayers, you could try following the ancient rhythms of daily prayer, assured that others are praying simultaneously. Traditionally there were 3 major offices and 4 minor ones. But a simplified approach is to pray Morning Prayer between 6 and 9 am, Midday Prayer between 11.00am and 2.00pm and Evening Prayer between 5 and 8 pm.

You can pray with the Church at these times by using prayer books or simply praying the Lord's Prayer, and then interceding for specific people and the world. Here are 3 prayers from the "Divine Hours" you could pray:

Morning: Lord God Almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought me in safety to this new day: Preserve me with your mighty power that I may not fall into sin nor be overcome by adversity; and in all I do direct me to the fulfilling of your purpose; through Jesus Christ, my Lord.

Midday: Lord Jesus Christ, you have prepared a place for us in your Father's eternal home. Watch over our welfare on this perilous journey, shade us from the burning heat of day, and keep our lives free of evil until the end.

Evening: Keep watch dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ, give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for your love's sake. Amen.

You can pray Luther's morning and evening prayer.

Morning:

Thank you, heavenly Father, through your Son Jesus Christ, for protecting me all night from harm and danger. Protect me today from all sin and evil, so that everything I do will please you. I put myself, and all I have into your hands. Send your holy angel to be with me, so that the devil will have no power over me. Amen.

Evening:

Thank you, heavenly Father, through your Son Jesus Christ, for being good to me and protecting me today. Forgive me all the wrong things I have done. Protect me tonight. I put myself and all I have into your hands. Send your holy angel to be with me, so that the devil will have no power over me. Amen.

Or a traditional prayer for peace.

Peace:

Lord God, from whom all holy desires, all good purposes, and all right works proceed: Give to your servants that peace which the world cannot give. Defend us from the fear of our enemies and set our hearts to obey your commandments, so that we may live on earth in rest and quietness. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Saviour, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

The Prayer Collective

This is a call to PRAYER as we, and all the world, deal with the COVID19 pandemic.

We are forming a **prayer collective** and inviting you and everyone in your household to join in by contributing a prayer. You will need to email or post it, so it can be added to the collection. Once compiled, some will go onto the website and some will be copied into a booklet. The aim is to share them with one another. The original pages you send will be placed together into a folder or book.

Please consider joining in and be encouraged that prayer takes many shapes and forms and is as varied as we are. The Bible tells us to *pray in the Spirit on every occasion with all kinds of prayers* eg:

- Prayers can be long or short,
- formal or informal
- An artist may express what they want to say to God visually as well as with words.
- A musician may set their words to music.
- Prayer can be expressed through movement and symbolic action.

Some prayers we pray aren't even our own words. They may be words of scripture or specific prayers from the Bible, like the Lord's Prayer. They may be prayers written by someone else, but we make them our own when we pray them.

While some prayers are private between us and God, other prayers belong to the church, the whole community – or communion of saints. In these public prayers we affirm that we are the children of the same Father, connected to him and one another as members of the body of Christ, and united in the Holy Spirit. When we put these types of prayers "out there" we invite others to join with us in heart, mind, and spirit, and give assent with our joint, "Amen".

So, will you join in and pray? What words of prayer express what's on your heart and mind?

Please put your prayer on a sheet no bigger than A4. You can write/type your own prayer, draw what's on your heart. Keep it plain and simple or decorate your page. You can contribute a meaningful prayer written by someone else so long as you attribute it to them, or use a prayer from the Bible etc.

This is your prayer and it expresses what you want to contribute to OUR prayers at this time of crisis in our community and world. Please put only your first name on the page, and don't include any personal information about yourself or others in the prayer.

Email or post to Karen Pietsch karen.pietsch@internode.on.net PO Box 499 Angaston SA 5353

The Spirit is our Helper and reminds us that as we pray, we are held close to the Father's heart by Jesus' love for us. God always hears our prayers, be they eloquent, creative or simple, he hears our ragged, raw, stumbling efforts and, even when words don't come at all, he hears the cries of our hearts. (Rom 8:26-27).

Blessings!

5 Stations: Interactive worship at home for individuals and families

Prepare by setting up 5 "stations of blessing" in your home. You will need:

1. a bowl of water and towel,
2. bubble blowing mixture/homemade soapy mix,
3. a printed map or outline of Australia and/or the world,
4. bread, wine/juice, cup/s,
5. one or more written copies of the readings and blessings.

You can use this resource creatively or add your own prayers, readings, visuals, or music. One suggestion is to spend a few minutes at each station but there is no special order and families could do each activity together or individually.

Select all or some of the Bible readings included or choose some yourself. Enjoy this time with Jesus and allow the Holy Spirit to lead. *God's Blessings to you!*

Water - He leads me beside the still water, he restores my soul.

Read Psalm 23. Sit and look at the water.

Be still and know that I am God (Ps 46:10).

Read Matthew 3:13-17. Immerse your hand in water. Consider your baptism.

Bubbles - Bless God! Read Psalm 150. Take the bubble mixture outside and blow bubbles! Let praise and thanksgiving to God well up within you and burst forth as bubbles of praise. Read the psalm out loud. Praise God! Sing a song!

Map - Bless others. Read John 14:13-14; Luke 18:1-8; James 5:16

Pray for a person, place or situation and stick a heart on the map as a sign of God's blessing on them.

Bread & Wine - Make use of your 5 senses. Read Matthew 26:17-30. Then **look** at the bread and the colour of the wine. **Touch** the bread as you break it. **Feel** the cup in your hand. **Hear** the sound of bread tearing and of wine being poured out as you pour into the cup. **Smell** the aroma of the bread's yeast and the fruity fullness of the wine. **Taste and see** that the Lord is good! Read Psalm 34:8; 1 Peter 2:2-3.

A Personal Blessing - Remember that God blesses you. Name others and speak the blessing over them, even if they are absent. Families can bless one another and/or lay hands on or anoint one another with oil. Pray for one another and say the Lord's Prayer together. Read Mark 10:16; Num 6:24-27; 2 Cor 13:14.

Readings

Psalm 23

1 The LORD is my shepherd I shall not be in want. 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, 3 he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. 4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. 5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Matthew 3:13-17 The Baptism of Jesus 13Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. 14But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" 15Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented. 16As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. 17And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

Psalm 150

1 Praise the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens.
2 Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness.
3 Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre,
4 praise him with tambourine and dancing, praise him with the strings and flute,
5 praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals.
6 Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD.

John 14:13-14 And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

Luke 18 The Parable of the Persistent Widow 1Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. 2He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. 3And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.' 4'For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care about men, 5yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually wear me out with her coming!' " 6And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. 7And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? 8I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

James 5:16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

Matthew 26:17-30 The Lord's Supper

17On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?" 18He replied, "Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, 'The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.'" 19So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover. 20When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. 21And while they were eating, he said, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me."

22They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, "Surely not I, Lord?" 23Jesus replied, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. 24The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born." 25Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, "Surely not I, Rabbi?" Jesus answered, "Yes, it is you."

26While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." 27Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. 28This is my blood of the ^{new} covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. 29I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom." 30When they had sung a hymn they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Psalm 34: 8 Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.

1 Peter 2:2-3 Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

Mark 10:16 And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.

Numbers 6:24-27

24 " ' "The LORD bless you
and keep you;

25 the LORD make his face shine upon you
and be gracious to you;

26 the LORD turn his face toward you
and give you peace." ' "

27 "So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them."

2 Corinthians 13:14 May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.