

LECTIO 365 Day Prayers

is a daily devotional resource that helps you pray the Bible every day.

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Written by leaders from the 24-7 Prayer movement, and produced in partnership with CWR, this resource helps you engage with Scripture to inspire prayer and shape your life.

Journey through the year with Pete Greig, Carla Harding, Phil Togwell, Jill Weber and international guest writers.

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In order to listen and read at the same time, you need to select the day page then right-click the date and set your screen for two separate windows

June 2021

June 1	June 2	June 3	June 4
June 5	June 6	June 7	June 8
June 9	June 10	June 11	June 12
June 13	June 14	June 15	June 16
June 17	June 18	June 19	June 20
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Audio for Each Day in MP3 Format

[Month of June 2021](#)

By opening a PDF version from above along with the appropriate audio selection you should be able to read and listen at the same time with two different windows open.

June 01 2021 (click for audio)

The Heart

Today is Tuesday, the first of June, and this week we are continuing our Three Loves series by exploring how we can live out our call to love the world through lifelong learning and discipleship. Together we will be exploring Paul's letter to the church in Philippi, and inviting the Holy Spirit to work within us as we seek to become more like Jesus.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Holy Spirit, my teacher, as I dive into the Bible would You awaken my heart, expand my mind and shape my identity today.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice today, joining in with creation and with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 19...

*The heavens proclaim the glory of God.
The skies display his craftsmanship.
Day after day they continue to speak;
night after night they make him known.
They speak without a sound or word;
their voice is never heard.
Yet their message has gone throughout the earth,
and their words to all the world.*

Psalm 19:1-4

Pause and pray

Today, I begin to explore the lifelong practice of learning by reflecting on the apostle Paul's amazing prayer for the church in Philippi...

I thank my God every time I remember you... And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ – to the glory and praise of God.

Philippians 1:3, 9-11

In this passage, the Greek word translated as *discern* comes from the root word *dokimos* meaning to test, analyze or examine in order to approve. Paul is praying that the Philippians would grow in

knowledge and insight so that they can look beyond the surface of each situation, to examine what they see, to question what they hear.

He doesn't want them to be blindly obedient, reliant on rules. But mature and compassionate, equipped to wrestle with complexity; able to differentiate between what brings them closer to the God of love, and what moves them further away.

Ask

God, I like easy answers. I'd rather be told what to do, than have to wrestle my way through uncertainty. Today, I bring You a decision I need to make – one without a simple answer. Teach me to discern the way of love.

Pause and pray

God, I pray now for those in leadership in my nation. They face difficult decisions on a daily basis. I use Paul's words to pray for them now and ask You to give them Your wisdom and discernment

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage I listen for a particular word or phrase that the Holy Spirit is highlighting to me today...

I thank my God every time I remember you... And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ – to the glory and praise of God.

Philippians 1:3, 9-11

I think of learning as an exercise of the intellect, but Paul isn't praying for head knowledge. Instead, he prays for insight so that hearts would expand, so that love would overflow. Do I approach learning whole-heartedly or with just one part of my mind?

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

God, I yield my IQ and my EQ to You today. I want to learn with all that I am but I need to start with my heart – show me the desires and the doubts that shape my decisions. Help me to discern Your way of love.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me reminds me through Paul's letter to the Philippians:

That I can be, 'confident of this, that he who began a good work in [me] will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.'

Philippians 1:6

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.

June 02 2021 (click for audio)

The Will

Today is Wednesday the 2nd of June, and this week we are exploring how we love the world through the practice of learning. Together we will pray (**P.R.A.Y.**) very simply each day – ‘P’: **PAUSING** to be still. ‘R’: **REJOICING** with a Psalm and **REFLECTING** on Paul’s letter to the Philippians. ‘A’: **ASKING** God to help us and others and ‘Y’: **YIELDING** to His will and discipleship in our lives.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Holy Spirit, my teacher, as I dive into the Bible would You awaken my heart, expand my mind and shape my identity today.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice, trusting in God today and joining with the ancient praise of all God’s people in the words of Psalm 130...

*I am counting on the Lord;
yes, I am counting on him.
I have put my hope in his word.
I long for the Lord
more than sentries long for the dawn,
yes, more than sentries long for the dawn.*

Psalm 130:5-6

Pause and pray

Today I continue to reflect on Paul’s letter, written from a prison cell, to the persecuted church in Philippi...

I want to know Christ – yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 3:10-14

I can partially relate to Paul. I want to know more of Jesus. I want to know the full power of His resurrection. But, if I'm honest, I don't want to participate in His suffering. Jesus was opposed, persecuted, falsely accused, tortured and executed by powerful people. Why would I want to experience something like that?

Earlier in His letter Paul describes Jesus humbling 'himself by becoming obedient to death – even death on a cross!' (Phil. 2:8) Might Paul have seen his own incarceration, struggle and suffering as an opportunity to learn the same humility and obedience as Jesus?

Ask

To be honest, I want to know power without accepting pain. I want to succeed without sacrifice. I want life without death, but that's not how resurrection works. Where am I experiencing sacrifice, pain, disappointment or conflict at present?

Jesus, show me how I can know You better through this situation. Help me become a little more like You today.

Pause and pray

I think about my Church and how we approach discipleship. I pray for my leaders:

Lord, guide them as they create a culture of discipleship that helps us follow Jesus through all that life throws at us.

Pause and Pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your Word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

I want to know Christ – yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 3:10-14

Through the resurrection of Jesus I have received the gifts of forgiveness, Spirit-soaked life and adoption into God's family. But Paul hints that there is a bigger prize ahead – on the day that Jesus returns I will no longer live in the shadow of death and experience resurrection life in all its fullness. Between today and that day, I 'press-on', actively seeking to know and follow Jesus more and more.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

God, I yield to You with the prayer of St Richard of Chichester:

*'Thanks be to thee, my Lord Jesus Christ,
for all the benefits thou hast given me,
for all the pains and insults thou hast borne for me.
O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother,
may I know thee more clearly,
love thee more dearly,
and follow thee more nearly, day by day.'*

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord Jesus who loves me reminds me in Luke's Gospel that:

*The student is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like their teacher.
Luke 6:40*

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.

June 03 2021 (click for audio)

The Mind

Today is Thursday the 3rd of June, and this week we are exploring how we love the world through an openness to lifelong learning and discipleship.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Holy Spirit, my teacher, as I dive into the Bible would You awaken my heart, expand my mind and shape my identity today.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's word today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 19...

*Reverence for the Lord is pure,
lasting forever.
The laws of the Lord are true;
each one is fair.
They are more desirable than gold,
even the finest gold.
They are sweeter than honey,
even honey dripping from the comb.*

Psalm 19:9-10

Pause and pray

Today I continue to reflect on Paul's letter to the Church in Philippi who are living through challenging circumstances...

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me – put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

Philippians 4:8-9

The apostle Paul is writing about focusing the mind and paying attention to the things that reflect God's goodness. This isn't positive thinking. This isn't some kind of ancient mindfulness trick. This is deliberately dwelling on good things as a way of recognizing and welcoming the God of peace into every moment of the day.

Ask

God, You have given me a powerful mind. I invite Your Spirit to speak to me as I think back through the past 24 hours. When has my mind been filled with what is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent or praiseworthy?

Pause and pray

God, my mind can be a battle ground. I invite Your Spirit to speak to me again. When in the last 24 hours has my mind been preoccupied by what is false, dishonorable, wrong, impure, unlovely, shameful, awful or selfish?

I ask for Your forgiveness, I need Your help and I welcome Your peace

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your Word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me – put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

Philippians 4:8-9

I am challenged by Paul's invitation to put into practice all that the Philippians have learned from Him. It takes a lot of confidence to write that sentence! I think about the people who are closest to me. My family, my closest friends; the people who see me when my guard is down. What do they *hear* and what do they see in me? What have I given them or taught them about following Jesus this week?

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

I return to the words of Psalm 19 and make it my prayer of surrender today...

*May the words of my mouth
and the meditation of my heart
be pleasing to you,
O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.
Psalm 19:14 (NLT)*

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Romans:

*Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.
Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect*

will.

Romans 12:2

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.

June 04 2021 (click for audio)

The Miracle of Dunkirk

It's Friday the 4th of June, and as regular users of Lectio 365 will know, we occasionally break from our daily rhythm to reflect on the life of a hero of faith or acknowledge a special event.

On this day 81 years ago, the Dunkirk evacuation in World War II – also known as the Miracle of Dunkirk – was completed, saving over 300,000 troops. Today we're going to reflect on these events and how we pray in seemingly impossible situations.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

As I draw near to You God, would You draw near to me? Teach me to pray. Speak Lord, Your servant is listening.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's majesty and power today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 29...

The Lord rules over the floodwaters.

The Lord reigns as king forever.

The Lord gives his people strength.

The Lord blesses them with peace.

Psalm 29:10-11

Pause and pray

During May 1940, months after the beginning of World War II, large numbers of British, Belgian and French allied troops became trapped and surrounded by Nazi troops in mainland Europe. The decision was made to evacuate the allied troops, and the French seaport Dunkirk was determined to be the best place to attempt the rescue.

A covert operation, code named Operation Dynamo, was set in motion, but officials estimated that only a small number of the total troops – around 30,000 – would be able to be rescued.

Ahead of the unfolding operation, King George VI called the people of Great Britain to a National Day of Prayer to take place across the nation, on Sunday 26th May 1940.

News coverage of the National Day of Prayer stated: 'It is well for us to show the world that we still believe in divine guidance [and] in the laws of Christianity; may we find inspiration and faith from this solemn day.*

* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1zbUqeYnyxw>

That very day, the evacuation began. Hundreds of boats set out across the English Channel in a rescue attempt, vulnerable to attack – but unseasonal storms meant the Nazi air force were grounded and unable to fly. Additionally, Hitler had ordered his ground forces to halt, and they didn't move for three days. This combination of events meant that the evacuations were able to take place largely uninterrupted for three days, leading to over 338,000 men being rescued – ten times the expected number!

The British prime minister Winston Churchill called it a 'miracle of deliverance'.**

** <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/765004.stm>

Ask

In the midst of crisis, where do I turn? Like King George VI, and the hope-filled news reports from 1940, am I eager to trust in the divine guidance of the Lord in my challenges? Or do I feel less faith-filled; in need of the fresh inspiration and truth of God's power?

God, today, remind me that You can do immeasurably more than all I can ask or imagine (Eph 3:20).

Pause and pray

I think of the situations in my community, town, or even my nation where there are challenges and battles to overcome. Who might God be calling me to intercede in prayer with?

Lord, I invite You to show me what to pray, how to pray, and who I can pray with.

Pause and pray

Yield

In his chapter on intercession in *How to Pray*, Pete Greig writes: 'It is without doubt that a series of critical elements in the success of the Dunkirk evacuations lay so far beyond the hand of the allied powers, that they must either be labeled as luck on a quite extraordinary scale, or answers to the unprecedented, concerted prayers of an entire nation which ascended to heaven on the day it all began.' ***

*** Pete Greig, *How to Pray*, (Hodder and Stoughton 2019) p100

The miracle of Dunkirk was not defined as a miracle by everyone; some say it was a series of coincidences that helped to save more lives. But as Archbishop William Temple is credited as saying: 'When I pray coincidences happen; when I don't, they don't.'

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Today, God, I often struggle to believe for the big stuff. It can feel overwhelming to pray for national crises. I recommit myself to partnering with You in prayer to seek Your kingdom. Give me fresh faith; equip me as I pray for miracles, today.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Matthew 18:

...if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.

Matthew 18:19-20

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.

June 05 2021 (click for audio)

The Life

Today is Saturday the 5th of June, and it's the last day this week that we will be exploring how we love the world through the life-long practice of learning.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Holy Spirit, my teacher, as I dive into the Bible would You awaken my heart, expand my mind and shape my identity today.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's strength today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 8...

*O Lord, our Lord, your majestic name fills the earth!
Your glory is higher than the heavens.
You have taught children and infants
to tell of your strength,
silencing your enemies
and all who oppose you.*

Psalm 8:1-2

Pause and pray

Today I return for a final time to Paul's letter to the Philippians...

I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

Philippians 4:10-13

When Paul said, 'I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances' he knew what he was talking about. These words weren't written from the road while Paul was on one of his epic missionary journeys. They weren't written during a rest period when Paul was at home with his church in Antioch. These words were written from a prison cell where Paul was dependent on the generosity of friends to provide for his most basic needs.

I often look for contentment in my situation. When I have what I need; when I'm surrounded by the people I love; when I'm safe and rested; it's easy to feel content. But Paul has learned through bitter experience not to look to ever-changing circumstances for satisfaction, but instead to look to the unchanging God.

Ask

Earlier in his letter Paul encourages me to, 'not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present [my] requests to God.' (Phil. 4:6)

What am I anxious about? What's countering my contentment today? God, with gratitude, I bring it to You now and ask for peace.

Pause and pray

God, I name my local prison and pray for all those incarcerated within its walls today. Turn every prison cell into a prayer room. Meet with every person, bring them hope, strength and peace.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage I listen for a particular word or phrase that the Holy Spirit is highlighting to me today...

I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

Philippians 4:10-13

William Barclay notes that the secret to Paul's contentment isn't self-sufficiency but 'God-sufficiency'.* My strength is finite, but God's is infinite. As I think about the day ahead, I pause now, stilling myself before the Lord, asking Him to give me the strength I need.

*William Barclay, *The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians and Thessalonians*, p100

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

God, my feelings are often shaped by my experiences. Whatever storms buffet me today, I choose to anchor myself in You. Help me to learn to be content, come what may.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Isaiah that:

*...those who wait upon God get fresh strength.
Isaiah 40:31 (MSG)*

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.

June 06 2021 (click for audio)

A Sabbath Prayer

Today is Sunday the 6th of June and today we pause our normal rhythm to pray a special Sabbath prayer.

I've been thinking this week about the biblical priority of learning in the book of Philippians. And so, as I settle into this time of prayer now, I ask God to renew in me a tender, teachable heart.

Pause and pray

*I have hidden your word in my heart,
that I might not sin against you...
Open my eyes that I may see
wonderful things in your law.
I am a stranger on earth;
Do not hide your commands from me.
My soul is consumed with longing
For your laws at all times...
Your statutes are my delight;
they are my counsellors.*

Psalm 119:11,18–20,24 (NIV UK)

Pause and pray

In his book about the Sabbath, Wayne Muller says: 'Because we do not rest, we lose our way. We miss the compass points that would show us where to go, we bypass the nourishment that would give us succor. We miss the quiet that would give us wisdom. We miss the joy and love born of effortless delight.*

* Wayne Muller, Sabbath, p1

Holy Spirit, help me to rest today, and as I do so, give me wisdom. I welcome Your presence and revelation within my life. Converse with my spirit so that the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart may be acceptable in Your sight today.

Pause and pray

I pray for the preaching of God's Word around the world today:

Father, I thank You that millions of people will learn from the Bible today. Please speak powerfully to convict, to comfort and to conform our minds to Yours.

Jesus, I pray today for all the children learning about You. Thank You that You always love to put them first. Help me to be more trusting, humble and playful like them.

Holy Spirit, revive us today. Inspire politicians and educators, artists and journalists, economists and scientists at church today, with the kinds of ideas that can change the world for good.

Pause and pray

I take a moment now to earth these big prayers in my own local community, naming someone I know who is either a student, an educator or a parent as they disciple their own Children.

Pause and pray

Sabbath Blessing

May this day bring Sabbath rest to my heart and my home.

May God's image in me be restored, and my imagination in God be re-storied.

May the gravity of material things be lightened, and the relativity of time slow down.

May I know grace to embrace my own finite smallness in the arms of God's infinite greatness.

May God's Word feed me and His Spirit lead me into the week and into the life to come.**

**Pete Greig, Sabbath Blessing, petegreig.info

June 07 2021 (click for audio)

The Mystery of God's Mission

Today is Monday the 7th of June and we are continuing to reflect on the three great loves at the heart of Christian faith through the lens of the six practices at the heart of Lectio 365*.

*You can find out more about the six practices and the Rule of Life at the heart of Lectio 365 at www.mustardseedorder.com

Over the last few weeks we've explored loving God through the practices of prayer and creativity, loving others through the practices of hospitality and justice, and loving the world through the practice of learning. This week, we conclude this series by exploring loving the world through the practice of mission.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

'Grant me, even me, my dearest Lord, to know you, and love you, and rejoice in you...

Let the love of you grow every day more and more in me, that my joy may be full in you'.(Augustine of Hippo – 354-430 AD)**

**Freely modified from Prayers of the Early Church, ed. J. Manning Potts, 1953

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's enduring purpose today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 33...

*The Lord frustrates the plans of the nations
and thwarts all their schemes.*

*But the Lord's plans stand firm forever;
his intentions can never be shaken.*

Psalm 33:10-11

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on the apostle Paul's letter to the Ephesians, which, according to the theologian NT Wright, 'offers a breathtaking view of the entire landscape'*** of salvation.

*** N.T Wright Paul for everyone: the prison letters. (2004, Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press)

For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will – to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, he

made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment – to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

Ephesians 1:4-10

Wow! It doesn't matter how many times I hear or read these verses, I am overwhelmed by them, by the mystery and the 'massiveness' of God's mission... to bring all things together, under Christ.

And perhaps the biggest mystery of it all is that I have been chosen to play a part. According to the apostle Paul, before people had being, and before the world had a beginning, I was chosen - in love - to belong with God.

Ask

I close my eyes and I imagine God pointing towards me, smiling and then speaking my name: 'I choose You. I have plans for You'.

How do I feel as I hear these words? I take a few moments to talk with God about this now.

Pause and pray

The word 'adoption' caught my attention in today's verses. I think of the many thousands of children who are literally 'waiting to be chosen' by an adoptive or foster family.

Father God, I ask You to be with them – give them comfort and hope, and give them a home too. And I ask that You speak to the individuals and families who You have already chosen to adopt and foster them.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage I listen for any other words or phrases that the Holy Spirit may want to highlight to me today...

For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will – to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment – to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

Ephesians 1:4-10 (NIV UK)

What word or phrase jumped out at me?

God chose me; predestined me; adopted me; gave grace to me, freely; redeemed me; forgave me; God makes mysteries known to me; God gives me purpose in Christ. I've already said this, but wow!

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Father God, forgive me for the times I've refused Your choosing because of shame, disappointment or insecurity. And for the times I've un-chosen myself for similar reasons. I'm saying 'yes' today, and I'm ready for whatever adventure You want to lead me into this week.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in John 15:

You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit – fruit that will last
John 15:16

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.

June 08 2021 (click for audio)

All About Jesus

Today is Tuesday the 8th of June and this week we are continuing to explore how we love the world through the practice of mission drawing on the apostle Paul's letters to the churches.

Together we will pray (**P.R.A.Y.**) very simply each day – '**P**': **PAUSING** to be still. '**R**': **REJOICING** with a Psalm and **REFLECTING** on a Scripture. '**A**': **ASKING** God to help us and others and '**Y**': **YIELDING** to His will in our lives, come what may.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

*'Grant me, even me, my dearest Lord, to know you, and love you, and rejoice in you...
Let the love of you grow every day more and more in me, that my joy may be full in you.'*
(Augustine of Hippo – 354-430 AD)*

*Freely modified from *Prayers of the Early Church*, ed. J. Manning Potts, 1953

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in the revelation of God today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 96...

*Let the heavens be glad, and the earth rejoice!
Let the sea and everything in it shout his praise!
Let the fields and their crops burst out with joy!
Let the trees of the forest sing for joy
before the Lord, for he is coming!
Psalm 96:11-13a*

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on a few verses from the apostle Paul's letter to the Colossian church, which has been described as 'the greatest Christian poem ever written'.**

**NT Wright, sermon at Durham Cathedral, 2006, <https://ntwrightpage.com/2016/03/30/city-on-a-hill/>

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to

reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Colossians 1:15-20

‘The God who made the world,’ writes the theologian NT Wright, ‘with all its parts and pieces, is now actively remaking it, restoring it, healing it, and renewing it; and the means by which he has done the first and is doing the second is the person, the man, we know as Jesus Christ. He is the mirror in which we discover who the creator really is; he is the one through whom all things were made, and through whom, by his death and resurrection, all things are now being remade.’***

***Ibid.

Ask

It’s all about Jesus. It always has been, and it will be forever.

Heavenly Father, thank You for Jesus. I ask You, whether for the very first time or the fiftieth time, to save me... remake me... restore me... heal me... renew me.

Pause and pray

I think of my family and my circles of friends and colleagues, and I ask myself – who doesn’t yet know Jesus?

As I name these loved ones before You now, Jesus, I ask You to give me opportunities, and the courage, to tell them just how amazing You are. I ask You to save them.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and I try to imagine Jesus as Paul describes Him.

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Colossians 1:15-20 (NIV/UK)

What word or phrase jumped out at me from these verses?

In yesterday’s devotional, I reflected on the Apostle Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, in which he states that God will ‘bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.’ (Ephesians 1:10) Today,

I've read something similar in his letter to the Colossians – that through Christ, God will 'reconcile to himself all things...' This is the mission of God.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

I know that I over-complicate things sometimes, including what it means to be a Christian. But Jesus, I'm inspired by the apostle Paul, who said that everything else was like rubbish compared to knowing You (Philippians 3:8). I want to see as clearly as that, so please help me to fix my eyes on You, today.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in John 14:

I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

John 14:6

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.

Amen.

June 09 2021 (click for audio)

Faith Expressed Through Love

Today is Wednesday the 9th of June and this week we are continuing to explore how we love the world through the practice of mission drawing on the apostle Paul's letters to the churches.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

'Grant me, even me, my dearest Lord, to know you, and love you, and rejoice in you...

Let the love of you grow every day more and more in me, that my joy may be full in you.'(Augustine of Hippo – 354-430 AD)*

*Freely modified from Prayers of the Early Church, ed. J. Manning Potts, 1953

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's unfailing love today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 147...

*[The Lord] takes no pleasure in the strength of a horse
or in human might.*

*No, the Lord's delight is in those who fear him,
those who put their hope in his unfailing love.*

Psalm 147:10-11

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on the apostle Paul's concern that the Galatians had become confused about what following Jesus involved, and what it didn't involve.

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all. Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is required to obey the whole law. You who are trying to be justified by the law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace. For through the Spirit we eagerly await by faith the righteousness for which we hope. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

Galatians 5:1-6

A religious group had infiltrated the Galatian churches and were trying to persuade them to take on some of the habits and legalistic practices of the Jewish people, including circumcision, as a way of following Christ.

This isn't as ridiculous as it sounds, because I succumb to a bit of legalism too sometimes. Maybe nothing as drastic as circumcision, but I add a few 'ought to do this' and 'shouldn't do that' rules every now and again in an effort to earn a little bit more approval from God. And in doing so, I fall away from grace.

'Stand firm,' writes Paul, 'and don't let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.' Freedom, it seems, requires a bit of resistance.

Ask

In the quiet I ask myself: am I free? Or am I burdened with trying to earn God's approval?

Jesus, as things come to mind, I confess them to You. All this stuff hinders me, burdens me, and so I throw it off now. Thank you that You died to set me free, completely.

Pause and pray

While Paul uses the word 'slavery' metaphorically, I know that there are more actual slaves in the world today 'than ever before in human history'.**

** <https://www.ijm.org/slavery>

I cry out to You, God of compassion and justice, to intervene. I pray for breakthroughs today. Protect and comfort those who are in some form of slavery. And give law enforcement teams and lawyers everything they need to expose and close-down organizations that profit from the buying and selling of human beings.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your Word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all. Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is required to obey the whole law. You who are trying to be justified by the law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace. For through the Spirit we eagerly await by faith the righteousness for which we hope. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

Galatians 5:1-6

I think I need to read that last line again, just a little bit slower, and let it sink in.

The only thing that matters is faith expressing itself through love. None of my 'ought to do this' and 'shouldn't do that' rules matter. All that matters is faith expressing itself through love.

How can I put this into practice today?

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Heavenly Father, I yield once again to Your unfailing, unchanging love. Help me to love You with all my heart, all my soul, all my strength and all my mind. Help me to love my neighbors. Help me to love my enemies too. And help me to love the world that You have created.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in 2 Timothy that:

He has saved [me] and called [me] to a holy life – not because of anything [I] have done but because of his own purpose and grace.

2 Timothy 1:9

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.

Amen.

June 10 2021 (click for audio)

Compelled By Love

Today is Thursday the 10th of June and this week we are continuing to explore how we love the world through the practice of mission, drawing on the apostle Paul's letters to the churches.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

'Grant me, even me, my dearest Lord, to know you, and love you, and rejoice in you...

Let the love of you grow every day more and more in me, that my joy may be full in you.' (Augustine of Hippo – 354-430 AD)*

*Freely modified from *Prayers of the Early Church*, ed. J. Manning Potts, 1953

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's loving kindness today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 9...

*I will praise you, Lord, with all my heart;
I will tell of all the marvelous things you have done.
I will be filled with joy because of you.
I will sing praises to your name, O Most High.*
Psalm 9:1-2

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on why the apostle Paul continued to preach the gospel in spite of repeated imprisonment and frequent suffering.

For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: the old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 5:14-18

Paul says that the love of Christ *compels* him. That word, 'compels', is a translation of the Greek word 'sunechei', which means 'to hold fast', or 'to urge', and I can hear all of this in Paul's words.

If I were able to ask him what he meant, I can imagine Paul's response would be something like this... 'Christ's love *holds* me - I can't escape it.'

Christ's love *urges* me onwards, like I'm being swept along by a river - I can't resist it. The good news of Jesus is so good that I have to tell people about it - I just can't help it.'

Ask

How does Christ's love motivate and move me? Would I say that I felt *compelled*?

Jesus, I wonder if I've fully grasped Your love for me and for those around me. I ask You to show me what I've been missing. I open myself to receive from You today.

Pause and pray

Who do I know that really needs to hear the good news of Jesus' life, death and resurrection?

I'm going to be brave. Jesus, I ask You to give me an opportunity to tell them about You, and to demonstrate Your love in some Way.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your Word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: the old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 5:14-18

Anyone who is 'in Christ', writes the Apostle Paul, is a 'new creation'. As I turn away from being 'in myself' (or even 'in religion') and I choose to give my life to, and live my life for, Christ alone, I am made new.

'I know no language,' said the great Baptist preacher C. H. Spurgeon, 'I believe there is none, that can express a greater or more thorough and more radical renewal, than that which is expressed in the term, 'a new creature.'**

**CH Spurgeon, taken from 'The Believer A New Creature', <https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/the-believer-a-new-creature/#flipbook/>

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for loving me enough to salvage the bits and pieces of my life, the ragged threads, the averageness, and for making it all new, every single day. I yield to Your plan for my life, Lord Jesus, and I invite You to 'compel me with love' in some way today.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in 1 John that:

God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.

1 John 4:10

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.

June 11 2021 (click for audio)

Making Jesus Known

Today is Friday the 11th of June and this week we are continuing to explore how we love the world through the practice of mission drawing on the apostle Paul's letters to the churches.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

'Grant me, even me, my dearest Lord, to know you, and love you, and rejoice in you...

Let the love of you grow every day more and more in me, that my joy may be full in you.' (Augustine of Hippo – 354-430 AD)*

*Freely modified from Prayers of the Early Church, ed. J. Manning Potts, 1953

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's good deeds today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 96...

Sing a new song to the Lord!

Let the whole earth sing to the Lord!

Sing to the Lord; praise his name.

Each day proclaim the good news that he saves.

Publish his glorious deeds among the nations.

Tell everyone about the amazing things he does.

Psalm 96:1-3

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on a few verses towards the end of the apostle Paul's letter to the church in Rome where he tells them what he's been up to...

Therefore I glory in Christ Jesus in my service to God. I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done – by the power of signs and wonders, through the power of the Spirit of God. So from Jerusalem all the way round to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ. It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation.

Romans 15:17-20

The Roman province of Illyricum is now part of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Albania, and it's about 1000 miles from Jerusalem. For Paul to say that he had 'fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ', that he has made Jesus known throughout that region, is impressive indeed!

Paul was often guided by the Holy Spirit (Acts 16:6-10), but he also had ambition. He had hopes and dreams to visit places, to meet people, and to do all sorts of things to make Jesus known.

Ask

What are my ambitions? What are my hopes and dreams? What has God put on my heart to do, or where has God put on my heart to go, that maybe I haven't accomplished yet?

In the quiet, I talk with God about these now.

Pause and pray

Having heard about these nations today, I pray for Bosnia-Herzegovina and Albania. I ask you God to send workers into the harvest fields to fully proclaim the gospel in these nations once again.

I also name other nations that God has particularly placed on my heart, and pray the same prayers for them too.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your Word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

Therefore I glory in Christ Jesus in my service to God. I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done – by the power of signs and wonders, through the power of the Spirit of God. So from Jerusalem all the way round to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ. It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation.

Romans 15:17-20

Ambition isn't always a good thing. At least, it doesn't always come from a good place. Sometimes, I'm ambitious for selfish reasons; I want people to be impressed. Sometimes, I'm ambitious because my self-worth has become unhealthily tangled up in my achievements.

But this isn't the kind of ambition that the apostle Paul is expressing. 'I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me...' he says. For Paul, it's all about giving glory to God, not grasping it for himself.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Heavenly Father, You are ambitious! I know that You have hopes and dreams and plans in motion, not only for the entire cosmos, but for me too. Somehow, there's a place for me in Your ambitious plan to reconcile all things, and so I yield to this today. Fill me with Your Spirit and make me ambitious to make You known.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Matthew 28 that:

I am with you always, to the very end of the age...

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

Matthew 28:20,19

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.

Amen.

June 12 2021 (click for audio)

The Call to Mission

Today is Saturday the 12th of June and this is our final day of exploring how we love the world through the practice of mission drawing on the apostle Paul's letters to the churches.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

'Grant me, even me, my dearest Lord, to know you, and love you, and rejoice in you...'

'Let the love of you grow every day more and more in me, that my joy may be full in you.' (Augustine of Hippo – 354-430 AD)*

*Freely modified from Prayers of the Early Church, ed. J. Manning Potts, 1953

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's saving power today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 67...

*May your ways be known throughout the earth,
your saving power among people everywhere.
May the nations praise you, O God.
Yes, may all the nations praise you.
Psalm 67:2-3*

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on a few verses towards the end of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, where he lists his plans for the next few months...

After I go through Macedonia, I will come to you – for I will be going through Macedonia. Perhaps I will stay with you for a while, or even spend the winter, so that you can help me on my journey, wherever I go. For I do not want to see you now and make only a passing visit; I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. But I will stay on at Ephesus until Pentecost, because a great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me.

1 Corinthians 16:5-9

Shortly after his resurrection, Jesus told his disciples to *wait* in Jerusalem for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. This, of course, resulted in thousands of people becoming followers of Jesus and the church being born.

And here's Paul, many years later, *waiting* in Ephesus until Pentecost. He recognizes that there is

opposition, but he sees great opportunities too. So despite having plans to go through Macedonia, he chooses to stay and wait.

Ask

Is the Lord calling me to stay or to go, right now? How do I feel about this? What am I doing about it?

I talk with God about this, and I listen for what God might want to say to me today.

Pause and pray

Who do I know that is facing opposition at the moment? Maybe it's someone standing against injustice in some way?

I ask You, Lord, to give them strength and comfort. Help them not to be overwhelmed by the challenge that they are facing. Help them to see the opportunity despite the opposition

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your Word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

After I go through Macedonia, I will come to you – for I will be going through Macedonia. Perhaps I will stay with you for a while, or even spend the winter, so that you can help me on my journey, wherever I go. For I do not want to see you now and make only a passing visit; I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. But I will stay on at Ephesus until Pentecost, because a great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me.

1 Corinthians 16:5-9

Regular users of the Lectio 365 app will know that we sometimes interrupt our usual rhythm to celebrate the life of a hero of the Christian faith, ordinary people who followed Jesus in extraordinary ways. People like Julian of Norwich and John Wesley, Aidan of Lindisfarne and Rosa Parks.

Each and every one of these heroes faced challenges and opposition, and yet, like the apostle Paul, they focused on the opportunities. Things didn't always go well for them; many of them made big mistakes and some paid a high price for following Jesus.

But they didn't give up. They ran the race.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

And so, Heavenly Father, since I am surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, I throw off everything that hinders me, and the sin that so easily entangles me, and I choose to say yes to You again today. I choose to run the race that You have marked for me. When I face challenges, as I surely

will, and maybe even opposition, help me to fix my eyes on Jesus, and to keep on running, with my feet fitted with readiness to proclaim the gospel of peace. (Hebrews 12:1, Ephesians 6:15)

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Acts 1 that:

[I] will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on [me], and [I] will be Jesus' witness...'
Acts 1:8

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.

Amen.

June 13 2021 (click for audio)

A Sabbath Prayer

Today is Sunday the 13th of June and this week we have been reflecting on how to love the world through the practice of mission. Today, we leave our usual P.R.A.Y. rhythms behind and pray in a simpler way, on this day of rest.

‘Six days a week we wrestle with the world, wringing profit from the earth; on the Sabbath,’ writes Rabbi Abraham Heschel, ‘we especially care for the seed of eternity planted in the soul.’*

* Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Sabbath* (FSG Classics) p1

As I settle into prayer now, Lord, show me what it means to ‘care for the seeds of eternity in my soul’. Help me to stop counting the minutes, to relinquish control. Inspire me to live and breathe with greater ease, as an eternal being loved by you.

Pause and pray

This week, I’ve been exploring the biblical priority of mission but today I stop striving to save the world and instead make space for the Lord to preach the gospel to me, to come and save me. Sunday is a day to be born again – again! And so I take time now to get right with God, to repent of my sins, to give thanks for the cross, to receive the Spirit once more.

Pause and pray

Turning my attention outwards, I pray for the gospel community as it gathers today:

Lord, You told us to ask the Father to send out workers to bring in the harvest. This we must do. Please ignite a renewed passion for the gospel in our lives and a sense of urgency in our churches. May we preach the way of salvation clearly today, so that many might see and believe and put their trust in You. Mobilize us as a missionary movement, wherever we live and to every tribe and tongue.

Holy Spirit, revive us again. Come to us once more as You came to that first prayer room in Jerusalem that we might be propelled out of our meetings and onto the streets with new courage to preach the gospel, that thousands might encounter the resurrected Savior, Jesus Christ.

I take a moment now to earth these big prayers in my own life, naming friends, family members or colleagues who don’t yet know Jesus. I ask for opportunities to share ‘the hope that (I) have’ (1 Pet. 3:15) with at least one of these people this week.

Pause and pray

Finally, I dedicate myself afresh to the mission of God:

Thank You, Father, that You loved the world so much that You sent Your only Son, Please help me to love the world with extraordinary generosity.

Thank You, Jesus, that You gave up everything and died for me.

Please help me to lay down my life for those who don’t yet know You.

*Thank You, Holy Spirit, for giving those first disciples such courage and power.
Please fill me now with that same boldness this week.*

Pause and pray

Sabbath blessing

*May this day bring sabbath rest to my heart and my home.
May God's image in me be restored, and my imagination in God be re-storied.
May the gravity of material things be lightened, and the relativity of time slow down.
May I know grace to embrace my own finite smallness
in the arms of God's infinite greatness.
May God's Word feed me and His Spirit lead me into the week and into the life to come.***

***Pete Greig, Sabbath Blessing, petegreig.info.*

June 14 2021 (click for audio)

Clash of the Titans

Today is Monday the 14th of June, and it's the beginning of a new Lectio 365 series called 'After the Fire'. Over the next six weeks we will be exploring a key moment in the life of Elijah, and asking ourselves, how do we dig into the peace, presence and glory of God within the great earth-shaking moments in our lives?

This week we set the scene by following Elijah up Mount Carmel; reflecting on his biggest high and then his lowest low.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Gracious Father, give me diligence to seek You, and wisdom to find You today. May my ears hear Your voice; my eyes see Your goodness; and my tongue proclaim Your name as I commit my life to pleasing You. (Adapted from a prayer by Benedict of Nursia)

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's authority today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 29:

The voice of the Lord echoes above the sea.

The God of glory thunders.

The Lord thunders over the mighty sea.

The voice of the Lord is powerful...

the voice of the Lord is majestic.

The Lord rules over the floodwaters.

The Lord reigns as king forever.

The Lord gives his people strength.

The Lord blesses them with peace.

Psalm 29:3-4, 10- 11

Pause and pray

Today I reflect on the clash of the titans as the prophet Elijah confronts Ahab. As king and ruler, it's Ahab's responsibility to call the people of Israel to be faithful to God and His law. However, due to the influence of his wife Jezebel, Ahab has instead given his allegiance to other gods...

'I have not made trouble for Israel,' Elijah replied. 'But you and your father's family have. You have abandoned the Lord's commands and have followed the Baals. Now summon the people from all over Israel to meet me on Mount Carmel. And bring the four hundred and fifty

prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table.' So Ahab sent word throughout all Israel and assembled the prophets on Mount Carmel. Elijah went before the people and said, 'How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him.'

But the people said nothing.

1 Kings 18:18-21

The culture has shifted. God's laws are no longer honored. The Old Testament prophets were charged with the responsibility of keeping the king accountable to the law. But when Elijah speaks truth to power and confronts the king, he is labeled as a troublemaker, the cause of Israel's problems. Elijah resists the gas lighting, refuses the label, and calls Ahab to account.

Ask

Have I been unduly influenced; either by the culture around me or people close to me? How has that impacted those around me?

God in the quiet I ask that You would search my heart for places of compromise, so that I can repent and turn back to You.

Pause and pray

God, I pray for courageous ones who speak truth to power. I ask that You bring someone to mind right now who needs my prayers to help them stand strong in the face of conflict; to resist and reject blame-shifting and labeling. Confirm to them their identity in You.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your Word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

'I have not made trouble for Israel,' Elijah replied. 'But you and your father's family have. You have abandoned the Lord's commands and have followed the Baals. Now summon the people from all over Israel to meet me on Mount Carmel. And bring the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table.'

So Ahab sent word throughout all Israel and assembled the prophets on Mount Carmel. Elijah went before the people and said, 'How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him.'

1 Kings 18:18-21

After confronting the king, Elijah then turns to the people. His charge is an echo of Joshua's exhortation to Israel when they first entered the land of Canaan, 'Choose this day who you will serve' (Joshua 24:15) In Joshua's time, the people of Israel had wholeheartedly committed to serve the Lord. Now, 350 years later, they're not so sure.

I remember the zeal of my early days of following Jesus. Have I fizzled out a bit? Have I been worn down over the years, through cultural influences and small compromises?

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

God I give to You my double mindedness; the way I say one thing and do another. I give to You my silence; my reticence and hesitancy in the face of a call to truth and to holiness. Today I choose who I will serve and I give myself to You afresh.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, I lean into God's provision promised in Psalm 28:7:

*The Lord is my strength and my shield;
my heart trusts in him, and he helps me.*

Psalm 28:7

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.

June 15 2021 (click for audio)

450 TO 1

Today is Tuesday the 15th of June, and this week we are continuing to follow Elijah's confrontation of Ahab and the prophets of Baal. Together we will pray (P.R.A.Y.) very simply each day – 'P': PAUSING to be still. 'R': REJOICING with a Psalm and REFLECTING on a Scripture. 'A': ASKING God to help us and others and 'Y': YIELDING to His will in our lives, come what may.]

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Gracious Father, give me diligence to seek You, and wisdom to find You today. May my ears hear Your voice; my eyes see Your goodness; and my tongue proclaim Your name as I commit my life to pleasing You. (Adapted from a prayer by Benedict of Nursia)

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's power today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 20...

*May we shout for joy when we hear of your victory
and raise a victory banner in the name of our God.
May the Lord answer all your prayers.
Now I know that the Lord rescues his anointed king.
He will answer him from his holy heaven
and rescue him by his great power.
Some nations boast of their chariots and horses,
but we boast in the name of the Lord our God.
Psalm 20:5-7*

Pause and pray

At Elijah's command, the people have gathered on Mount Carmel. It's a showdown between him and the prophets of Baal. Whose god is God?

Then Elijah said to them, 'I am the only one of the Lord's prophets left, but Baal has four hundred and fifty prophets. Get two bulls for us. Let Baal's prophets choose one for themselves, and let them cut it into pieces and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. I will prepare the other bull and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the Lord. The god who answers by fire – he is God.'

Then all the people said, 'What you say is good.' Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, 'Choose one of the bulls and prepare it first, since there are so many of you. Call on the name of your god, but do not light the fire.' So they took the bull that was given to them and prepared it.

Then they called on the name of Baal from morning till noon. ‘Baal, answer us!’ they shouted. But there was no response; no one answered. And they danced around the altar they had made.

At noon Elijah began to taunt them. ‘Shout louder!’ he said. ‘Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or traveling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened.’

1 Kings 18:22-27

I am amazed by Elijah's confidence as he sets the stage for the confrontation. Where did he get that boldness in the face of unbelief and opposition?

How confident am I in God's character, God's goodness, God's power? How is it demonstrated in and through my life?

Ask

God I ask that You would help me to grow in my faith and confidence in who You are. Especially when I'm surrounded by those who don't share my beliefs.

God, in the quiet I ask that You remind me of something of Your name and Your nature, and show me how I can live today like I really believe it.

Pause and pray

God I pray for missionaries loving and serving unreached people groups. Would You give them confidence in who You are and what You say You can and will do.

I pray that they would experience what the disciples in Mark 16:20 experienced. [they] went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied It.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I try to picture it in my mind. I imagine the crowds, the shouting, the dancing around the altar. And I imagine Elijah's taunting response.

Then Elijah said to them, ‘I am the only one of the Lord’s prophets left, but Baal has four hundred and fifty prophets. Get two bulls for us. Let Baal’s prophets choose one for themselves, and let them cut it into pieces and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. I will prepare the other bull and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the Lord. The god who answers by fire – he is God.’

Then all the people said, ‘What you say is good.’ Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, ‘Choose one of the bulls and prepare it first, since there are so many of you. Call on the name of your god, but do not light the fire.’ So they took the bull that was given to them and prepared it.

Then they called on the name of Baal from morning till noon. ‘Baal, answer us!’ they shouted. But there was no response; no one answered. And they danced around the altar they had made.

At noon Elijah began to taunt them. ‘Shout louder!’ he said. ‘Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or traveling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened.’

1 Kings 18:22-27

450 to one. Those are some kind of odds. But of course it's not the devotees and their praying, shouting and dancing that will determine the outcome. Either God is God or He is not.

Elijah lived in a way and made some pretty drastic choices that would seem utterly ridiculous if God didn't exist.

I reflect on my lifestyle. Do I live in a way that only makes sense if God is alive and active in the world? **If not, why not?**

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

God I want to live in a way that makes no sense whatsoever unless You are actually alive and active in the world. Give me the courage to stand against the crowd, even if I am the only one standing. And as I give myself to You, would You demonstrate Your power through me.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Jeremiah 33.

'Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.'

Jeremiah 33:3 (NKJV)

Closing Prayer

*Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.*

*Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.*

*Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.*

Amen.

June 16 2021 (click for audio)

Stones from the Jordan

Today is Wednesday the 16th of June, and this week we are with Elijah on the peak of Mount Carmel.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Gracious Father, give me diligence to seek You, and wisdom to find You today. May my ears hear Your voice; my eyes see Your goodness; and my tongue proclaim Your name as I commit my life to pleasing You. (Adapted from a prayer by Benedict of Nursia)

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's faithfulness today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 36...

*Your unfailing love, O Lord, is as vast as the heavens;
your faithfulness reaches beyond the clouds.
Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains,
your justice like the ocean depths.
You care for people and animals alike, O Lord.
How precious is your unfailing love, O God!
All humanity finds shelter
in the shadow of your wings.*

Psalm 36:5-7

Pause and pray

The prophets of Baal have had their go: but despite their best efforts, Baal doesn't answer. Their altar is untouched by fire. Now it's Elijah's turn....

Then Elijah said to all the people, 'Come here to me.' They came to him, and he repaired the altar of the Lord, which had been torn down. Elijah took twelve stones, one for each of the tribes descended from Jacob, to whom the word of the Lord had come, saying, 'Your name shall be Israel.' With the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord, and he dug a trench round it large enough to hold two seahs of seed. He arranged the wood, cut the bull into pieces and laid it on the wood. Then he said to them, 'Fill four large jars with water and pour it on the offering and on the wood.'

'Do it again,' he said, and they did it again.

'Do it a third time,' he ordered, and they did it the third time. The water ran down around the

altar and even filled the trench.

1 Kings 18:30-35

Elijah starts with a history lesson. He tells the people to gather twelve stones, one for each of the tribes of Israel, reminding them of the day their forefathers crossed the Jordan into the promised land. As the people of Israel crossed, they gathered stones from the middle of the river. Once they had passed over to the other side they set up the stones as a memorial of God's saving power and provision (Joshua 4).

Ask

What are my stones from the Jordan? What reminders do I have of God's saving power and provision in my life? Of previous moments of encounter with Him? In the quiet, I ask You to bring them to mind and I offer them back to You with thanksgiving.

Pause and pray

God I pray for those who are struggling right now with unsolvable problems. Those whose life circumstance spreads out in front of them like a massive rushing un-crossable river. I pray that You would remind them of times in the past where You made a way where there was no way, and give them the courage to put their foot in the water. God would You part the waters and create safe Passage.

Pause and pray

Yield

Just like yesterday, I picture this passage in my mind's eye as I read it.

Then Elijah said to all the people, 'Come here to me.' They came to him, and he repaired the altar of the Lord, which had been torn down. Elijah took twelve stones, one for each of the tribes descended from Jacob, to whom the word of the Lord had come, saying, 'Your name shall be Israel.' With the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord, and he dug a trench round it large enough to hold two seahs of seed. He arranged the wood, cut the bull into pieces and laid it on the wood. Then he said to them, 'Fill four large jars with water and pour it on the offering and on the wood.'

'Do it again,' he said, and they did it again.

'Do it a third time,' he ordered, and they did it the third time. The water ran down around the altar and even filled the trench.

1 Kings 18:30-35

'Your name shall be Israel.'

The name Israel means 'one who contends with God,' and 'God contends.' Both names are relevant in this current situation; the children of Israel who are contending with God, turning their back on Him to embrace Baal; and the God who will contend with that false god for the hearts and the loyalty of His people.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

God, I don't want to contend with You and what's more, I need You to contend with all that holds me captive. I give myself to You again today with this prayer of yielding from poet John Donne...

*Batter my heart, three-person'd God, for you
As yet but knock, breathe, shine, and seek to mend;
That I may rise and stand, o'erthrow me, and bend
Your force to break, blow, burn, and make me new.
I, like an usurp'd town to another due,
Labor to admit you, but oh, to no end;
Reason, your viceroy in me, me should defend,
But is captiv'd, and proves weak or untrue.
Yet dearly I love you, and would be lov'd fain,
But am betroth'd unto your enemy;
Divorce me, untie or break that knot again,
Take me to you, imprison me, for I,
Except you enthrall me, never shall be free,
Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me.**

* John Donne, *The Complete English Poems*(Penguin Classics) Penguin Books Ltd. Kindle Edition.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Isaiah 49:

*Yes, captives will be taken from warriors, and plunder retrieved from the fierce; I will contend with those who contend with you, and your children I will save.
Isaiah 49:25*

Closing Prayer

*Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.*

June 17 2021 (click for audio)

Convinced all over again

Today is Thursday the 17th of June. At the beginning of our new After the Fire series we are setting the scene by witnessing Elijah's battle with the Prophets of another god on Mount Carmel.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Gracious Father, give me diligence to seek You, and wisdom to find You today. May my ears hear Your voice; my eyes see Your goodness; and my tongue proclaim Your name as I commit my life to pleasing You. (adapted from a prayer by Benedict of Nursia)

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's glory today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 24...

*Open up, ancient gates!
Open up, ancient doors,
and let the King of glory enter.*

*Who is the King of glory?
The Lord, strong and mighty;
the Lord, invincible in battle.*

*Open up, ancient gates!
Open up, ancient doors,
and let the King of glory enter.
Psalm 24:7-9*

Pause and pray

Elijah has prepared the altar on Mount Carmel. Now it's time for the sacrifice...

At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: 'Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. Answer me, Lord, answer me, so these people will know that you, Lord, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again.'

Then the fire of the Lord fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench.

When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, 'The Lord – he is God! The Lord – he is God!'

Then Elijah commanded them, 'Seize the prophets of Baal. Don't let anyone get away!' They seized them, and Elijah had them brought down to the Kishon Valley and slaughtered there.
1 Kings 18:36-40

Elijah calls, God answers, and the fire falls, demonstrating to everyone that He and He alone is God. The people who had formerly been double-minded; who just earlier had nothing to say, now fall on their faces, proclaiming His Lordship. It's a power encounter that shakes them all.

Most of our answered prayers are not that dramatic – but in big and small ways when we ask and when He responds, we are convinced all over again that He is God.

Ask

Have I ever asked the Lord for something, and had prayer answered in such a way that convinced me, all over again, that He is God?

In the quiet, I hold that memory in my mind's eye. As I remember it, I savor it and lift my heart to heaven in gratitude. Like the people of Israel, I declare You are Lord - You are God!

Pause and pray

God, it can feel safer to lift up little prayers for small situations, but today I'm going to go for a big one. I hold before you the greatest challenge I see in the world around me and ask for a breaking in of Your kingdom. A power encounter that changes the destiny of all who are involved, in the mighty name of Jesus.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I hear the passage again, I enter into it with my imagination. I hear Elijah's voice raised in prayer. I feel the flash and burn of the heat of the fire as it falls. I watch the people as they fall on their faces; a whole nation coming back to God.

At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: 'Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. Answer me, Lord, answer me, so these people will know that you, Lord, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again.'

Then the fire of the Lord fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench.

When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, 'The Lord – he is God! The Lord – he is God!'

Then Elijah commanded them, 'Seize the prophets of Baal. Don't let anyone get away!' They seized them, and Elijah had them brought down to the Kishon Valley and slaughtered there.

1 Kings 18:36-40

I wonder how Elijah felt in that moment when the fire fell? Did he pump his fist in triumph or heave a big sigh of relief? Or both?

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

God I yield myself to the adventure of going out on a limb for the sake of Your name. I repent of my aversion to risk, and ask You would give me holy boldness. Send your fire!

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Psalm 91:

[You] will call on me, and I will answer [you]; I will be with [you] in trouble, I will deliver [you] and honor [you].

Psalm 91:15

Closing Prayer

*Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.*

*Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.*

*Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.*

Amen.

June 18 2021 (click for audio)

Wait for it

Today is Friday the 18th of June, and we are continuing to walk with Elijah through what seems to be the biggest week of his life.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Gracious Father, give me diligence to seek You, and wisdom to find You today. May my ears hear Your voice; my eyes see Your goodness; and my tongue proclaim Your name as I commit my life to pleasing You. (Adapted from a prayer written by Benedict of Nursia)

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's greatness today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 148...

*Praise the Lord from the earth,
you creatures of the ocean depths,
fire and hail, snow and clouds,
wind and weather that obey him,
Let them all praise the name of the Lord.
For his name is very great;
his glory towers over the earth and heaven!
Psalm 148:7,8,13*

Pause and pray

The prophets of Baal have been defeated. The glory of God has been revealed. But Israel was still struggling with drought – the drought that Elijah himself had instigated. It is time to bring back the rain.

And Elijah said to Ahab, "Go, eat and drink, for there is the sound of a heavy rain." So Ahab went off to eat and drink, but Elijah climbed to the top of Carmel, bent down to the ground and put his face between his knees.

"Go and look toward the sea," he told his servant. And he went up and looked.

"There is nothing there," he said.

Seven times Elijah said, "Go back."

The seventh time the servant reported, "A cloud as small as a man's hand is rising from the sea."

So Elijah said, "Go and tell Ahab, 'Hitch up your chariot and go down before the rain stops you.'"

Meanwhile, the sky grew black with clouds, the wind rose, a heavy rain started falling and

Ahab rode off to Jezreel. The power of the Lord came on Elijah and, tucking his cloak into his belt, he ran ahead of Ahab all the way to Jezreel.

I Kings 18:41-46

Elijah has just had a massive public victory.

Today I see him away from the platform and the people. And he is laboring in prayer, asking for rain. Elijah is confident that God will answer; so confident that he tells Ahab to get ready, rain is coming. However, Elijah knows he also has a part to play. He expects God to respond and holds his nerve, even when the response is slow to materialize.

Ask

When I pray, am I expectant that God will answer? Am I proactive and faith filled, eyes open for where the answers to my prayer might materialize?

God would You give me more faith, more expectancy? Help me not to be passive, but proactive. Help me to seek you diligently until I find You.

Pause and pray

God, I pray for those with a public platform and ministry. Pastors, evangelists, Christian educators.

Lord I pray for integrity – that they would be the same ‘all the way through’. That their public persona and their private prayer life would be in step with each Other.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your Word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

And Elijah said to Ahab, “Go, eat and drink, for there is the sound of a heavy rain.” So Ahab went off to eat and drink, but Elijah climbed to the top of Carmel, bent down to the ground and put his face between his knees.

“Go and look toward the sea,” he told his servant. And he went up and looked.

“There is nothing there,” he said.

Seven times Elijah said, “Go back.”

The seventh time the servant reported, “A cloud as small as a man’s hand is rising from the sea.”

So Elijah said, “Go and tell Ahab, ‘Hitch up your chariot and go down before the rain stops you.’”

Meanwhile, the sky grew black with clouds, the wind rose, a heavy rain started falling and Ahab rode off to Jezreel. The power of the Lord came on Elijah and, tucking his cloak into his belt, he ran ahead of Ahab all the way to Jezreel.

I Kings 18:41-46

Sometimes when I pray big prayers the answers begin as small things, as small as a cloud the size of a man’s hand. I can feel discouraged because I’m not seeing everything I am believing for. But this story shows me that big things often begin as little things. If I respond in faith and gratitude for the small, I may be given more.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

God I give You my discouragement and I receive from You hope and expectancy. I give myself to prayer and trust Your timing and great power.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Psalm 91:

*He will call on me, and I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble,
I will deliver him and honor him.
With long life I will satisfy him
and show him my salvation.*

Psalm 91:15 – 16

Closing Prayer

*Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.*

June 19 2021 (click for audio)

When it all goes wrong

Today is Saturday the 19th of June, and this is the final day of our exploration of Elijah's journey up and down Mount Carmel.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Gracious Father, give me diligence to seek You, and wisdom to find You today. May my ears hear Your voice; my eyes see Your goodness; and my tongue proclaim Your name as I commit my life to pleasing You. (Adapted from a prayer written by Benedict of Nursia)

Rejoice and Reflect

Today, I join with the ancient lament of all God's people in the words of Psalm 6...

*I am worn out from sobbing.
All night I flood my bed with weeping,
drenching it with my tears.
My vision is blurred by grief;
my eyes are worn out because of all my enemies.
Psalm 6:6-7*

Pause and pray

Elijah's glory story ends with a surprising anti-climax... He's triumphed over the prophets of Baal but experiences some unexpected push back...

Now Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, 'May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them.'
Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, while he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. 'I have had enough, Lord,' he said. 'Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors.'

1 Kings 19:1-4

It's the ultimate let down. Elijah should have been at the top of the world, but instead he's crawled under a broom bush, wanting to end it all. What happened? Why the crash?

I can relate to Elijah. At my church when it's my turn to preach I just love it. I get so much joy and energy from speaking to my beloved community. But I know from experience that the 'after crash' is inevitable, and that I have to be particularly gentle with myself over the next day or so. What goes up must come down.

I've come to realize that when we take ground for the kingdom of God, the kingdom of darkness often pushes back, sometimes quite quickly, and tries to regain what it's lost.

Ask

God would You help me to be gentle with myself in the aftermath of spiritual highs and public victories. May I have the humility to recognize my vulnerability, and to pace and nurture myself accordingly. I pray for protection over my body, soul and spirit. Hide me in Your loving care.

Pause and pray

*God I pray for pastors and clergy. Protect them from the enemy who would seek to 'steal, kill and destroy' them (John 10:10). Help them, as Ruth Haley Barton exhorts to 'Allow [themselves] to be at ease for a few moments...[Help them] Experience [their] finiteness and what it feels like to be a finite being in the presence of the infinite God.'**

* Ruth Haley Barton, *Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership: Seeking God in the Crucible of Ministry* (Transforming Resources) InterVarsity Press. Kindle Edition p113.

In the quiet, I pray for my own pastor Now.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your Word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

Now Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, 'May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them.'

Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, while he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. 'I have had enough, Lord,' he said. 'Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors.'

1 Kings 19:1-4

It's amazing how fleeting my faith can be. How quickly spiritual amnesia sets in. Elijah had witnessed the superior strength and might of God, but at the next challenge, he's forgotten it all and caved in on himself in self-pity, fear and despair. And I can totally relate.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

God I repent of my spiritual amnesia, for how quickly I cave in, shrink down, and check out. For the times I feel overwhelmed and I look only to my own finite and inadequate human capacity instead of reaching for the resources of heaven.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, I lean into your promise in Philippians:

And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.
Philippians 4:19

Closing Prayer

*Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.*
*Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.*
*Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.*
Amen.

June 20 2021 (click for audio)

A Sabbath Prayer for World Refugee Day

On this special Sabbath, we are marking World Refugee Day, and praying for the 26 million people all over the world who have been forcibly displaced from the nations they call home.*

* <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/>

So today I pause and give thanks for God's abundant and generous welcome:

'Come, all you who are thirsty,' He says, 'come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat!'

Isaiah 55:1

Pause and pray

Every year, individuals and families have to leave the nation they call home for many reasons – including violence, conflict, natural disasters. Worldwide, half of all refugees are under 18 years old.**

** <https://msf.org.uk/issues/refugees-and-displaced-people>

On World Refugee Day; I celebrate the strength and courage of those who have been forced to flee, and recognize their resilience in rebuilding their lives.***

*** Find out more at <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/world-refugee-day.html>

Creator God, thank You for your love and care for every human being. I especially thank You for Your love and care of the displaced. You know them intimately. You care for them deeply. As I pause to pray, share Your loving, caring heart for refugees with me.

I take time now to pray those who are facing or embarking on dangerous journeys. For those who are feeling isolated and scared. For those who are uncertain what the future might Hold.

Pause and pray

I also pray for the Church all over the world this Refugee Day.

God of welcome, would You challenge us to open our doors wider today? You call us to welcome the stranger (Deut 10:18) and to rescue those who are weak and in need (Ps 82:4). Show us how to model your generous and abundant love to refugees in our towns, cities and nations, today.

I recommit myself to be the hands and feet of Jesus in the coming week:

Spirit of the Sovereign Lord, anoint me again this week to proclaim good news to the poor. Send me to bind up the broken-hearted. Show me how I can love refugees through my prayers, through my words and through my actions.

Pause and pray

Sabbath blessing

May this day bring sabbath rest to my heart and my home.

May God's image in me be restored, and my imagination in God be re-storied.

May the gravity of material things be lightened, and the relativity of time slow down.

May I know grace to embrace my own finite smallness in the arms of God's infinite greatness.

*May God's Word feed me and his Spirit lead me into the week and into the life to come.*****

****Pete Greig, Sabbath Blessing, petegreig.info

June 21 2021 (click for audio)

God in the Care of the Traumatized

Today is Monday the 21st of June, and we are continuing our After the Fire series exploring how we hold on to God in the midst of earth-shaking experiences. This week we are exploring God's care for us.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Gracious Father, give me diligence to seek You, and wisdom to find You today. May my ears hear Your voice; my eyes see Your goodness; and my tongue proclaim Your name as I commit my life to pleasing You. (Adapted from a prayer by Benedict of Nursia)

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's loving care for me today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 31...

*I will be glad and rejoice in your unfailing love,
for you have seen my troubles,
and you care about the anguish of my soul.*

Psalm 31:7

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on God's care for the prophet Elijah in a moment of deep personal crisis. His life is in danger and he seems to be suffering with what doctors today might recognize as post-traumatic stress...

Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, while he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. 'I have had enough, Lord,' he said. 'Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors.' Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep. All at once an angel touched him and said, 'Get up and eat.' He looked around, and there by his head was some bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again.

1 Kings 19:3-6

Elijah's emotions are all over the place. One moment he is running from King Ahab and the furious Jezebel. The next day Elijah travels alone into the wilderness, where he sits down under a bush and asks God to take away his useless life. Perhaps wisely, he soon stops praying, lies down and falls asleep.

I wonder whether sometimes God can only really begin to help me when I stop running to save myself and have the honesty to admit, 'I've had enough, Lord.'

And sometimes, I need to lie down and sleep more than I need to sit and pray.

Ask

I take a moment to stop; to be still; to rest in God.

Lord, may I have the courage to stop running when I really need to sit and rest.

May I be honest enough with myself to know when to admit, 'Lord, I've had enough.'

And may I be wise enough to know when to cease my anxious prayers, and just lie down and sleep.

Pause and pray

I think of someone I know who is experiencing a time of great stress and heartache – perhaps even real trauma.

I pray for them now; Lord, may they find all the healing rest they need in You.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your Word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, while he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. 'I have had enough, Lord,' he said. 'Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors.' Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep. All at once an angel touched him and said, 'Get up and eat.' He looked around, and there by his head was some bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again.

1 Kings 19:3-6

The sleeping Elijah is awakened by God's messenger. An angel has brought him breakfast. When I am stretched to the limit of my ability to cope, I find myself hoping for a big spectacular miracle to solve all my problems. But perhaps God might come to me instead with the most ordinary of good things; like bread, water and sleep.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord, I yield all my anxious thoughts, all my shattered emotions to Your care. Open my eyes to see You again in the good ordinary gifts of life. And, Lord, may I be Your messenger, ready to show practical kindness to someone today.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Philippians chapter 4:

*... my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.
Philippians 4:19*

Closing Prayer

*Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.*

June 22 2021 (click for audio)

God in the Care of the Exhausted

Today is Tuesday the 22nd of June, and this week we are exploring how God cares for us after the earth-shattering experiences of our lives.

Together we will pray (**P.R.A.Y.**) each day – ‘P’: PAUSING to be still. ‘R’: REJOICING with a Psalm and REFLECTING on a Scripture. ‘A’: ASKING God to help us and others and ‘Y’: YIELDING to His will in our lives, come what may.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Gracious Father, give me diligence to seek You, and wisdom to find You today. May my ears hear Your voice; my eyes see Your goodness; and my tongue proclaim Your name as I commit my life to pleasing You. (Adapted from a prayer by Benedict of Nursia)

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God’s thoughtful care for everyone today, joining with the ancient praise of all God’s people in the words of Psalm 8...

*When I look at the night sky and see the work of your fingers—
the moon and the stars you set in place—
what are mere mortals that you should think about them,
human beings that you should care for them?
Yet you made them only a little lower than God
and crowned them with glory and honor.*

Psalm 8:3-5

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on God’s patient care for the exhausted prophet Elijah as God begins to lead him on a journey of recovery from the emotional trauma he has suffered.

The angel of the Lord came back a second time and touched him and said, ‘Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.’ So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled for forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. There he went into a cave and spent the night.

1 Kings 19:7-9

‘There is a time for everything,’ the preacher says [Ecclesiastes 3:1]. There is a time to rest and there is a time to get up and go. Elijah is asleep; again. Feeling alone, afraid, and unqualified, he seems to have shut down. But God’s messenger wakes him a second time. ‘Get up and eat,’ he says, ‘you have a long road ahead of you.’ It will be a journey to a new face-to-face encounter with God.

Ask

Am I lying asleep when I should be preparing for a new challenge, a new journey, a fresh purpose?

Lord, teach me to be kind to myself when I need to rest, but help me be alert to Your voice calling me to 'Get up and eat'. I know that the road is long; give me Your strength for the way.

Pause and pray

Lord, I pray for someone I know who needs God's encouragement in the challenges of life they are facing. Awaken them from spiritual sleep into new hope and new possibilities.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your Word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

The angel of the Lord came back a second time and touched him and said, 'Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.' So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled for forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. There he went into a cave and spent the night.

1 Kings 19:7-9

Elijah's 40 day journey through the wilderness to Horeb will take him to the very place where Moses had met with God 400 years before: the place of the burning bush. This is a journey back into the roots of Elijah's faith. It is a journey out to the lonely desert and a journey into his own soul.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord, I yield myself to your way; the way of love, the way of Jesus. I yield myself to the journey ahead. 'May I see you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day.' (Prayer of Richard of Chichester)

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in the words of Isaiah:

Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, 'This is the way; walk in it.'

Isaiah 30:21

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full, being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others, being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost, proclaiming Christ in all I do and say. Amen.

June 23 2021 (click for audio)

God in the Care of the Forgotten

Today is Wednesday the 23rd of June, and this week we are exploring God's care for us.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Gracious Father, give me diligence to seek You, and wisdom to find You today. May my ears hear Your voice; my eyes see Your goodness; and my tongue proclaim Your name as I commit my life to pleasing You. (Adapted from a prayer by Benedict of Nursia)

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's care for all his people today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 95...

*Come, let us worship and bow down.
Let us kneel before the Lord our maker,
for he is our God.
We are the people he watches over,
the flock under his care.
Psalm 95:6-7*

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on God's care for Moses and the people of Israel. Moses grew up as a prince in Egypt. One day he came face to face with the injustice the enslaved Israelites faced every day. He tried to make a difference, but it ended in disaster. Years later, Moses is in exile, a shepherd in the desert, and life for the Israelites is worse than ever...

...The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them.

Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. So Moses thought, 'I will go over and see this strange sight – why the bush does not burn up.' When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, 'Moses! Moses!' And Moses said, 'Here I am.'

Exodus 2:23-3:4

The lives of the Israelites were impossibly hard. In their trouble they groaned and cried out. And God responded in four ways. God heard. God remembered his covenant promise. God saw. And God was concerned – the Hebrew word means simply, ‘God knew’.

God called Moses because He cared for His people, and because He cared for Moses. And it all began when Moses became curious about a bush.

Like the Israelite slaves, God hears me. God remembers me. God sees me. God knows.

God knows my situation. God knows my pain. God knows all the worries which keep me awake at night. And God knows what to do.

Ask

Am I facing a situation that seems impossible? Have I lost a sense of purpose which I once had? Do I feel as though God has forgotten me and left me to wander in a desert?

Lord, hear my cry. Remember me. See me. Know me. Let me hear Your voice calling my name once again.

Pause and pray

I pray for someone I know who seems lost right now. Lord, would You show them something to make them curious

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your Word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

...The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them.

Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. So Moses thought, ‘I will go over and see this strange sight – why the bush does not burn up.’ When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, ‘Moses! Moses!’ And Moses said, ‘Here I am.’

Exodus 2:23-3:4

Forty years earlier, Moses had seen the terrible injustice suffered by his own people. He had rushed in to try and help, but he had tried to do it on his own and he had not been ready. Only now Moses sees ‘the Angel of the Lord’ - the invisible God appearing to him in the flames of a burning bush! Moses finds that his people are not forgotten. He is not forgotten. But God’s timing was not what Moses had expected.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord, I yield to Your timing. I often rush in, thinking that I can save the world, or even just make a useful difference on my own. Lord, here I am. Take me. Change me. Use me. Send me.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me reminds me in Hebrews 11:

By faith [Moses]... persevered because he saw him who is invisible.
Hebrews 11:27

Closing Prayer

*Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.*
*Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.*
*Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.*
Amen.

June 24 2021 (click for audio)

John the Baptist: Hero of Mission and Justice

Today is Thursday the 24th of June, the Feast of the provocative prophet, John the Baptist.

On Feast Days we celebrate the stories and learn from the lives of heroes of faith, whose collective witness embodies our six practices at the heart of Lectio 365. These are: Prayer and Creativity, Justice and Hospitality, Learning and Mission. Today therefore we are thanking God for the extraordinary example of John, a compelling hero of mission and justice.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Father God, open my eyes, stir my heart and teach me how, 'To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with...' You today. (Micah 6:8)

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's faithfulness today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 119...

*Your eternal word, O Lord,
stands firm in heaven.
Your faithfulness extends to every generation,
as enduring as the earth you created.
Your regulations remain true to this day,
for everything serves your plans.
Psalm 119:89-91*

Pause and pray

The birth of John the Baptist, like his cousin Jesus, was marked by an angelic visitation, a miraculous conception and great anticipation.

John's parents, Elizabeth & Zechariah, couldn't have children naturally. While Zechariah was burning incense in the Temple one day, an angel appeared with a life-changing message, 'Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son.' (Luke 1:13).

Zechariah was struck dumb with disbelief, and yet nine months later he witnessed the birth of his son and named him John: meaning 'Yahweh's gift', or 'God is gracious'.

From day one John was born with a purpose. He would be great in God's sight, filled with God's Spirit and call Israel back to God.

As he grew, many wondered ‘what then is this child going to be?’ (Luke 1:66). But Mark’s Gospel opens with John as an adult, bursting onto the scene preparing the way for Jesus...

The good news of Jesus Christ—the Message! — begins here, following to the letter the scroll of the prophet Isaiah.

*Watch closely: I’m sending my preacher ahead of you;
He’ll make the road smooth for you.
Thunder in the desert!
Prepare for God’s arrival!
Make the road smooth and straight!*

John the Baptizer appeared in the wild, preaching a baptism of life-change that leads to forgiveness of sins. People thronged to him from Judea and Jerusalem and, as they confessed their sins, were baptized by him in the Jordan River into a changed life. John wore a camel-hair habit, tied at the waist with a leather belt. He ate locusts and wild field honey.

As he preached he said, “The real action comes next: The star in this drama, to whom I’m a mere stagehand, will change your life. I’m baptizing you here in the river, turning your old life in for a kingdom life. His baptism—a holy baptism by the Holy Spirit—will change you from the inside out.”

Mark 1:1-8 (MSG)

John was a compelling character. He lived simply in a harsh wilderness, cared little for comfort and called Israel to repent; to admit their wrongs and change their life. He baptized many, challenging them to live generously, simply and justly.

John confronted both people and power structures. So much so that he was arrested and eventually executed for speaking out about the actions of the ruler Herod Antipas.

Ask

William Barclay writes that John, ‘was a man who lived his message. Not only his words, but his whole life was a protest.’*

* William Barclay, *The Gospel of Mark*, p16

If someone wrote about my life, what would its message be? How can I learn from John’s example to use my voice and my actions to live in a way that honors God today?

Lord, show me where You want me to stand up – or stand out – so that others will encounter You.

Pause and pray

John challenged his nation to turn back to God. How has my nation turned away from God?

Lord, show me where our culture worships money, comfort, power or something else; instead of You. In humility I ask You to forgive Us.

Pause and pray

Yield

Eugene Peterson powerfully paraphrases Mark's words in The Message...

The real action comes next: The star in this drama, to whom I'm a mere stagehand, will change your life. I'm baptizing you here in the river, turning your old life in for a kingdom life. His baptism—a holy baptism by the Holy Spirit—will change you from the inside out.

Mark 1:7-8 (MSG)

John wasn't building his own brand, gathering likes and followers, expanding his influence in Israel. He knew exactly why he was there, and who would stand on the stage he had built.

Who takes center stage in my life? Am I content to 'exit stage left' and allow Jesus to stand in the spotlight?

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Jesus, I often consider myself the lead role in my life, but today I want to be more like John. Help me decrease, so You can increase (John 3:30) in me and in my interactions with others.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me encourages me that...

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

Closing Prayer

*Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.*

*Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.*

*Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.*

Amen.

June 25 2021 (click for audio)

God in the Care of the Rejected

Today is Friday the 25th of June, and this week we are continuing to explore how God cares for us whenever everything goes wrong.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Gracious Father, give me diligence to seek You, and wisdom to find You today. May my ears hear Your voice; my eyes see Your goodness; and my tongue proclaim Your name as I commit my life to pleasing You. (Adapted from a prayer by Benedict of Nursia)

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice today in God's care even in tough times, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 37...

*Day by day the Lord takes care of the innocent,
and they will receive an inheritance that lasts forever.
They will not be disgraced in hard times;
even in famine they will have more than enough.*

Psalm 37:18-19

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on God's care for a North African slave woman, who has been rejected by the father of her child, a man, who, to this day, is honored as a spiritual leader and patriarch.

Early the next morning Abraham took some food and a skin of water and gave them to Hagar. He set them on her shoulders and then sent her off with the boy. She went on her way and wandered in the Desert of Beersheba.

When the water in the skin was gone, she put the boy under one of the bushes. Then she went off and sat down about a bow-shot away, for she thought, 'I cannot watch the boy die.' And as she sat there, she began to sob.

God heard the boy crying, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, 'What is the matter, Hagar? Do not be afraid; God has heard the boy crying as he lies there. Lift the boy up and take him by the hand, for I will make him into a great nation.'

Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. So she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink.

Genesis 21:14-19

The name 'Hagar' means 'Forsaken'. For the sake of Abraham's domestic peace, Hagar and her son, Ishmael are made homeless and left to wander in the desert. Here they learn that, even though life

may be tough, God has certainly not rejected them. ‘Do not be afraid’, the Lord tells Hagar. ‘God has heard the boy’s cry...’ As Hagar stops acting out of fear, her eyes are opened to see what God sees – a well of water.

Ask

Are there areas in my life where I feel a sense of rejection, or exclusion? Have I allowed the behavior of others to affect my opinion of myself, or how God sees me? Have I let fear control the way I see the future? I bring all these emotions to the Lord now.

Father, I need to know that You do see me and that You hear my cry, even if other people ignore me and reject me. Open my eyes to see what You see.

Pause and pray

Lord, I pray now for the homeless, the forsaken, the rejected, the trafficked, and abused, especially vulnerable women and children who, like Hagar, have been cast aside, uncared For.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your Word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

Early the next morning Abraham took some food and a skin of water and gave them to Hagar. He set them on her shoulders and then sent her off with the boy. She went on her way and wandered in the Desert of Beersheba.

When the water in the skin was gone, she put the boy under one of the bushes. Then she went off and sat down about a bow-shot away, for she thought, ‘I cannot watch the boy die.’ And as she sat there, she began to sob.

God heard the boy crying, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, ‘What is the matter, Hagar? Do not be afraid; God has heard the boy crying as he lies there. Lift the boy up and take him by the hand, for I will make him into a great nation.’

Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. So she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink.

Genesis 21:14-19

Hagar is wounded by her rejection. All her resources for survival are gone, so she casts the boy aside, leaving him under a bush. It will shield him from the hot sun, but, more importantly to her, it will shield her from seeing him die. To protect her broken heart, the forsaken one forsakes her child.

But God has a great plan for Ishmael, and Hagar has a part to play. ‘Lift the boy up,’ the Lord says, ‘and take him by the hand, for I will make him into a great nation’ (v18).

Is there someone who needs me to lift them up, and take them by the hand, so that they might fulfill God’s promise?

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord I yield all my woundedness to You. I know how easy it is for hurting people to, in turn, hurt other people. Where I have experienced hurt and rejection, may the hurting stop with me. Help me lift others up, so that they might fulfill Your purpose.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Psalm 34:

The Lord hears his people when they call to him for help.

He rescues them from all their troubles.

The Lord is close to the brokenhearted;

he rescues those whose spirits are crushed.

Psalm 34:17-18

Closing Prayer

*Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.*

*Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.*

*Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.*

Amen.

June 26 2021 (click for audio)

God in the Care of the Outsiders

Today is Saturday the 26th of June, and this week we are exploring God's care for us.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Gracious Father, give me diligence to seek You, and wisdom to find You today. May my ears hear Your voice; my eyes see Your goodness; and my tongue proclaim Your name as I commit my life to pleasing You. (Adapted from a prayer by Benedict of Nursia)

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice today in God's care for every living thing, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 36...

*Your unfailing love, O Lord, is as vast as the heavens;
your faithfulness reaches beyond the clouds.
Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains,
your justice like the ocean depths.
You care for people and animals alike, O Lord.
How precious is your unfailing love, O God!
All humanity finds shelter
in the shadow of your wings.*
Psalm 36:5-7

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on God's care for an outraged prophet and a pagan city. Assyria was the deadly enemy of Israel and Judah. God had sent Jonah to prophesy the destruction of Nineveh, capital of this violent empire. Jonah prophesied destruction, but surprisingly the people of Nineveh turned from their evil ways...

Jonah had gone out and sat down at a place east of the city. There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city. Then the Lord God provided a leafy plant and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the plant. But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the plant so that it withered. When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah's head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, 'It would be better for me to die than to live.' But God said to Jonah, 'Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?' 'It is,' he said. 'And I'm so angry I wish I were dead.'

But the Lord said, 'You have been concerned about this plant, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left – and also many animals?'

Jonah 4:5-11

Jonah is outraged because God's compassion challenges his own dearly held beliefs about the way things ought to be. His theology is at stake.

God is not doing what Jonah thinks God should do. Jonah wants God to destroy his enemies. God is being too kind to the wrong people. God held back disaster, and now, in Jonah's mind, it is God who is acting in an evil way. His prejudice caused him to lose touch with God's heart.

Ask

Am I so certain in my opinions about God, that I find it hard to trust in his loving care for me and for others – especially those who don't think like me? Do I always need to be right about everything?

Lord, I confess my prejudices. Open my heart to your generous love for everyone, especially for those who don't look like me, think like me, act like me, or live like me.

Pause and pray

I think of someone I know who holds opinions that I strongly disagree with, perhaps a family member whom I am tempted to dismiss as stupid because of their politics, their theology, or their lifestyle. Lord, would you show your special kindness to them Today.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your Word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

Jonah had gone out and sat down at a place east of the city. There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city. Then the Lord God provided a leafy plant and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the plant. But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the plant so that it withered. When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah's head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, 'It would be better for me to die than to live.'

But God said to Jonah, 'Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?'

'It is,' he said. 'And I'm so angry I wish I were dead.'

But the Lord said, 'You have been concerned about this plant, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left – and also many animals?'

Jonah 4:5-11

I notice a phrase repeated three times in this brief passage: 'God provided'. When Jonah was tossed into the waves back in chapter 1, 'the Lord provided a large fish' (Jonah 1:17), maybe a whale. Now,

God provides a weed, then a worm, and finally a wind. Jonah is too caught up in his emotions to realize that everything is a gift from God. He is caught up in self-pity, but God is concerned for a city.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord, I yield myself to Your compassionate care for all of your creation: for all people, and for every living thing. Set me free from self-centered, petty thinking.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Jeremiah 31:

*I have loved you with an everlasting love;
I have drawn you with unfailing kindness.
I will build you up again,
and you... will be rebuilt.
Jeremiah 31:3-4*

Closing Prayer

*Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.*

June 27 2021 (click for audio)

A Sabbath Prayer

It's Sunday the 27th of June and this week we've been continuing our After the Fire series exploring the life of Elijah and learning how to encounter God's presence in the earth-shaking moments in our lives.

Today, we leave our usual P.R.A.Y rhythms behind and pray simply on this day of rest.

Ruth Haley Barton says that keeping the Sabbath, '...honors the body's need for rest, the spirit's need for replenishment, and the soul's need to delight itself in God for God's sake'*

* Ruth Haley Barton, *The Road We Must Travel, A Personal Guide for Your Journey* (Worthy publishing, 2004)

Lord, I bring my body before You for rest and restoration. I lift my Spirit to You for replenishment and refreshment. And I still my soul to wait in Your presence, on this day of Rest.

Pause and pray

On this Sabbath, I return to Elijah's story, reflecting on how God met both his spiritual and physical needs:

[Elijah] looked around and there beside his head was some bread baked on hot stones and a jar of water! So he ate and drank and lay down again.

Then the angel of the Lord came again and touched him and said, "Get up and eat some more, or the journey ahead will be too much for you."

1 Kings 19:6-7 (NLT)

Where in my life do I need God's physical provision – sustenance, energy or strength - today?

Father, I invite You, Jehovah-jireh – God who provides – to give me what I need.

Pause and Pray

Where in my life do I need to invite the spiritual refreshment of the Holy Spirit today?

Holy Spirit, I invite You to fill me, again.

Pause and Pray

What 'journey' is ahead of me that I need to be sustained for? What awaits me in the coming days?

Jesus, I invite You to provide refreshment today. Prepare me to follow You in the journey ahead.

Pause and Pray

I pause and ground these prayers by praying for someone I know who also needs God's provision, refreshment or direction today.

Pause and pray

I pray a prayer of gathering and releasing, by preacher and poet Ted Loder:

'Oh God, gather me now to be with you
as you are with me.

Soothe my tiredness;
quiet my fretfulness;
curb my aimlessness;
relieve my compulsiveness;
let me be easy for a moment.

O Lord, release me
from the fears and guilts which grip me so tightly;
from the expectations and opinions which I so tightly grip,
that I may be open
to receiving what you give,
to risking something genuinely new,
to learning something refreshingly different.

O God, gather me to be with you
as you are with me'**

** Ted Loder, *Guerrillas of Grace: Prayers for the Battle*, p76

As I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming Sabbath day, I breathe slowly, and repeat the words of Psalm 119, making them my prayer:

*'Let your love, God, shape my life'
Psalm 119:41 (MSG)*

Pause and Pray

Sabbath blessing

*May this day bring sabbath rest to my heart and my home.
May God's image in me be restored, and my imagination in God be re-storied.
May the gravity of material things be lightened, and the relativity of time slow down.
May I know grace to embrace my own finite smallness in the arms of God's infinite greatness.
May God's Word feed me and his Spirit lead me into the week and into the life to come.****

***Pete Greig, Sabbath Blessing, petegreig.info

June 28 2021 (click for audio)

The Cry from the Cave

Today is Monday the 28th of June, and this week we are continuing our After the Fire series exploring how we hold on to God in the midst of earth-shaking experiences. Today we return to the story of Elijah and reflect on how he prays when all his hopes are dashed and nothing has gone to plan.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Gracious Father, give me diligence to seek You, and wisdom to find You today. May my ears hear Your voice; my eyes see Your goodness; and my tongue proclaim Your name as I commit my life to pleasing You. (Adapted from a prayer by Benedict of Nursia)

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's protection today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 91...

*Those who live in the shelter of the Most High
will find rest in the shadow of the Almighty.*

This I declare about the Lord:

*He alone is my refuge, my place of safety;
he is my God, and I trust him.*

Psalm 91:1-2

Pause and pray

Elijah has stood up to the Prophets of Baal. He has seen God move miraculously on Mount Carmel. He's experienced crushing disappointment when Israel did not turn back to God. And now he has run for his life to Mount Horeb. Today I join Elijah, hiding in a cave, pouring out his pain and disappointment to God...

...the word of the Lord came to him: 'What are you doing here, Elijah?'

He replied, 'I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.'

The Lord said, 'Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.'

1 Kings 19:9b-11a

There's no polish or performance to this prayer. It's just raw pain and deep disappointment. To talk to God like this Elijah has to do two things: face up to how he feels, and choose to trust that God wants to hear about it.

When I'm wrestling with pain or disappointment, it can be tempting to ignore or avoid my feelings. It's easy to perform my prayers, or spin my situation so it sounds better. But as Author Richard Rohr writes, 'If [I] do not transform [my] pain, [I] will most assuredly transmit it—usually to those closest to [me].' *

*Richard Rohr, Transforming Pain Devotional, October 17th 2018, <https://cac.org/transforming-pain-2018-10-17/>

Ask

Elijah's honesty invites God to begin the slow process of healing and transformation. What pain or disappointment am I carrying? Maybe I had dreams or plans canceled by pandemic restrictions. Have I lost my job, my community, or even someone I love?

God, help me face my feelings, especially the ones I've tried to bury. Without filter, I share them with You now.

Pause and pray

God, I name someone I know who helps others process or transform their pain and disappointment; maybe a pastor, a counselor or a therapist. Strengthen them and equip them by Your Spirit to accompany people as they journey toward wholeness.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your Word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

...the word of the Lord came to him: 'What are you doing here, Elijah?'

He replied, 'I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.'

The Lord said, 'Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.'

1 Kings 19:9b-11a

What word or phrase jumped out to me?

I'm struck by God's response to Elijah's complaint. He doesn't rebuke Elijah and he doesn't tell him to pull himself together. Instead, the God of all creation draws near. He 'passes by' the cave this broken man has hidden in.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

God, I drop my defenses, forget my filters and approach You with honesty today. I'm sorry for the times I've tried to fool You and myself. I trust in Your love for me.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me reminds me in Psalm 34:

*If [my] heart is broken, [I'll] find God right there;
if [I'm] kicked in the gut, he'll help [me] catch [my] breath.
Psalm 34:18 (MSG)*

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.

Amen.

June 29 2021 (click for audio)

The Apostle Peter: Hero of Mission and Prayer

today is Tuesday the 29th of June, a day when many around the world are remembering the life and death of the Apostle Peter

Those who pray with Lectio 365 will know that on Feast Days like today we pause from our usual rhythm to celebrate the stories and learn from the lives of heroes of faith, whose collective witness embodies our six practices at the heart of Lectio 365. These are: Prayer and Creativity, Justice and Hospitality, Learning and Mission. Today therefore, we are thanking God for the extraordinary example of Peter, an influential hero of mission and prayer.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

God of rescue and restoration, thank You for Your great and beautiful mission in the world. Here I am Lord, fill me with Your Spirit and send me.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's holiness today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 77...

*O God, your ways are holy.
Is there any god as mighty as you?
You are the God of great wonders!
You demonstrate your awesome power among the nations.
Psalm 77:13-14*

Pause and pray

Simon was a young Jewish fisherman who left his home, his profession and even his name behind to become one of Jesus' disciples. Simon, whom Jesus called Peter, went on to become one of Jesus' closest friends and a key witness to his life, death and resurrection. Today, as I celebrate Peter, I reflect on a famous moment from his life...

Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. 'It's a ghost,' they said, and cried out in fear. But Jesus immediately said to them: 'Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid.' 'Lord, if it's you,' Peter replied, 'tell me to come to you on the water.' 'Come,' he said.

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came towards Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, 'Lord, save me!' Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. 'You of little faith,' he said, 'why did you doubt?'

And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down.

Matthew 14:25-32

When I read this story, I often focus on Peter sinking into the sea, and I miss the significant decision he makes just before that. Does Peter stay in the safety of the boat, or does he risk his life to join Jesus on the water?

This isn't a story about Peter's faith failing. This is a story about a fisherman who had the courage to fix his eyes on Jesus and get out of his boat. Yes, Peter got wet; but he also got to experience a miracle.

Ask

Is Jesus inviting me to take a risk, to step out in faith on a new adventure with Him today?

Jesus, I take my eyes off my troubles and fix them firmly on You. I might get it wrong but I won't be intimidated because it feels risky. Give me the courage to go wherever You call me.

Pause and pray

I pray for someone I know who is taking a risk: maybe changing profession, moving to a new place or starting a new relationship.

Jesus, guide them. Help them see You more clearly than the challenges they ask.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage I take Peter's place in this story. I imagine the dark night, I feel the wind on my face, and I sense the swell of the water beneath the boat...

Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. 'It's a ghost,' they said, and cried out in fear.

But Jesus immediately said to them: 'Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid.' 'Lord, if it's you,' Peter replied, 'tell me to come to you on the water.'

'Come,' he said.

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came towards Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, 'Lord, save me!'

Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. 'You of little faith,' he said, 'why did you doubt?'

And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down.

Matthew 14:25-32

Peter famously denied that he knew Jesus three times during his trial, but he went on to be a key leader in the early church. Peter shared the good news of Jesus' resurrection and saw thousands saved. He advocated for the welcome of non-Jewish believers and saw the Church expand across nations. Peter is also likely to be the eye-witness source for the Gospel of Mark, the first account of Jesus' life to be written down.

Ultimately, this passionate, impulsive, risk-taking man was martyred for his faith. Not bad for someone who wrestled with doubt!

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Thank you, Jesus that You invite me, like Peter, to be me, nothing more and nothing less than a human being. I'm grateful that my doubts don't disqualify me from following You. Today, I choose to step out of my boat and I fix my eyes on You, whatever storms I may face.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Joshua:

...Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.
Joshua 1:9

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.

June 30 2021 (click for audio)

Earth, Wind and Fire

Today is Wednesday the 30th of June, and this week we are exploring how we lean into God during earth-shaking moments.

Together we will pray (**P.R.A.Y.**) each day – ‘P’: **PAUSING** to be still. ‘R’: **REJOICING** with a Psalm and **REFLECTING** on a Scripture. ‘A’: **ASKING** for God’s help and ‘Y’: **YIELDING** to His will, come what may.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Gracious Father, give me diligence to seek You, and wisdom to find You today. May my ears hear Your voice; my eyes see Your goodness; and my tongue proclaim Your name as I commit my life to pleasing You. (Adapted from a prayer by Benedict of Nursia)

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God’s protection today, joining with the ancient praise of all God’s people in the words of Psalm 91...

*[God] will rescue you from every trap
and protect you from deadly disease.
He will cover you with his feathers.
He will shelter you with his wings.
His faithful promises are your armor and protection.*
Psalm 91:3-4

Pause and pray

Today I reflect again on Elijah in the cave on Mount Horeb. The prophet has prayed an unflinching and honest prayer full of pain and disappointment. Now, God is drawing near...

The Lord said, ‘Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.’

Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.
1 Kings 19:11-13

Elijah fled to a place steeped in history. Mount Horeb was also known as Mount Sinai. It was on this mountain that God spoke to Moses from a burning bush (Ex 3). It was on this mountain that God descended before Israel in storm and fire, the ground trembling before His special presence (Ex 19). As Elijah waited in the cave, on this mountain of encounter, perhaps he was expecting God to arrive in the ways he had before: in rock-shattering wind, in mountain-shaking earthquakes or in consuming fire.

Ask

I pause and remember a significant moment when God felt particularly present with me.

God, I thank You for how I have been formed by my encounters with You. But, today, I take my eyes off the experience of my past, and I ask: how do You want to meet with me now?

Pause and pray

I pray for someone I know who is struggling to experience God's presence at the moment. Maybe they are beginning to have questions and doubts about their faith.

God, draw near to them. Make Your presence tangible and Your voice audible to them in some way today.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your Word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

The Lord said, 'Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.'

Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.

1 Kings 19:10-13

Despite his exhaustion and disappointment, Elijah patiently waited for the presence of God. He didn't just look for God in the ways He'd shown up in the past. He listened for where God was in the present. How can I wait patiently and attentively for God's presence and voice today?

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

God, I confess that I'm a creature of habit and I want You to speak and move in predictable ways. I surrender my attachment to what's familiar. I am hungry for an encounter with You. I yield my expectations and wait patiently for Your presence – however You want to meet with me.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in John:

My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand.

John 10:27-28

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.

Amen.