

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

May 2021

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Audio for Each Day in MP3 Format

[Month of May 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.

May 01 2021 (click for audio)

Bertha of Kent: Hero of Prayer

Today is Saturday the 1st of May, Feast of Queen Bertha of Kent.

On Feast Days we pause from praying the Bible 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 Queen Bertha, a courageous hero of 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

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 rejoice in God's goodness today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 13...

But I trust in your unfailing love.
I will rejoice because you have rescued me.
I will sing to the LORD
because he is good to me.
Psalm 13:5-6

Pause and pray

In the year 578 AD, a French princess called Bertha moved to Canterbury in the English kingdom of Kent to marry its ruler Æthelberht. Catholic Christianity had not yet come to the British Isles – Æthelberht was a pagan King - but his new bride brought with her a strong Christian faith. Seeking to be supportive, Æthelberht built Bertha a small chapel which she visited daily, praying diligently for the conversion of her non-Christian husband!

For 18 years Bertha's daily prayers for her husband went unanswered. She must surely sometimes have felt discouraged. But then in 596 AD a mission team arrived from Rome, sent by Pope Gregory the Great. Landing in Kent, they first preached the gospel to King Æthelberht who finally bowed his knee before the Sovereignty of Christ.

Within a single year it is estimated that more than 10,000 people had followed Æthelberht's example, converting to Christianity. On Christmas Day in 597 there was a mass baptism service. Canterbury inevitably became the base for the Catholic Church in England, while the indigenous Celtic church continued to flourish out of apostolic centers in the North such as the holy islands of Iona and

Lindisfarne. To this day, Canterbury is the spiritual home for 85 million Anglicans around the world and its Bishop is also recognized as the leader of the worldwide Anglican communion as Archbishop of Canterbury.

Bertha left no writings, and there is no record of her ever making a public speech or passing any laws. And yet through her faithfulness in prayer she had a huge and incredible impact on the evangelization not just of England but of the nations. What's more, her prayer chapel, dedicated to St Martin, is recognized by UNESCO as the oldest place of unbroken Christian worship and witness in the English-speaking world.

Bertha probably thought she was just praying for her husband, but she was, in fact, interceding for generations to come. The Lord heard the prayers she offered day after day in that chapel, and He took His time, using them 'to do immeasurably more than all [she could] ask or imagine.' (Eph. 3:20)

Ask

Thinking of a long-term unanswered prayer in my life, could it be that Satan is contesting my perseverance because God is working on an answer beyond anything I can 'ask or imagine'?

I use my imagination now to wonder what such an answer might be and turn my imagining into asking once again.

Pause and pray

Bertha's situation is not uncommon. Many men and women today continue to pray for their non-Christian spouses, sensing how significantly God could use them if they would humble themselves before the Lord.

I pray now for marriages where husbands and wives are not on the same page, spiritually.

Pause and pray

I pray now for the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, leader of the world's fourth largest denomination, doing one of the toughest jobs in the world. I ask the Lord to give him wisdom, courage and joy, and to revive the Anglican church once again.

Pause and pray

Yield

Yielding Prayer

A prayer from the 472-year-old Anglican Book of Common Prayer:

O LORD, our heavenly Father, Almighty and everlasting God, who hast safely brought us to the beginning of this day: Defend us in the same with thy mighty power; and grant that this day we fall into no sin, neither run into any kind of danger; but that all our doings may be ordered by thy governance, to do always that is righteous in thy sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

(The Order for Morning Prayer)

Yielding Promise

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

Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

Ephesians 6:18

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.

May 02 2021 (click for audio)

A Sabbath Prayer

Today is Sunday the 2nd of May and like every Sunday we take a break from our usual rhythm of Pausing, Rejoicing, Reflecting, Asking and Yielding to pray the Bible and embrace a day of rest.

Eugene Peterson describes Sabbath as 'a time to receive silence and let it deepen into gratitude'.*

*Eugene Peterson, Tell it Slant, p.82

And so, on this day of rest, as I prepare to pray, I settle into silence and allow thankfulness to bubble up inside.

Pause and pray

A prayer of contentment from Psalm 131:

'My heart is not proud, Lord,
my eyes are not haughty;
I do not concern myself with great matters
or things too wonderful for me.
But I have calmed and quietened myself,
I am like a weaned child with its mother;
like a weaned child I am content.
Israel, put your hope in the Lord
both now and for Evermore

In the silence of this moment, I express my deep gratitude for the Church:

Father, thank You for Your beautiful, multicultural, intergenerational family, gathering today in so many countries. Revive and sanctify us, I pray. Make us a house of prayer for all nations. And set our hearts on fire again with the good news of Your gospel.

I take a moment now to earth these big prayers locally by naming members of my own church, and friends who are finding life particularly tough

Pause and pray

I dedicate the coming week to Jesus:

Thank You, Father, for loving me with all Your heart, all Your soul and all Your mind.
Inspire me this week to love You more with all of mine.

Thank You, Jesus, for Your faithful and sacrificial friendship.
Help me this week to be a faithful and sacrificial friend like You.

Thank You, Holy Spirit, for listening to my many thoughts and words and dreams.
Still my soul this week to listen much more carefully to Yours.

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

May 03 2021 (click for audio)

Befriending Strangers

Today is Monday the 3rd of May and this week we continue to reflect upon 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

So far we've explored *loving God* through the practices of prayer and creativity. And in weeks to come we will focus on *loving other and loving the world* through three more of our practices: justice, learning and mission. But this week we will focus on how to *love other people* through the practice of hospitality.

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

A prayer from the fifth century AD by Augustine of Hippo:

*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.***

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

Rejoice and Reflect

I make myself at home today in God's presence, echoing a 3,200-year-old prayer of Moses recorded in Psalm 90:

*Lord, through all the generations
you have been our home!
Before the mountains were born,
before you gave birth to the earth and the world,
from beginning to end, you are God.
Psalm 90:1-2*

Pause and pray

Most of this week's meditations will be based on Romans 12, in which the apostle Paul depicts the reality of Christian love, not as an airy-fairy sentiment, but with a series of very practical challenges...

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual

fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

Romans 12:9-13

Do I hear that last sentence? Just two words: 'Practice hospitality'. It couldn't be a clearer challenge. But the original Greek is even stronger. The word *diōkontes* which is translated here as 'practice', literally means 'pursue' hospitality. Paul isn't just telling me to practice hospitality in some nice but slightly passive way, but to pursue it actively - chasing hard after hospitality with single-minded devotion.

Seventeen centuries ago, the Church Father Origen explained what this practically means: 'We are not just to receive the stranger when he comes to us,' he wrote, 'but actually to inquire after, and look carefully for, strangers, to pursue them and search them out everywhere, lest perchance somewhere they may sit in the streets or lie without a roof over their heads.'***

***Origen's commentary, cited in *C.E.B Cranfield, Romans*, vol II, p.640, footnote 1.

Ask

Have I become a little too self-contained over the last year? Has my home become my castle? With lock downs beginning to ease in many countries, how do I feel deep down about the prospect of swapping social distancing for the kind of relational proximity and active inclusion Origen prescribes?

Pause and pray

The Greek word for hospitality *philoxenos* combines the word *philos*, which means friend, and *xenos* meaning stranger. Hospitality literally means befriending strangers, not hanging out with those familiar to me.

And so I take a moment now to ask the Holy Spirit to show me someone a little outside of my usual friendship group – perhaps someone who doesn't yet know Jesus – with whom I might initiate friendship today

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to this provocative passage, I listen out carefully for the word or phrase that surprises or challenges me most...

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

Romans 12:9-13

Taking the phrase that challenged me most as a direct word from God, I simply take these moments now to respond to Him in prayer.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Father, I give my front door key to You. My house is Your home.

Bring whoever You want, whenever You want into my private space this week.

Jesus, I relinquish my schedule to You. My days are in Your hands.

Help me to welcome interruptions this week as gifts from You.

Spirit, I surrender my possessions to You. All my stuff belongs to You.

Help me this week to 'share with the Lord's people who are in need.' (Rom. 12:13)

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 book of Revelation:

Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.

Revelation 3:20

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.

[May 4 2021 \(click for audio\)](#)

Stranger Things

Today is tuesday the 4th of May. This week I am making space in my heart and my home for the Holy Spirit to challenge my lifestyle and shape my attitude towards hospitality.

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

A prayer from the fifth century AD by Augustine of Hippo:

*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.**

** 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 in the ancient song of all God’s people in the words of Psalm 5:

*Because of your unfailing love, I can enter your house;
I will worship at your Temple with deepest awe.
Lead me in the right path, O Lord,
or my enemies will conquer me.
Make your way plain for me to follow.
Psalm 5:7-8*

Pause and pray

In today’s reading I return to the apostle Paul’s challenging instructions on love and hospitality in Romans chapter 12...

*Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.
Romans 12:13-16*

Yesterday, I considered the fact that true hospitality is not just towards those who are already my friends but rather, and especially, towards those who are strangers. But in today's reading Paul goes further. Referencing Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:4,10) he says that I should bless strangers who are hostile and hateful ('those who persecute you'), and that I should show compassion to the brokenhearted ('those who mourn').

This is uncomfortable stuff. It's a very long way indeed from the pleasantness of polite dinner parties and the serenity of scented spare rooms. Less about making room in my home, more about making room in my heart to bless those who curse me and to love those whose brokenness drains and depletes me.

Ask

Thinking now of someone known to me who is mourning today, I imagine how they are feeling. Allowing myself to feel some of their sadness, I turn their pain into prayer.

Pause and pray

Who is persecuting me, or just giving me a hard time? Remembering how Jesus loved me before I loved Him, I take time to pray the kindest, biggest prayers imaginable over this difficult person's life.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to this challenging passage, I invite the Holy Spirit to go even deeper, searching my heart with the spotlight of His gaze:

Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

Romans 12:13-16

Why does Paul tell me not to be proud or conceited in a passage about hospitality? Because one of the greatest enemies of true hospitality is snobbery, a sense of entitlement, and an obsession with status. The Jerusalem Bible translates verse 16b, 'Never be condescending, but make real friends with the poor.'

Do I secretly consider myself better than those who are less popular, or less educated, or less spiritual than me? If all my friends are like me, is it possible that I am defined by status more than the Spirit? Whenever I hear someone being criticized or diminished and fail to stand up for them, could it be because I am more interested in receiving love and admiration from others, than in showing love and admiration to others?

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

*Father, I give my front door key to You. My house is Your home.
Bring whoever You want, whenever You want into my private space this week.
Jesus, I relinquish my schedule to You. My days are in Your hands.
Help me to welcome interruptions this week as gifts from You.
Spirit, I surrender my possessions to You. All my stuff belongs to You.
Help me this week to 'share with the Lord's people who are in need.' (Rom. 12:13)*

Yielding Promise

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

*No harm will overtake [me],
no disaster will come near [my] tent.
For he will command his angels concerning [me]
to guard [me] in all [my] ways.'
Psalm 91:10-11*

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.

May 05 2021 (click for audio)

My Sense of Offence

Today is Wednesday the 5th of Maay. Throughout this week I am making space for the Holy Spirit to challenge my lifestyle and shape my attitude towards the great biblical priority of hospitality.

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

A prayer from the fifth century AD by Augustine of Hippo:

*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.**

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

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's hospitality today, joining the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 27...

*The one thing I ask of the Lord—
the thing I seek most—
is to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,
delighting in the Lord's perfections
and meditating in his Temple.
Psalm 27:4*

Pause and pray

Once more today I return to Paul's instructions on love in Romans 12, picking up where I left off yesterday with some of his most challenging words so far...

Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord. On the contrary:

*'If your enemy is hungry, feed him;
if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.
In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.'
Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.
Romans 12:17-21*

How do I feel about Paul's stark teaching in these verses? Perhaps I find myself *disturbed by* the description of 'God's wrath', vengeance and burning coals? Isn't God meant to be loving and full of grace?

Or perhaps I feel *unsettled* by such a clear challenge to 'live at peace' with others and to 'overcome evil with good'. Am I supposed to let people walk all over me like a doormat?

Or perhaps I find myself *relieved* to be reminded that evil will not always prosper because judgment is real and the way of Jesus is going to win in the end.

Ask

The world seems angrier than ever. People seem ruder than ever. Terrible things are undoubtedly being done. It's easy to live my life with an underlying sense of incremental offense.

Is there a group of people against whom I nurse a grudge? Someone I can't forgive? A person in whose presence I am not 'at peace'?

Without trying to justify myself, I simply allow the Holy Spirit to speak to me now about my broken relationships.

Pause and pray

Which people are considered enemies or scapegoats by my nation? I take time now to pray God's blessing upon them and ask the Lord to raise up peacemakers at a governmental level to improve our relationships

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I visualize someone who has hurt me and apply each instruction to my relationship with them:

Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord. On the contrary:

'If your enemy is hungry, feed him;

if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.

In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.'

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Romans 12:17-21

Ancient Egyptians practiced a ritual in which a person who had committed some serious offense. would carry red-hot coals on their head as a public sign of repentance. It's entirely possible and indeed quite likely that when Paul describes heaping burning coals on the heads of my enemies here, he is referring to this ceremony.

In other words, he is not saying that by loving my enemies I can somehow make God's judgment upon them worse, but rather that by loving them I can bring them to a place of sincere repentance. Am I able to pray this for them now?

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Father, I give my front door key to You. My house is Your home.

Bring whoever You want, whenever You want into my private space this week.

Jesus, I relinquish my schedule to You. My days are in Your hands.

Help me to welcome interruptions this week as gifts from You.

Spirit, I surrender my possessions to You. All my stuff belongs to You.

Help me this week to 'share with the Lord's people who are in need.' (Rom. 12:13)

Yielding Promise

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

If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: the old has gone, the new is here!

2 Corinthians 5:17

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.

[May 06 2021 \(click for audio\)](#)

Unconditional Acceptance

Today is Thursday the 6th of May. This week I am consciously making space for the Holy Spirit to challenge my lifestyle and shape my attitude towards the great biblical priority of hospitality.

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

A prayer from the fifth century AD by Augustine of Hippo:

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.**

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

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice today in the place God has planted me in, and the faith he has planted in me, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 52:

*I am like an olive tree, thriving in the house of God.
I will always trust in God's unfailing love.
I will praise you forever, O God,
for what you have done.
I will trust in your good name
in the presence of your faithful people.
Psalm 52:8-9*

Pause and pray

So far this week, I have focused on the apostle Paul's call to show hospitality of heart towards strangers, but today's reading opens a new vista, calling me to cultivate an equally accommodating attitude towards my brothers and sisters in Christ....

*May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.
Romans 15:5-7*

In this beautiful benediction, the apostle Paul prays that my attitude towards other Christians would be as accepting as Christ's attitude towards me. This is an extraordinarily low bar!

Our unity is not to be based on believing precisely the same things; that would make us a sect; nor on behaving in precisely the same ways; that would make us a cult; but rather on belonging to the same Father through the unconditional acceptance of his son Jesus Christ: that's what makes us a family.

As Nicky Gumbel says, 'I used to look at other types of Christians and ask "What's wrong with them?" But these days I ask "What's right with them?" What can I learn from them? What do they have that I need?'

Ask

Why is it that I sometimes have more grace for non-Christians than I do for my brothers and sisters in Christ? Thinking now of a Christian who annoys me, I ask You Lord to give me eyes to see them the way You see them, and an ability to accept them the way You do too.

Pause and pray

I thank God now for a church or a denomination other than my own, asking the Father to bless them, and enjoying the smile on His face as I do so.

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.

May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

Romans 15:5-7

It's easy to miss the two key hinge phrases in this passage: 'so that' and 'in order to'. Paul prays for unity 'so that' with one mind and voice we may glorify God and 'in order to' bring him praise.

Whenever we acknowledge that there are indeed other rooms in the House of God, and other branches in his family tree, the result is praise and glory to the Lord. As the apostle John puts it, 'If we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.' (1 John 4:12)

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Father, I give my front door key to You. My house is Your home.

Bring whoever You want, whenever You want into my private space this week.

Jesus, I relinquish my schedule to You. My days are in Your hands.

Help me to welcome interruptions this week as gifts from You.

Spirit, I surrender my possessions to You. All my stuff belongs to You.

Help me this week to 'share with the Lord's people who are in need.' (Rom. 12:13)

Yielding Promise

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

Trust in [me] with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to [me], and [I] will make your paths straight.

Proverbs 3:5-6

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.

[May 07 2021 \(click for audio\)](#)

Hospitality At The End of The World

Today is Friday the 7th of May. Throughout this week we are making space in our hearts and our homes for the Holy Spirit to challenge our lifestyle and shape our attitudes towards the biblical priority of hospitality.

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

A prayer from the fifth century AD by Augustine of Hippo:

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.*

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

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in the bounty of God's house today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 84...

A single day in your courts
is better than a thousand anywhere else!
I would rather be a gatekeeper in the house of my God
than live the good life in the homes of the wicked.
For the Lord God is our sun and our shield.
He gives us grace and glory.
The Lord will withhold no good thing
from those who do what is right.
Psalm 84:10-11

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on the Apostle Peter's extraordinary exhortation to practice hospitality in 1 Peter 4...

The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.

To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

1 Peter 4:7-11

I love Peter's pragmatism in these verses. His exhortations to pray, to love, to serve, to speak and to offer hospitality all sound very worthy but they are tempered with such humanity and grace. The reason I am to love, he says, is to cover 'a multitude of sins'. Now that's not something I expect to hear apostles say!

Peter knows that it's entirely possible to do all the right things in the wrong way. I can love but fail to 'love deeply', with real grace (v8). I can offer hospitality, but with a resentful, grumbling attitude (v9). I can use the gifts of God, but to serve myself instead of others (v.10). I can speak for God, but without his authority (v11a). I can serve, but burn out doing so because I'm serving in my own strength instead of 'the strength God provides' (v11b).

Ask

Time to get really honest now: where am I doing the right thing in the wrong way? What am I doing that looks commendable to others, or makes me feel good about myself, but with an underlying attitude of harshness, grumbling, self-gratification, or self-sufficiency?

Instead of beating myself up now, I simply acknowledge these attitudes before the Lord and receive a fresh dose of His grace.

Pause and pray

Thinking now of someone whose attitude hurts, annoys or offends me, I pray the most loving blessing I can imagine over their lives Today.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I ask You, Holy Spirit, to highlight the particular word or phrase You are speaking over me today...

The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

1 Peter 4:7-11

I'm struck by the stark opening sentence of this passage: 'The end of all things is near'. It's easy to deride people who go around saying that 'the end is nigh', but it's deeply biblical to acknowledge that every generation since Jesus has run in parallel proximity with the inevitability of his return.

Recent world events have often reminded me of the fragility of life on earth. Peter gives me clear, practical instructions on how to live in such apocalyptic times. I may not understand everything that is going on in the world but I know how to 'love deeply' and our world needs love. I know how to 'pray'

at a time when our world surely needs prayer. And I know how to offer hospitality at a time when everyone is looking for home.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Father, I give my front door key to You. My house is Your home.
Bring whoever You want, whenever You want into my private space this week.
Jesus, I relinquish my schedule to You. My days are in Your hands.
Help me to welcome interruptions this week as gifts from You.
Spirit, I surrender my possessions to You. All my stuff belongs to You.
Help me this week to 'share with the Lord's people who are in need.' (Rom. 12:13)

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me promises to reward my faithfulness:

Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done.

Revelation 22:12

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.

May 08 2021 (click for audio)

Julian of Norwich – Hero of Prayer

Today is Saturday the 8th of May. Feast of the 14th century woman of prayer Julian of Norwich. On Feast Days we pause from praying the Bible to celebrate the stories and learn from the lives of heroes of faith, whose collective witness embodies the 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 Julian, a hero of Prayer and a pioneer of Creativity.

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 love and blessing towards me today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 30...

You have turned my mourning into joyful dancing.

*You have taken away my clothes of mourning and clothed me with joy,
that I might sing praises to you and not be silent.*

O Lord my God, I will give you thanks forever!

Psalm 30:11-12

Pause and pray

On this day in 1373 Julian of Norwich received her last rites. Just thirty years old, she was gravely ill and expected to die. But instead she received a series of sixteen visions primarily of Christ on the Cross. She was also completely healed. For the next twenty years Julian meditated in prayer upon the things she had seen, recording her reflections in a book, *Revelations of Divine Love*. In so doing, Julian became the first woman anywhere in the world to publish a book in the English language.

Julian's experiences drew her deeply into a life of prayer, choosing to live in almost complete solitude in a small cell built onto the side of St Julian's church (from which she took her name) in the bustling English city of Norwich. Her cell had two windows: one that looked into the church sanctuary so that she could participate in public worship and receive communion. And the other window looked out onto the street, so that people could come to her to receive prayer and counsel.

Julian's writing is mystical and marked profoundly by a message of God's all-encompassing love.

‘Would’st thou know the Lord’s meaning?’ she asks at one point. ‘Know it well. Love was his meaning.’*

*Robert Llewelyn (ed.), *Enfolded in Love*(Darton, Longman & Todd, 1980) p. 7

The quote for which Julian is best-known (because it features in a poem by T.S. Eliot), also captures her absolute certainty in the love of Christ: ‘All shall be well and all shall be well and all manner of things shall be well.’**

** T.S. Eliot, *Little Gidding /The Four Quartets*(Faber & Faber London, 1963) p.59

Julian’s writing is profound, occasionally perplexing, and loaded with insight. And since we’ve been exploring the biblical priority of hospitality this week in Lectio 365, I am going to reflect now on one of Julian’s insights into Christ’s hospitality towards us:

‘My mind was lifted up to heaven and I saw our Lord as a lord in his own house where he had called his much-loved friends and servants to a banquet. I saw that the Lord did not sit in one place but ranged throughout the house, filling it with joy and gladness. He himself, courteously and companionably, greeted and delighted his dear friends with love shining from his face like a marvelous melody that has no end. It is this look of love shining from God’s face that fills the heavens full of joy and gladness.’***

*** Robert Llewelyn (ed.), *Enfolded in Love*(Darton, Longman & Todd, 1980) p. 18

Jesus Christ is almost always depicted in the arts looking earnest, bored or mildly angry. But here in the earliest English book by a female writer we have a completely different depiction of Jesus and it’s really rather wonderful. Here He is hosting a party, moving from person to person with love shining from His face, filling the house with joy.

Ask

I use my imagination now to participate in the party Julian describes. What do I hear? Who else is there? And how do I feel as Jesus approaches me in the crowd and greets me by name? Do I see the love and joy on His face? Perhaps I detect a trace of some other emotion?

Pause and pray

I’m struck by the two windows Julian had in her cell. It’s a powerful picture of a life lived between the church and the city, heaven and earth, God and humanity. Walking now to the window that looks out onto the street, who do I see out there?

Holy Spirit, show me now just one person You want me to look upon with love now in prayer

Pause and pray

Yield

How do I feel about Julian’s craving for solitude in prayer? Is it a longing I share, or a prospect that secretly scares me?

Henri Nouwen describes solitude as ‘the place of the great struggle and the great encounter – the struggle against the compulsions of the false self, and the encounter with the loving God who offers

himself as the substance of the new self.'****

**** Henri J.M. Nouwen, *The Way of the Heart*(Ballantine 1981) p. 15-16

Is there a time today when I might make a little more space for solitude with my phone off and my attention focused on the Lord without distraction?

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

I pray now the words of Julian of Norwich:

*Lord, let not our souls be busy inns that have no room for thee or thine,
But quiet homes of prayer and praise, where thou mayest find fit company,
Where the needful cares of life are wisely ordered and put away,
And wide, sweet spaces kept for thee; where holy thoughts pass up and down
And fervent longings watch and wait thy coming. ******

***** *Julian of Norwich, Revelations of Divine Love (Penguin Classics) p.169*

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 gospel of John:

*I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.
John 15:14*

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.

May 09 2021 (click for audio)

A Sabbath Prayer

Today is Sunday the 9th of May. Throughout this last week the Lord has challenged my lifestyle and shaped my attitude in the realm of hospitality. But today I pause to receive hospitality from the Lord Himself, responding as I hear the surprising invitation he extends to his weary disciples: 'Come and have breakfast.' (John 21:12)

Pause and pray

Psalm 23 celebrates God's attentive and generous hospitality in every season of life:

You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
Surely your goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.
Psalm 23:5-6 (NIVUK)

Pause and pray

Lord, thank You for leading me by quiet waters, for feeding me at Your table, and for inviting me to dwell in Your house forever. Would You please give me opportunities this week to show true hospitality to others, and to do it generously, joyfully and without grumbling. Would You give me grace to embrace interruptions as gifts from You, and Help me to make space in my schedule, at my table, in my home and my heart for others. Amen.

In the silence of this moment, I remember the Church meeting today online or in person all around the world, asking that the House of God would increasingly become a home for every nation:

Father, thank You for Your beautiful, multicultural, intergenerational family, gathering today in so many countries. Forgive us our many failings, heal our deep divisions, and make us one. Let strangers be welcomed in Your house today. May sinners sense amazing grace. Let preachers and worship leaders step out of the limelight into the twilight to fix the spotlight entirely upon You.

I take a moment now to earth these big prayers locally, lifting my own leaders before the Lord and asking Him to make my own church family more welcoming today

Pause and pray

And now I accept the invitation of the Lord into this coming week, accepting His hospitality and offering Him mine in return:

Thank You, Father, for welcoming me home into Your heart.
Love me this week as I welcome You home into my heart.

Thank You, Jesus, for standing and knocking at the door of my life.

Befriend me again this week as I open the shameful and vulnerable parts of myself to You.

Thank You, Holy Spirit, for brooding over the chaos of my world and within my inner being,

Fill me this week as I seek to host You with generous attention and joy.

A Prayer of Augustine of Hippo:

O Lord God, grant your peace to us, for you have supplied us with all things—the peace of rest, the peace of the Sabbath which has no evening; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen*

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

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, www.petegreig.info

May 10 2021 (click for audio)

The Sower

Today is Monday the 10th of May, and we are pausing our recent series exploring The Three Loves at the heart of Christianity. Instead, over the next few days, we will reflect on Jesus' teaching about the Kingdom of God.

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

Creator God, who formed humanity from dust, breathe in me again. Revive me and sanctify me by the power of Your Spirit. Set my heart on fire with the good news of Your gospel.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's sovereignty today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 145...

I will exalt you, my God and King,
and praise your name forever and ever.
I will praise you every day;
yes, I will praise you forever.
Great is the Lord! He is most worthy of praise!
No one can measure his greatness.
Psalm 145:1-3

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on one of Jesus' parables (or stories) about the kingdom of God...

Then he told them many things in parables, saying: 'A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop – a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.

Matthew 13:3-8

Jesus goes on to explain that the seed is the message of God's kingdom, and the terrain describes the hearts of those who hear it. The path, with its impenetrable soil, is someone who hears the message but doesn't understand, so it's snatched away by the 'evil one' and they are left unchanged. The shallow, rocky soil is someone who hears the message and is initially enthusiastic, but doesn't deepen

their relationship with God, so they lack strength when their faith is tested. The thorny ground is someone whose heart is so overcrowded by worries and desires that the message of the kingdom has little room to grow, let alone become fruitful. And finally, there's the good soil, the person who hears and understands, who lets the message of the kingdom take root in their lives and produce an amazing harvest. (Matthew 13:18-23)

Ask

I usually think of this parable as a way to pray about non-Christians being receptive to the good news of Jesus. But today, I use this story to examine my own heart and my openness to Jesus and His kingdom...

Jesus, show me the hard places within me where I don't allow Your kingdom in. Soften my heart and expand my understanding.

Pause and pray

Jesus, show me where my faith is on shallow terrain. Lead me deeper in relationship with 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.

Then he told them many things in parables, saying: 'A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop – a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.

Matthew 13:3-8

The Kingdom of God is anywhere King Jesus reigns. Any place (or heart) where He is loved, welcomed, obeyed and imitated. So, at the beginning of this week reflecting on the kingdom, I pause and pray, very simply...

Your kingdom come and Your will be done, in my heart as it is in heaven.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Jesus, it's hard to surrender every part of my life to You. I often hold back little kingdoms within myself, reluctant to relinquish control. I need Your help. Teach me to surrender whole-heartedly. Deepen the roots of my faith.

Yielding Promise

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

I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

John 15:5

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.

May 11 2021 (click for audio)

The Mustard Seed

It's Tuesday the 11th of May, and today we are continuing to explore Jesus' teaching about the kingdom of heaven. Together we will pray (**P.R.A.Y.**) – '**P**': **PAUSING** to be still. '**R**': **REJOICING** with a Psalm and **REFLECTING** on a parable. '**A**': **ASKING** God to help us and others and '**Y**': **YIELDING** to His will 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

Creator God, who formed humanity from dust, breathe in me again. Revive me and sanctify me by the power of Your Spirit. Set my heart on fire with the good news of Your gospel.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's majesty today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 145...

*All of your works will thank you, Lord,
and your faithful followers will praise you.
They will speak of the glory of your kingdom;
they will give examples of your power.
They will tell about your mighty deeds
and about the majesty and glory of your reign.
Psalm 145:10-12*

Pause and pray

Today I continue to reflect on Jesus' parables about the Kingdom of God...

*[Jesus] told them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.'
Matthew 13:31-32*

For Jesus' listeners, trees were a familiar metaphor for empires or kingdoms. In the book of Ezekiel, the Assyrian Empire is described as a beautiful cedar, and the nations are depicted as birds and animals, sheltering in its shade (Ezekiel 31). In the book of Daniel, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon dreams of himself and his kingdom as a tree so tall it could be seen, 'to the ends of the earth', and again, the nations are the animals and birds finding food beneath its branches (Daniel 4).

Both of these earthly kingdoms, though impressive, came to an end, toppling like a chopped down tree.

In contrast, Jesus describes the kingdom of heaven not as a grand, fully grown tree, but as a humble seed so small it could be easily overlooked. When it's planted it grows so large that it can welcome and shelter all the nations.

Ask

I imagine myself as a bird in Jesus' parable. I live within His mustard-tree kingdom. What am I looking for within its branches today? What do I need? I pause and speak to the Father now.

Pause and pray

God, I pray for Your Church. Show me where we are distracted or attracted by the power and wealth of earthly empires. Teach us to embody the humility that characterizes Your kingdom. How can my church welcome and shelter the nations today?

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I imagine myself as the person planting a mustard seed...

[Jesus] told them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.'
Matthew 13:31-32

The mustard seed takes time to grow and work. Through Jesus, the kingdom of heaven has come to the earth, but two millennia later, I am still waiting for its fullness.

Theologian Tom Wright reminds me that, though I wait for the slow process of God's kingdom expansion to crescendo, I can wait with patience because I am, 'not like [someone] in a dark room wondering if anyone will ever come with a lighted candle, but like [someone] in early morning who know[s] that the sun has arisen and [is] now waiting for the full brightness of midday.' *

*Tom Wright, *Matthew for Everyone*, p170

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

God, I am often impatient and want Your plans to work on my schedule. I choose to surrender, and I place my trust in Your timing and Your goodness.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Psalmist reminds me in Psalm 93:

*God is King, robed and ruling,
God is robed and surging with strength.
And yes, the world is firm, immovable,
Your throne ever firm—you're Eternal!*
Psalm 93:1-2 (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.

May 12 2021 (click for audio)

Kingdom Adventure

It is Wednesday the 12th of May. From tomorrow we will be joining with the international prayer movement *Thy Kingdom Come* to prepare to celebrate Pentecost Sunday, and to ask God to empower us by His Spirit to be effective witnesses for Jesus. Today, we are continuing to reflect on Jesus' teaching about the kingdom.

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

Creator God, who formed humanity from dust, breathe in me again. Revive me and sanctify me by the power of Your Spirit. Set my heart on fire with the good news of Your gospel.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's majesty and 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

Today I return to Matthew chapter 13 and continue to reflect on Jesus' parables about the kingdom of heaven....

The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.
Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.
Matthew 13:44-46

Searching for the kingdom of heaven sounds mysterious and intriguing, like the plot of a jam-packed adventure novel or Netflix series. But in these stories Jesus is highlighting something quite challenging.

To find the riches of the kingdom – to receive the hidden treasure and sought-after pearls – I must be willing to actively search, and I must be willing to sacrificially relinquish all I consider mine, so that I can receive something immensely more valuable.

Ask

Where do I find myself in this kingdom adventure today? Am I searching? Am I sacrificing? Or am I celebrating the valuable riches of the kingdom of heaven?

God, You know me intimately and You love me unconditionally. Today, would You meet me in my searching, or in my sacrificing, or help me to praise You as I experience the goodness of Your love and presence.

Pause and pray

Is there someone who especially needs to see the treasure or pearls of the kingdom in the season they find themselves in? God, I invite You to give me a name as I pause to pray.

Lord, You are worth the search and the sacrifice. I invite You to make Yourself known to that person 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.

The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

Matthew 13:44-46

Dr Richard Glover writes, 'The growth of the church is not blind destiny, but the result of men's wise choice of the good and the beautiful.'* These parables are an invitation for me to choose to seek the kingdom of heaven; to put all of my resources into something of eternal value and great beauty.

*Dr Richard Glover, The Gospel of Matthew, (Zondervan) p154

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Jesus, I often coast through my faith without expending much effort. But You are worth my searching and my sacrifice. I choose to seek the beauty and magnificence of Your kingdom today, whatever it may cost me.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me encourages me in 2 Corinthians to...

...fix [my] eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

2 Corinthians 4:18

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.

May 13 (click for audio)

The Ascension of Jesus

Today is Thursday the 13th of May, and I am Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury.

I am hosting this special day of Lectio 365 to celebrate the Ascension of Jesus, and to invite you to join with Christians around the world in a prayer movement called Thy Kingdom Come.

From today, until Pentecost Sunday, we will be asking God to empower us by His Spirit to be effective witnesses for 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

Creator God, who formed humanity from dust, breathe in me again. Revive me and sanctify me by the power of Your Spirit. Set my heart on fire with the good news of Your gospel

Rejoice and Reflect

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

*The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it.
The world and all its people belong to him.
For he laid the earth's foundation on the seas
and built it on the ocean depths.
Who may climb the mountain of the Lord?
Who may stand in his holy place?
Only those whose hands and hearts are pure...
Psalm 24:1-4a*

Pause and pray

Ascension Day marks the moment when Jesus was taken up into heaven in full view of his disciples. Today I reflect on Jesus' final words to His friends, just before this extraordinary event...

Then they gathered round him and asked him, 'Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?'

He said to them: 'It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.'

*After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.
Acts 1:6-9*

The disciples had questions. What did Jesus' unexpected resurrection mean for Israel? But God's agenda was infinitely broader than the disciples realized, and they had an essential part to play. Jesus told them that they would be His witnesses to the nearest community (Jerusalem), to their region (Judea) and even further, to those they disliked (Samaria). And, the Holy Spirit would make it all possible. The Spirit would give them the power to live out God's extraordinary plan. The Spirit would propel them to the very ends of the earth.

Ask

Jesus, just as You breathed on Your disciples and gave them the gift of the Holy Spirit, would You breathe on me again (John 20:22). In the quiet of this moment, I receive Your Spirit.

Pause and pray

I think about my community, the mission field God has placed me in. The family, friends, neighbors and colleagues I share most of my life with.

God, I ask You to give me five names; people I know who don't know You. People You want me to pray for every day between now and Pentecost Sunday. Empower me by Your Spirit to be Your witness to them this week.

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.

Then they gathered round him and asked him, 'Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?'

He said to them: 'It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.'

After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.
Acts 1:6-9

The story of Jesus' ascension could feel like an ending, but Tom Wright reminds me that, 'the story continues, and [I am] a part of it!'^{*} Through the life of Jesus Christ, a small group of disciples experienced the presence of God in a particular way, in one place, for a few short years. Through Jesus' Ascension, and the subsequent sending of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, many people have experienced and will experience the presence of God in all places, for all people, for all time in and through the body of Christ, His Church.

^{*}Tom Wright, Acts for Everyone Part 1, page 3

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Jesus, thank You for the gift of Your life, the incredible love demonstrated through Your death on the cross, the victory won through Your resurrection from the tomb, and the power released through Your Ascension into heaven and the sending of Your Spirit. I yield myself completely to You. Spirit of Jesus, fill me and lead me today.

Yielding Promise

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

God exalted [Jesus] to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:9-11

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.

N.B. For more information and further prayer resources visit [Thy Kingdom Come](#)

May 14 2021 (click for audio)

Praise

Today is Friday the 14th of May. This week, we invite you to join with Christians around the world in a prayer movement called Thy Kingdom Come. As we prepare to celebrate Pentecost Sunday, we will be asking God to empower us by His Spirit to be effective witnesses for Jesus. Each day, throughout this time of Thy Kingdom Come there will be a different theme: today we reflect on praise.

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

Creator God, who formed humanity from dust, breathe in me again. Revive me and sanctify me by the power of Your Spirit. Set my heart on fire with the good news of Your gospel.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's presence today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 52...

*But I am like an olive tree
flourishing in the house of God;
I trust in God's unfailing love
for ever and ever.
For what you have done I will always praise you
in the presence of your faithful people.
And I will hope in your name,
for your name is good.
Psalm 52:8-9*

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on praise, and the interplay between light and dark where praise can flourish. The disciples faced the reality of the risen Jesus filling them with so much joy - but his departure perhaps filled them with conflicting emotions...

Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'
Matthew 28:16-20

The disciples are caught between worship and doubt. Theologian R T France notes that the Greek verb *distazō* used for doubt in this passage does not mean unbelief, but a state of uncertainty and hesitation.* Jesus is risen but He is leaving them; and the relief that He is alive is mixed with the sadness that He, their friend, will leave.

*R.T France, Tyndale New Testament commentary: Matthew. P.412

I can relate to the disciples' experience. In times of stress and confusion, my worship can be uncertain and hesitant.

Ask

Am I uncertain? Am I holding back my praise because I can't see the full picture?

God, meet me in uncertainty. I choose to praise You now, even in the waiting.

Pause and pray

The disciples were going through an incredible time of change.

Father, I pray for those I know who are in a time of change today. Lord, reveal yourself; speak into uncertainty; show them that You are the immutable, unchanging God.

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...

Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'

Matthew 28:16-20

The phrase that strikes me from this passage is 'and surely I am with you...' Jesus speaks into uncertainty with certainty. In times of uncertainty, I must remember that the promise of the presence of God is certain and true. Praise is the recognition that He is 'with me always, even to the end of the age'.

I will praise you because I am sure of this: You are present.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord, I confess that I am sometimes uncertain and hesitant in my praise of You. Forgive me for this. I will praise You because You do not abandon me. In all of my circumstances Your Spirit is present: Lord help me to be certain of this.

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:

So do not fear, for I am with you;
do not be dismayed, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you and help you;
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.
Isaiah 41:10

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.

N.B. For more information and further prayer resources visit [Thy Kingdom Come](#)

May 15 2021 (click for audio)

Thanks

It's Saturday the 15th of May, and this week we are preparing to celebrate Pentecost and joining with Christquans around the world in a prayer movement called Thy Kingdom Come.

Today we are reflecting on a moment shortly before Jesus' Ascension; and how we can give thanks.

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

Creator God, who formed humanity from dust, breathe in me again. Revive me and sanctify me by the power of Your Spirit. Set my heart on fire with the good news of Your gospel.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's goodness today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 100...

*Acknowledge that the Lord is God!
He made us, and we are his.
We are his people, the sheep of his pasture.
Enter his gates with thanksgiving;
go into his courts with praise.
Give thanks to him and praise his name.
For the Lord is good.
His unfailing love continues forever,
and his faithfulness continues to each generation.
Psalm 100:3-5*

Pause and pray

The Psalmist says to enter God's gates with thanksgiving. Today I reflect on a passage in Luke where the resurrected Jesus meets with some sad travelers on the road to Emmaus. They don't recognize him at first. Later when they share a meal, that suddenly changes as He gives thanks...

*When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"
Luke 24:30-32*

'Rub-a-dub-dub, thanks for the grub. Yaaay God!' Thanking God for a meal. Saying grace. It's a common practice. Often, I do it without thinking. And yet stopping to pause at any point in my day, to

be thankful for the gifts right in front of me, can potentially open my eyes to the presence of God in our midst.

Ask

God, I want to be more aware of Your presence and Your activity in my life – to see the unseen kingdom that is near me. And so I take time now to thank You for all the blessings around me.

Pause and pray

Author John Bowen says to ‘repent means literally to change your mind – to think differently about things’ and ‘to believe...means to have confidence in – and thus to commit yourself, to give your allegiance to something or someone.’*

*John Bowen, Professor of Evangelism, Wycliffe College – Unpublished, 2021

God, I pray for all of those, who like those on the Road to Emmaus are confused and looking for answers – who have a sense that there is something more to life than they are currently experiencing. I pray that they would repent – and believe. Open their eyes - show them that You are indeed near to them. In the quiet, I name ones I know before you 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.

When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?”

Luke 24:30-32

After their eyes were opened, Jesus’ astonished dinner companions realized that they had already been somewhat aware of God’s presence earlier. ‘Were not our hearts burning within us?’ they asked. It wasn’t heartburn. It was the presence of God; but they just hadn’t connected the dots. It took a pause. A moment of gratitude. Then the presence of Jesus is revealed.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

God I give You my heart – may I notice when it burns within me, when something deep inside me responds to Your presence and activity. I give You my lips – may thanksgiving pour forth from them regularly so that I can enter Your gates and Your courts and become aware of Your presence and Your kingdom. (Psalm 100)

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 107:

*...thank God for his marvelous love,
for his miracle mercy to the children he loves.
He poured great drafts of water down parched throats;
the starved and hungry got plenty to eat.
Psalm 107:8-9 (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.

N.B. For more information and further prayer resources visit [Thy Kingdom Come](#)

May 16 2021 (click for audio)

A Sabbath Prayer

It's Sunday the 16th of May. Since Ascension Day last Thursday, until Pentecost Sunday next weekend, we are joining with Christians all over the world in a global prayer movement called Thy Kingdom Come. Together we are asking God to empower us afresh by His Spirit to be effective witnesses for Jesus.

Today we are pausing our usual P.R.A.Y. rhythm to pray in a simpler way on this day of rest. Together we welcome the presence of God, examine our hearts and seek His Kingdom for our lives.

The scholar Walter Brueggemann describes the Sabbath as 'a decisive, concrete, visible way of opting for and aligning with the God of Rest'

* Walter Brueggemann, Sabbath as Resistance, p10

Pause and pray

So today, Lord, I realign myself to You using the powerful words of Psalm 51:

*Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
Do not cast me from your presence
or take your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.
Psalm 51:10-12 (NIV UK)*

Pause and pray

As I reflect on these words, I become aware of God's holiness, and conscious of my brokenness. So today, I pause to examine my heart and to say sorry. I repent of my sins.

Pause and pray

I continue to use the words of Psalm 51 as my prayer:

*Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion
blot out my transgressions.
Wash away all my iniquity
and cleanse me from my sin.
Psalm 51:1-2 (NIVUK)*

*God of grace, I give thanks for the cross. Thank You that when I confess my sins, You forgive me.
I receive Your forgiveness and welcome the Spirit afresh.*

Pause and pray

Turning my attention outwards, I pray for the Church all over the world.

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 to root this prayer in my local community. I name the friends and family members who don't yet know Your Love.

Pause and pray

I return one final time to David's words in Psalm 51:

*Then [we] will teach transgressors your ways,
so that sinners will turn back to you...
Open [our] lips, Lord,
and [our] mouths will declare your praise.
Psalm 51:13,15 (NIV UK)*

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**

N.B. For more information and further prayer resources visit [Thy Kingdom Come](#)

May 17 2021 (click for audio)

Offer

Today is Monday the 17th of May, and this week we are joining with Christians around the world for Thy Kingdom Come, a global prayer initiative led by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York at Pentecost. Together we are preparing ourselves for Pentecost Sunday, asking God to empower us afresh by His Spirit as effective witnesses for 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

Creator God, who formed humanity from dust, breathe in me again. Revive me and sanctify me by the power of Your Spirit. Set my heart on fire with the good news of Your gospel.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in the gift of God's salvation today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 116...

*'What can I offer the Lord
for all he has done for me?
I will lift up the cup of salvation
and praise the Lord's name for saving me.
I will keep my promises to the Lord
in the presence of all his people.'
Psalm 116:12-14*

Pause and pray

Shortly after the Day of Pentecost, Peter and John were on their way to a prayer meeting, when they met a man who could not walk. Today, I am reflecting on that joyous encounter...

*'One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer – at three in the afternoon. Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, 'Look at us!' So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them. Then Peter said, 'Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.' Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong.'
Acts 3:1-7*

The lame man's highest hope that day was simply for a generous handout, but Peter and John were carrying something far more valuable. Peter says 'What I have I give you'.

Throughout the Bible, God asks people to give 'what they do have'. Moses has a staff, and God uses it to perform signs in front of Pharaoh. (Exodus 4:2) A young boy has a picnic and Jesus uses it to feed 5000. (John 6:9-11) A widow has just two copper coins, and Jesus says it's the biggest gift of all. (Mark 12:41-44)

Is anyone asking anything of me at this time that I simply can't give? Do I dare to admit my lack of resources to them as clearly as Peter in this story? And what is it that 'I do have' to offer them instead?

Ask

Thinking of someone who needs more from me than I can offer them – in money, in emotional support, in wisdom, or in time – I give them the greater gift of my faith now, praying for them with all my heart.

Pause and pray

I love the way Peter says to the man 'Look at me'. Before he blesses him with a miracle he insists upon a real relational connection. I pray now for someone known to me whose disability sometimes makes them hide from the gaze of others, asking that they may feel seen and heard and given dignity today

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, where do I picture myself in this story? Perhaps I'm in the crowd looking on? Or maybe I'm Peter taking a lead? I could be the man who can't walk needing a miracle? Or perhaps I'm John, participating as a friend?

'One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer – at three in the afternoon. Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, 'Look at us!' So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them. Then Peter said, 'Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.' Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong.'

Acts 3:1-7

Some scholars worry about Peter saying here 'What I do have I give to you'. They would prefer him to have said 'What Jesus has given me I give to you'. His posture seems overly assured. But of course Peter has this extraordinary confidence because he has received authority directly from Jesus, firstly in word at the Great Commission, and secondly in Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.

In Peter's first letter, he writes, 'Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.' (1 Peter 4:10) Perhaps I need to stop comparing myself to others, stop worrying about what I haven't got, and start walking a little taller today, offering to others 'what I do have'.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Father God, I give up apologizing for the things I lack, and instead take hold today of the things You have placed in my hand. Using the Apostle Paul's words from Romans 12, I give you my 'everyday, ordinary life – my sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life - and I place it before You as an offering' once again today. (Adapted from Romans 12:1-2, The Message)

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, I...

...say with confidence, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?' Hebrews 13:6

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.*

N.B. For more information and further prayer resources visit [Thy Kingdom Come](#)

May 18 2021 (click for audio)

Pray for...

Today is Tuesday the 18th of May, and this week we are preparing ourselves to celebrate Pentecost Sunday and asking God to empower us by His Spirit to be effective witnesses for Jesus.

Together we will pray **(P.R.A.Y.)** each day – **‘P’: PAUSING** to be still. **‘R’: REJOICING** with a Psalm and **REFLECTING** on a story about the early church. **‘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

Creator God, who formed humanity from dust, breathe in me again. Revive me and sanctify me by the power of Your Spirit. Set my heart on fire with the good news of Your gospel.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God’s loving attention today, joining with the ancient praise of all God’s people in the words of Psalm 33...

*The Lord looks down from heaven
and sees the whole human race.
From his throne he observes
all who live on the earth.
He made their hearts,
so he understands everything they do.
Psalm 33:13-15*

Pause and pray

Yesterday I reflected on the healing of a man who couldn’t walk. Today I am exploring the aftershocks of that miraculous moment and Peter’s subsequent preaching to an astonished crowd. In response the chief priests imprisoned Peter and John and commanded them, ‘not to speak or teach... in the name of Jesus.’ (Acts 4:18)

On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. ‘Sovereign Lord,’ they said, ‘you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David:

*“‘Why do the nations rage
and the peoples plot in vain?*

*The kings of the earth rise up
and the rulers band together
against the Lord
and against his anointed one."*

...Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.'

Acts 4:23-26, 29-30

I imagine myself standing among the believers listening as Peter and John share their story. How do I feel?

Am I amazed at God's power?

Or am I frightened by the opposition of powerful people?

As I take it all in a prayer begins to rise within our group. A prayer of faith that takes my eyes off the threat we face, and fixes them firmly onto the 'Sovereign Lord,' who 'made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them.'

Ask

Am I intimidated by the criticism and opposition from others when I talk about Jesus? Or, do the greatest challenges to sharing my faith come from within? Do I struggle with embarrassment, not wanting to seem weird or make things uncomfortable?

God, search my heart and show me what's stopping me from speaking about Jesus.

Pause and pray

Is there someone I want to share my faith in Jesus with but for some reason I've been holding back? I pray for them now.

God, give me an opportunity to talk about Jesus with them this week.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage I imagine myself again as one of the believers, hearing Peter and John's report and joining in with the prayer of those present...

On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. 'Sovereign Lord,' they said, 'you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David:

*“Why do the nations rage
and the peoples plot in vain?
The kings of the earth rise up
and the rulers band together
against the Lord
and against his anointed one.”*

...Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.’

Acts 4:23-26, 29-30

If I were with Peter and John facing opposition from the chief priests and elders, I would probably be praying, ‘God, save us!’ Or, ‘Lord, stop them!’ But these believers don’t ask for God to change their circumstance. Instead, they ask God to empower them in the midst of challenge to speak about Jesus without fear.

Their request is immediately answered. ‘After they prayed,’ for the second time in the book of Acts, ‘the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.’ (Acts 4:31)

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

God, I confess that I sometimes hold back from sharing Jesus with others. I am sorry. I make the prayer of these early believers my own. Enable me to ‘speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.’

Yielding Promise

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

*Blessed are you when people hate you,
when they exclude you and insult you
and reject your name as evil,
because of the Son of Man.
Luke 6:22*

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.

N.B. For more information and further prayer resources visit [Thy Kingdom Come](#)

May 19 2021 (click for audio)

Help

Today is Wednesday the 19th of May, and this week we are joining with Christians around the world to prepare ourselves to celebrate Pentecost Sunday as part of the prayer movement Thy Kingdom Come. Together we are asking God to empower us by His Spirit to be effective witnesses for 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

Creator God, who formed humanity from dust, breathe in me again. Revive me and sanctify me by the power of Your Spirit. Set my heart on fire with the good news of Your gospel.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in the many ways that God helps today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 34...

*I prayed to the Lord, and he answered me.
He freed me from all my fears.
Those who look to him for help will be radiant with joy;
no shadow of shame will darken their faces.
In my desperation I prayed, and the Lord listened;
he saved me from all my troubles.
For the angel of the Lord is a guard;
he surrounds and defends all who fear him.
Psalm 34:4-7*

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on how Luke describes the early days of the new-born church, immediately after the Day of Pentecost.

*The [believers] devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.
Acts 2:42-47*

There's lots about these few verses that I find inspiring and challenging. They raise lots of questions, like: What did it look like for the community of believers to have 'everything in common'? Did no-one have *anything* of their own? And, who decided what should be sold?

What strikes me today though is that the community of believers were 'together' enough to know one another's needs, and be sacrificial in the way that they helped.

I realize that I don't know a lot about the community of believers that I'm part of. And I don't know a lot about those who live in my street either. I don't know much about what they need, nor what I can do to help.

Ask

As I think about the friends and neighbors who I do know, are any of them in particular need today? Who is isolated or lonely? Who is in financial need? Who feels overwhelmed right now?

Heavenly Father, show me what I can do to help, even if it means a bit of personal sacrifice.

Pause and pray

I think about those who have been helping others during the pandemic; especially young carers, health visitors and other medical staff, mental health teams, youth workers, and so many more.

Holy Spirit, Divine Helper, I ask You to help those who have been helping others. Meet their needs. Give them special rest.

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.

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Acts 2:42-47

In this action-packed passage, Luke lists what it looks like when God's Kingdom comes. Believers love one another and learn together. They pray and share in the Lord's Supper together, praising God with grateful hearts. Miracles take place. People are helped and their needs are met – and the community of believers grows because new people encounter the risen Jesus.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord Jesus, as I imagine the daily life of that first community of believers, I pray: let Your Kingdom Come in my community too. I yield myself to You once again. Help me to seek first Your Kingdom, and to play my part.

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's Gospel that He:

*...will ask the Father to send [me] the Holy Spirit who will help [me] and always be with [me].
John 14:16 (CEV)*

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.

N.B. For more information and further prayer resources visit [Thy Kingdom Come](#)

May 20 2021 (click for audio)

Adore

Today is Thursday the 20th of May, and this week we are joining with Christians around the world to prepare ourselves to celebrate Pentecost Sunday and asking God to empower us by His Spirit to be effective witnesses for 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

Creator God, who formed humanity from dust, breathe in me again. Revive me and sanctify me by the power of Your Spirit. Set my heart on fire with the good news of Your gospel.

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 103...

*Let all that I am praise the Lord;
with my whole heart, I will praise his holy name.
Let all that I am praise the Lord;
may I never forget the good things he does for me.
He forgives all my sins
and heals all my diseases.
Psalm 103:1-5*

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on the moment directly after Jesus' ascension to heaven. I join the disciples as they react to the incredible sight they have just witnessed...

They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 'Men of Galilee,' they said, 'why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.'

Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city. When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

Acts 1:10-14

I would love to ask the disciples what they felt as they watched their resurrected-from-the-dead teacher, leader, friend and Savior rise into the heavens from the earth. Perhaps they were confused. Maybe they were excited. Possibly, they were afraid.

In the middle of this unforeseen and monumental event, the disciples united in one simple action; they lifted their eyes; gazed into the sky, and were unable to look back down. A whole-body reaction to the wonder and awe of the risen Jesus.

Ask

When was the last time the wonder of Jesus provoked a whole-body reaction in me? Is there anything in my life – perhaps my fear or worry - that lowers my eyes, and prevents my adoration of the risen Lord?

Jesus, I let go of those things which prevent me from adoring You with my whole body, mind and soul.

Pause and pray

Lord, I pray for my church community. Help us gather together, physically or virtually, with the same expectation that Your Spirit is present. Spark awe and wonder in our church communities. Help us to lift our eyes upwards in this uncertain landscape and adore You together, just as the disciples did. I name my church leaders and those who help us worship; fill them afresh with Your Spirit.

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.

They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ‘Men of Galilee,’ they said, ‘why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.’

Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day’s walk from the city. When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

Acts 1:10-14

The word ‘adore’ comes from the Latin words ‘ad’ + ‘ōrāre’, which mean to ask or to pray. After witnessing the ascension of Jesus, the natural reaction of this early church community is to join together in adoration; in constant prayer to God.

After seeing the magnificence of the resurrected Jesus; they continued to seek Him, after his ascension, on their knees.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord of all, I come before You in adoration, no matter how I feel or what lies ahead of me today. I pause now to lift my eyes and my heart as an offering to You.

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 book of Jeremiah:

Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

Jeremiah 29:12-13

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.

N.B. For more information and further prayer resources visit [Thy Kingdom Come](#)

May 21 2021 (click for audio)

Celebrate

It's Friday the 21st of May, and this week we are joining with Christians from different streams of the Church across the globe as part of the Thy Kingdom Come movement.

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

Creator God, who formed humanity from dust, breathe in me again. Revive me and sanctify me by the power of Your Spirit. Set my heart on fire with the good news of Your gospel.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's wonderful deeds 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 the dramatic conclusion to the book of Luke.

When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them.

While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.

Luke 24:50-53

What a 40 days it has been! After the resurrection, Jesus appeared many times to His disciples – appearing in locked rooms, showing he still knew where to catch fish and cooking breakfast on the beach. Jesus restored their souls after the trauma of the crucifixion and re-commissioned them to go into all the world, to share the good news of the kingdom. It all culminates in a dramatic day when right in front of their eyes, He is taken up to heaven. They have much cause for celebration!

Ask

God I have much cause to celebrate. You have rescued me from the dominion of darkness, and given me Jesus; inviting me into a way of life that transforms me and offers the hope of transformation to all of those around me. I name all of the ways You have been good to me, and I celebrate.

Pause and pray

God I pray for all those whose lives are marked by trauma. Children and spouses in abusive family situations. Refugees, victims of war and human trafficking. Jesus, would You reveal Yourself. Would You redeem their lives and rescue them. Would You give them meaning and purpose – a life with the King and in Your good kingdom. And Jesus, perhaps would You use me to do it? In the quiet I name some before You now.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I imagine myself in the scene. Standing under a palm tree up the hill near Bethany. The sun is shining. His hands are stretched out in blessing. What do I see and hear as He blesses me? How do I feel in that moment when He is taken up into heaven?

When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.

Luke 24:50-53

Shock and awe, but not the kind caused by war. God's kingdom is established in love, in blessing, in a life laid down, in the power of God revealed through one who became obedient unto death and then was exalted to the highest place. (Philippians 2:8-9)

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Jesus I receive Your blessing over my life. I let it sink in. I receive joy – right down to the very core of me. I respond in celebration. Jesus Christ, risen King, ascended to heaven and seated at the right hand of the Father, I worship You today and always.

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 16:

*I keep my eyes always on the Lord.
With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken.
Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;
my body also will rest secure,
because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead,
nor will you let your faithful one see decay.*

Psalm 16:8-10

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.

May 22 2021 (click for audio)

Silence and Waiting

Today is Saturday the 22nd of May, and this is the penultimate day in our thy Kingdom Come series. Together we are asking God to empower us by His Spirit to be effective witnesses for Jesus, and preparing ourselves to celebrate Pentecost Sunday tomorrow and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

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

Creator God, who formed humanity from dust, breathe in me again. Revive me and sanctify me by the power of Your Spirit. Set my heart on fire with the good news of Your gospel.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's promises today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 27...

I remain confident of this:
I will see the goodness of the Lord
in the land of the living.
Wait for the Lord
be strong and take heart
and wait for the Lord
Psalm 27: 13-14

Pause and pray

It is almost Pentecost Sunday. But today, as I stand on the brink of a new world, in anticipation of all that is to come, I reflect on the silence before the shaking, the waiting before the wind...

After his suffering, [Jesus] presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: 'Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'
Acts 1:3-5

I wonder how the disciples felt in those few days between Jesus' ascension to Heaven and the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost. Jesus has told them to stay in Jerusalem and wait. They know the promise is coming, but in the meantime, they must be patient.

Waiting can be incredibly challenging – especially in the midst of a busy and chaotic world! But it is an important part of every spiritual journey. It is often when I am waiting, particularly when I quiet myself and wait in silent expectation, that God speaks in the most miraculous ways. Mother Teresa once said: ‘Souls of prayer are souls of great silence.’*

* Mother Teresa, Essential Writings, (United Kingdom: Orbis Books 2001) p63

Ask

When was the last time my soul was truly silent, waiting expectantly before God?

I take a moment now to quiet my busy mind, settle my anxious heart, still my restless body. I wait in silence for You to speak, Lord.

Pause and pray

Waiting for the fulfillment of God’s promises can be painful and difficult.

God as I think of a loved one who is in a season of waiting, I pray now that You would speak into their silence.

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 his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: ‘Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’
Acts 1:3-5

I think about the silence which enveloped Elijah as he waited in the cleft of rock for God to draw near. Wind-shook, rubbing ash from his eyes after the earthquake, hurricane and fire, and in the quietness of a whisper, God finally speaks (1 Kings 19).

And I think of the disciples, huddled together in a room in Jerusalem, waiting, hoping; living in the pregnant pause before God drew near in a special way and the world would change forever.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Father in my waiting, give me hope. Jesus in my wanting, give me strength. And Spirit in my longing, give me the truth of God’s promises written over my life. Help me today to embrace the silence which precedes and invites the rushing wind and fire of Your presence. In stillness, I wait for you, O, Lord.

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:

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you for ever – the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

John 14:16-17

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.

N.B. For more information and further prayer resources visit [Thy Kingdom Come](#)

May 23 2021 (click for audio)

Pentecost Sunday

Today is Sunday the 23rd of May and I am Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury. I am hosting this special day of Lectio 365 to celebrate Pentecost Sunday as part of the world prayer movement Thy Kingdom Come. For the past 11 days, millions of Christians around the world have been asking God to empower us by His Spirit to be effective witnesses for Jesus. Though many of us cannot gather in large numbers to mark this day, we join together from home to home, to unite in praying for God's kingdom to come, and His will to be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.

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

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice today in God's goodness, 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

Today I reflect on the story of Pentecost when the promised Holy Spirit fell on the disciples...

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Acts 2:1-4

It's interesting that the Holy Spirit fills the house first and only then, a few moments later, the people within it. Clearly, it's possible for places to host the presence of God as well as people.

Ask

Thank You Father that You love to 'give the Holy Spirit to those who ask...' (Luke 11:13). And so, on this

very special day, I invite You now, Spirit of the Living God, to enter my home and to fill me too in powerful, disruptive ways.

Pause and pray

When Jesus predicted Pentecost He said: 'You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.' (Acts 1:8)

I pray now for a renewed mobilization of Spirit-empowered mission; an outpouring of fresh confidence in the gospel this Pentecost. Lord, I name before You now people I know who do not yet know You, and ask You to give me opportunities to be Your witness to them.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to Acts chapter 2, I notice the response of the crowds who witnessed the Spirit-filled followers of Jesus bursting out onto the streets of Jerusalem...

Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. Utterly amazed, they asked: 'Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs – we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!' Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, 'What does this mean?'

Acts 2:5-12

The confusion on the streets of Jerusalem reminds me of the story of the Tower of Babel. In Genesis 11 I read about a community of people who tried to make a name for themselves by building a tower, but they were scattered in confusion as God turned one language into many. At Pentecost, a community of people acting in the name of Jesus, miraculously spoke many languages – making the good news understandable and accessible to all.

Today, the Church worldwide is the most culturally and socially diverse community on earth. Day by day we conspire to follow Jesus by serving, forgiving and creating beauty. Around the world we seek to educate, liberate and advocate for those who have no voice. The gospel has inspired artists from Michelangelo to Aretha Franklin, activists from William Wilberforce to Dr Martin Luther King, scientists from the physicist Sir Isaac Newton to the geneticist Francis Collins.

And so, as Your people gather around the world today, I thank You, Lord, for Your beautiful, multicultural, intergenerational family. Revive us, sanctify us and unite us once again I pray. Forgive our many sins and make us holy. Set our hearts on fire again with the good news of Your gospel.

Yielding Prayer

Finally, I gather up all these prayers in the words of a great hymn written by William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army...

Thou Christ of burning, cleansing flame,
Thy blood-bought gift today we claim,
Look down and see this waiting host,
We want another Pentecost,
Send the fire!
Send the fire!
Send the fire!

Yielding Promise

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

...the Spirit [I] received brought about [my] adoption... And by him [I] cry, 'Abba, Father.'
Romans 8:15b

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.*
Amen

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

May 24 2021 (click for audio)

John Wesley – Hero of Mission

It's Monday the 24th of May. Today we're celebrating the life of the English revivalist and the founder of Methodism, John Wesley. It was his encounter with the Holy Spirit on this day in 1738 that triggered 'the greatest British spiritual awakening for perhaps a 1000 years'.*

*Pete Greig, *Dirty Glory*, p269

Regular users of the Lectio 365 app will know that we occasionally pause from praying the Bible 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. We call these Feast Days.

Today we are thanking God for the extraordinary example of John Wesley a pioneering hero 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

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 faithfulness today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 40...

I have not kept the good news of your justice hidden in my heart;

I have talked about your faithfulness and saving power.

I have told everyone in the great assembly

of your unfailing love and faithfulness.

Psalm 40:10

Pause and pray

As a young man John Wesley was a deeply committed Anglican Priest; but one given to crushing legalism. Unsure of God's love, he compulsively ranked and graded his spiritual performance in an attempt to gain God's favor.

After a spell as a missionary to the American colonies ended in burnout and disgrace, he returned to England exhausted and depressed.

Reluctantly, he agreed to attend a Moravian worship meeting in Aldersgate Street, London, where he met with God in a way that transformed him. In his own words, he later described his 'Aldersgate Experience' ...

*'In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street... About a quarter before nine, while [the preacher] was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation, and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.'***

***John and Charles Wesley, Selected Prayers, Hymns, Journal Notes, Sermons, Letters and Treatises, (1981) p20*

Legalism fell away, replaced by a deep assurance of God's love for him, and a burning passion to share that love.

Wesley preached about the need to personally encounter Jesus – a message which barred him from most Anglican churches. So, he took the deeply radical step of preaching not from a pulpit but out in the streets and fields. Joining with other revivalists, he called the nation's poor to follow Christ – which they did in their tens of thousands.

In his lifetime he traveled 250,000 miles on horseback to teach all over the country. He preached around 40,000 sermons and planted radical communities of prayer, mission and justice across Britain.

John Wesley was a champion of the poor and a campaigner against the slave trade. Disregarding hierarchies of class and sex, he trained non-ordained men and, radically for his day, women to disciple the many people coming to Jesus.

Ask

Is there someone I know who I've felt afraid to talk with about Jesus? Or a situation where I've felt afraid to stand up for Jesus?

God, I am inspired by John Wesley's example for whom no person or place was off limits to the gospel. I ask You to give me extra courage today.

Pause and pray

The slave trade did not end in Wesley's day. It is estimated that more than 40 million people are in slavery today.***

*** <https://hopeforjustice.org/modern-slavery/>

Lord, I take a few moments now to pray for the lawyers, the police and the counselors who are fighting to free people from slavery today.

Pause and pray

Yield

I am struck by the fact an evangelist as successful as John Wesley first endured disappointment and shame during his mission in America.

Returning to England, it would have been easy for him to give up, but he didn't. In dragging himself to the worship meeting at Aldersgate, even when he didn't feel like it, John Wesley kept himself open to God.

When I endure setbacks and disappointments, how do I respond? Do I withdraw from God or from my church community?

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord, when disappointments and setbacks come – and I know they will – I choose not to withdraw from You or my community. I choose to continue to show up and open myself to You.

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:

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.

Matthew 28:19

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.

May 25 2021 (click for audio)

One Year Anniversary of the Death of George Floyd

It's Tuesday the 25th of May, the one-year anniversary of the death of George Floyd.

Today's devotional contains language referencing the death of George Floyd – some may find it upsetting.

It's Tuesday the 25th of May, the one-year anniversary of the death of George Floyd. I'm Lisa Koons, the National Prayer Director for 24-7 Prayer in the USA. Today I am reflecting on the racial justice movement born in the wake of his death and the teaching of Jesus about the pursuit of 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 unfailing love 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

George Floyd. Cuffed. Pinned down. Gasping for mercy and breath. The knee and the indifference of his oppressor stealing away his life. Authorities present, refusing to intervene. The crowd, fearing reprisal, left only with the option to shout disdain and record the scene.

In the aftermath – the ongoing swell of protests spilling into many nations - filling streets with signs and fists and cries for justice.

One year later, with many changes made and many more changes still needed, I reflect on a parable told by Jesus, that challenges me to faithfulness in work and in prayer for justice...

He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.'

"For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care what people think, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually come and attack me!'"

And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off?"

Luke 18:2-7

As I reflect on this text, I'm encouraged to work tenaciously for justice. But much more so, I'm provoked to pray tenaciously for justice. This season calls out for clenched fists raised in peaceful protest. But the solutions call out for raised hands clasped in persistent prayer.

Even as this passage confirms my call to seize this historic moment and discomfort those withholding justice, it reminds me where the real power of social transformation is found; with God who invites me to pray with perseverance, and not stop until the tide is turned.

Ask

God, I ask You to show me how You want me to show up, work and pray persistently for racial righteousness and equity in my community and in my nation.

Pause and pray

God, I pause now and pray a prayer that can only be answered by You. Eradicate racism from this world. Heal those most impacted by it. Reconcile us, make us one as You and the Father are one. John 17:11

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.

He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.'"

"For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care what people think, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually come and attack me!'"

And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off?"

Luke 18:2-7

Despite my own anger and grief at the racism I and many others live with, in this historic season of racial protests the justice I find myself pursuing – like the widow in Jesus’ story – isn’t hateful or vengeful, but redemptive in its aims.

Like others, my hope is for racial reconciliation and equity breaking out, not just in a single institution, but in the whole of society; in all of its systems, structures and souls.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Here I am God, send me. Use me to help eradicate racism. Use me to heal my brothers and sisters who have been impacted by it. And send me as an agent of reconciliation to the people and places where it is needed most.

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:

*...if you spend yourselves on behalf of the hungry
and satisfy the needs of the oppressed,
then your light will rise in the darkness,
and your night will become like the noonday.
The Lord will guide you always;
he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land
and will strengthen your frame.
Isaiah 58:10-11*

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.*

N.B. Find out more about 24-7 Prayer's invitation to recognize, repent and reconcile around issues of Racial justice by watching our video on [Race & Reconciliation](#)

May 26 2021 (click for audio)

A Right Heart

Today is Wednesday the 26th of May. As part of ur season exploring the Three Loves that lie at the heart of Christian discipleship – Love for God, Love for Others, and Love for the World – this week we are reflecting on how we Love Others through the practice of Justice, as expressed in the book of James.

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

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, edited by J. Manning Potts, 1953*

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God’s mercy and compassion today, joining with the ancient praise of all God’s people in the words of Psalm 145:

*The Lord is merciful and compassionate,
slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love.
The Lord is good to everyone.
He showers compassion on all his creation.
Psalm 145:8-9*

Pause and pray

James was one of the leaders of the Early Church. Today, I am reflecting on his letter to believers, who were experiencing persecution, and were hurting and angry.

*My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent, and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.
James 1:19-21*

When I read James’ warning about anger, my first instinct is, ‘Ah! But what about righteous anger?’

In the heat of the moment all anger feels righteous! To my shame, my angry response to genuine injustice and my angry response to having my own desires frustrated are uncomfortably similar.

If I am serious about loving others and seeking justice, I must slow down and check my own sinfulness. Only then can I respond in ways that bring righteousness.

Ask

Lord, forgive me for indulging in knee-jerk reactions that feel like righteousness, but which are more about my ego. When my buttons are pushed, teach me to respond as You do – being slow to anger.

Pause and pray

Lord, what story in the news today makes me angry? Which story should make me angry, because it makes You angry? I cry out to You now, God of Justice, deliver us from Evil.

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.

My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent, and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

James 1:19-21

How often do I feel the need to 'get in first' or to have the last word in an argument? Either in person or online? Often, I'm not 'quick to listen'. Sometimes, I'm not really listening at all to the person I am in disagreement with. I'm too busy formulating clever replies. What would happen if I 'chose to lose' in these situations, to be 'quicker to listen' rather than speak or defend myself?

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord, I lay down my right to try and win every disagreement. Using James' words from today's passage, Lord, make me quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry. May my life produce the righteousness that You desire.

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 5:

... I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

Matthew 5:44

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.

May 27 2021 (click for audio)

Love in Practice

Today is Thursday the 27th of May. As part of our season exploring the three Loves that lie at the heart of Christian discipleship – Love for God, Love for Others, and Love for the World - this week we are reflecting on how we Love Others through the practice of Justice as expressed in the book of James.

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, edited by J. Manning Potts, 1953*

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's forgiveness today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 130:

Lord, if you kept a record of our sins,

who, O Lord, could ever survive?

But you offer forgiveness,

that we might learn to fear you.

Psalm 130:3-4

Pause and pray

In his letter to the Early Church, James urges the believers not to take the easy route by blending in with the culture around them. It is not enough to quietly believe Jesus' teaching in their hearts...

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom and continues in it – not forgetting what they have heard but doing it – they will be blessed in what they do.

James 1:22-25

Reflecting on this passage in the light of Jesus' commandment to love my neighbor means that simply *believing* that the poor and oppressed deserve justice is not enough. I need to *seek* justice – I need to speak out and take action, even if it costs me.

I confess that I can take pride in my beliefs about justice without doing anything. God is not impressed by the opinions I hold, the things I 'like' on social media. James says I will be blessed when I don't merely listen to commands like 'love your neighbor' but do what they say.

Ask

What issue of injustice am I particularly aware of today? Maybe something in my local community, or in the media?

Lord, show me how I can move beyond simply reading and talking about this to taking real action that makes a difference to those who are suffering.

Pause and pray

I am aware today that people are still suffering from racial injustice, both personally and systemically.

Lord, I cry out to You. Comfort those who are suffering, and strengthen those who are leading the fight against racial injustice

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.

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom and continues in it – not forgetting what they have heard but doing it – they will be blessed in what they do.

James 1:22-25

James makes the idea of ignoring Christ's teaching sound ridiculous. However, I'm aware that I find reasons not to obey His most straightforward commands and justify why I don't have to love my enemy... or give away my money... or turn the other cheek.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord Jesus, I yield to the simplicity of Your teaching. Help me to lay down my clever reasons for resisting Your ways and instead step into the freedom and adventure of obedience.

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:

...Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.

John 14:23

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.

May 28 2021 (click for audio)

Action Not Words

Today is Friday the 28th of May. As part of our season exploring the Three Loves that lie at the heart of Christian discipleship – Love of God, Love of Others, and Love for the World – this week we are reflecting on how we Love Others through the practice of Justice, as expressed in the book of James.

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, edited by J. Manning Potts, 1953

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's voice 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.*

If only you would listen to his voice today!

Psalm 95:6-7

Pause and pray

Today, I am continuing to reflect on James' letter to the early church. His message to me today is a very simple one...

Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless. Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

James 1:26-27

How do I pursue justice whilst keeping a rein on my tongue? Surely I must raise my voice for the voiceless!

What if the poor and oppressed are not actually voiceless; but simply not heard? What if my well-meaning words drown out their voices rather than amplify their words?

Ask

As I think about my family and my community of friends, whose voice is hardly ever heard? Who gets talked over, silenced even?

Lord, forgive me for speaking over them. Help me to listen well the next time we talk.

Pause and pray

Who are the equivalent of orphans and widows in my life? Those who are silenced by the injustice of their circumstances.

Lord, I cry out to You – I use my voice in prayer on their behalf. What can I do to help their voices be heard?

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.

Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless. Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

James 1:26-27

I am sincere in my *belief* that those who are oppressed should experience justice, but beyond sharing a campaign video or signing a one-click petition every now and again, how deep does my commitment to justice really go?

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord, to use James' words, I want my religion to be worth something, but I know that this means it will cost me something. Help me to move beyond easy engagement and into the tougher work of active and consistent action on behalf of the poor and mistreated.

Yielding Promise

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

Be still, and know that I am God! I will be honored by every nation. I will be honored throughout the world.

Psalms 46:10 (NLT)

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.

May 29 2021 (click for audio)

Playing Favorites

Today is Saturday the 29th of May. As part of our season exploring The Three Loves that lie at the heart of Christian discipleship – Love of God, Love of Others, and Love for the World – this week we are reflecting on how we Love Others through the practice of Justice, as expressed in the book of James.

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, edited by J. Manning Potts, 1953

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's security today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 63:

I cling to you;
your strong right hand holds me securely.
But those plotting to destroy me will come to ruin.
They will go down into the depths of the earth.
Psalm 63:8-9

Pause and pray

Today's reading challenges one of our most basic human instincts - showing preference to certain people because of their status. Writing to the early church, James warns that such behavior is incompatible with following Jesus Christ.

My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism. Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, 'Here's a good seat for you,' but say to the poor man, 'You stand there' or 'Sit on the floor by my feet,' have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?
James 2:1-4

I like to think I'm above the kind of discrimination that James describes, but then I remember how easily I'm impressed by outward signs of success. For example, I can equate wealth with God 'favoring' some people over others.

Maybe it's not money, but other outward signs of success that I'm drawn to? Maybe it's popularity or self-confidence? Maybe it's being married rather than being single? Maybe it's the area where someone lives? Maybe it's the job they do that impresses me?

Ask

In the quiet, I search my heart for where I am guilty of treating people differently.

God, I repent. Please forgive me, and free me from favoritism.

Pause and pray

In my community, who is the equivalent of the 'poor man in filthy clothes' from today's passage? Perhaps it's those who have no home? Perhaps those living in extreme poverty?

God, I pray for my church community. Help us to become a home – a place of belonging - for those who feel excluded; where they can Thrive

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.

My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism. Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, 'Here's a good seat for you,' but say to the poor man, 'You stand there' or 'Sit on the floor by my feet,' have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

James 2:1-4

What is it that makes me decide that somebody is 'my kind of person' and that someone else isn't?

Mostly it's fear. It's me wanting my world to feel familiar and free of anything, or anyone, who reminds me of my privilege or makes me uncomfortable.

James calls such judgments 'evil'. Not just 'a problem' or 'less-than-perfect.' But evil. It's a heavy word, but it shows how seriously Jesus takes discrimination and favoritism.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord Jesus, I yield my right to fill my social circle (offline and online) with people who look or think just like me. Thank You for loving me just as I am. Help me to love and welcome every person that You have created, just as they are too.

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 13:

A new command I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.
John 13:34-35

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.

[May 30 2021 \(click for audio\)](#)

A Sabbath Prayer

Today is Sunday the 30th of May and this week we've been reflecting how to Love Others through the practice of Justice, reflecting on the book of James.

Today, on this day of rest, we interrupt our usual daily pattern with a shorter, simpler time of prayer.

At the end of a week thinking about justice, it's easy to feel relentlessly responsible for tackling all the world's insurmountable problems. But today I pause and receive again God's grace and mercy.

'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

'Are you tired?' Asks Jesus, 'Are you worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly.'

Matthew 11:28-30 MSG

Pause and pray

'Sabbath,' says the theologian Walter Brueggemann: 'is the refusal to let one's life be defined by production and consumption and the endless pursuit of private well-being.'*

*Walter Brueggemann, Sabbath as Resistance, p.6

Lord, I come to You for a deep rest today. I spend so much of my life dissatisfied; wanting more stuff, more money, more friends, more applause, more miracles. Today I put away my superhero cape and thank You, very simply, that because I have You I have everything I will ever truly need.

I take a moment now to pray for those who really don't have enough. Is there a particular person I know, or crises elsewhere in the world, where God's justice and mercy are desperately needed today?

Pause and pray

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 out again this week to bind up the broken-hearted. Help me again this week to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners. Amen.

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

[May 31 2021 \(click for audio\)](#)

Holy Fire

It's Monday the 31st of May. From tomorrow we will be continuing our series on The three Loves at the heart of christianity by exploring the call to love the world through learning and discipleship. Today, however, we're taking a break from this series to reflect together on the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

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 who is a consuming fire, warm us with Your friendship. Purify us with Your flame. Ignite us with Your Holy Spirit.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's presence today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 68...

Sing praises to God and to his name!
Sing loud praises to him who rides the clouds.
His name is the Lord—
rejoice in his presence!
Father to the fatherless, defender of widows—
this is God, whose dwelling is holy.
Psalm 68:4-5

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on the moment when the promised Holy Spirit was given to the Church. The disciples have met the resurrected Jesus, witnessed His ascension to heaven and are now waiting faithfully in Jerusalem for the gift He promised...

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.
Acts 2:1-4

God first appeared to Moses from within a burning bush (Exodus 3). God's presence then descended in fire on Mount Sinai before Israel (Exodus 19). His presence filled the Holy of Holies in the

Tabernacle, God's portable throne room, with cloud and fire (Exodus 40). And the glory of God came in fire to fill the Temple, and became the primary place of connection between heaven and earth (2 Chronicles 7).

Knowing these stories well, how must the disciples have felt when they heard the sound of a rushing wind and saw fire descend, not on a mountain or a throne room – but on them?

Ask

Holy Spirit, I sometimes take Your presence for granted. Teach me to live in the awareness that I carry the powerful presence of God within me into every place I go, and to every person I meet. I pause now, and pray again today, come Holy Spirit.

Pause and pray

God, I cry out for a fresh Pentecost movement throughout the worldwide Body of Christ. Holy Spirit, revive us and sanctify us again. I name the churches in my community and ask You to move powerfully in and through them.

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.

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Acts 2:1-4

The Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Corinth that, 'we [together] are the temple of the living God.' And that God, '... will live with [us] and walk among [us]...' (2 Corinthians 6:16)

I am included in this living Temple, and I am made holy by the presence of God's Holy Spirit within me – sanctifying me from the inside out.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

*Holy Spirit, I invite You to search me and know my heart. Test my mind and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any evil or unloving way in me. Forgive me and show me how to live life to the full.
(Adapted from Psalm 139:23-24)*

Yielding Promise

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

...hope does not put me to shame, because God's love has been poured into my heart through the Holy Spirit who has been given to me.

Adapted from Romans 5:5

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.