

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

Jan 2022

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Audio for Each Day in MP3 Format

[Month of Jan 2022](#)

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.

January 01 2022 (click for audio)

New Year's Revolution

Today is Saturday the 1st of January 2022. Happy New Year! As today is New Year's Day, we continue to pause our usual rhythm to think and pray about the year ahead.

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

Loving Father, I still my soul now and remember that You are here with me, You are here in me, You are here for me. Lord Jesus, I worship You. Holy Spirit, I welcome You.

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...

*Shout with joy to the Lord, all the earth!
Worship the Lord with gladness.
Come before him, singing with joy.
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 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

On this day, the 1st of January, the birth of a new year, I am reflecting on the birth of the Early Church in the book of Acts, and also a key moment in the life of the church in the 1700s...

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 (NIV UK)

At 3am on New Year's Day, 1739, the Holy Spirit also came to an all-night prayer meeting in Fetter Lane, London. 'The power of God came mightily upon us, recorded John Wesley in his journal, 'insomuch that many cried out for exceeding joy and many fell to the ground.'*

*John Wesley, The Journal of John Wesley

Echoing the experience of those who were propelled out of the upper room in Jerusalem to preach the gospel, John Wesley, too, was propelled out of that prayer room in London to ride 125,000 miles preaching the gospel, while his brother Charles Wesley began writing 6,000 hymns. And their 25-year-old friend, George Whitfield, crossed the Atlantic to stir the fires of America's First Great Awakening. The world would never be the same again.

Ask

Jesus said that the Father loves to give the Spirit to those who ask (Matthew 7:11), just as John and Charles Wesley asked that day in London.

And so, as I open my hands in front of me, I ask You, Father, to fill me with Your Spirit. Fill me with new power for this new year, just as You filled those disciples 2,000 years ago in Jerusalem, and 283 years ago in Fetter Lane, London.

Pause and pray

And now, I lift up my hands and I pray for my community, for my nation, and for the nations of the world. I ask You, Father, to stir the fires of another Great Awakening of Your Spirit.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to this familiar passage, I try to imagine what it was like to be in that room, seeing what seemed like tongues of fire dancing in the air, being filled with the Holy Spirit for the very first time...

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 (NIV UK)

The Holy Spirit enabled the disciples to speak in other tongues. As the story continues, the Spirit enabled them to speak about Jesus with boldness, to endure hardship and persecution, to perform miracles, to serve the poor, to discern and make difficult decisions, and much more.

These are the kinds of things that Spirit-enabled people do. What might the Spirit be enabling me to do this year?

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

The Methodist Covenant prayer, written by John Wesley himself in 1755, is prayed by millions of Methodists at the start of every year. It's a liturgy of profound and beautiful surrender, and so I join with sisters and brothers in Christ around the world as I pray it now.

*I am no longer my own, but Yours.
Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will;
Put me to doing, put me to suffering;
Let me be employed for you, or laid aside for you,
Exalted for you, or brought low for you;
Let me be full,
Let me be empty,
Let me have all things,
Let me have nothing:
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things
To your pleasure and disposal.
And now, glorious and blessed God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
You are mine and I am yours. So be it.
And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven.
Amen. ***

**Methodist Covenant Prayer, <https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/the-methodist-church/what-is-distinctive-about-methodism/a-covenant-with-god/>

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.

January 02 2022 (click for audio)

A Sabbath Prayer

Today is Sunday the 2nd of January, and it's the very first Sabbath day of the New Year. Like every Sunday we are taking a break from our usual rhythm of Pausing, Rejoicing and 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.
Psalm 131 (NIV UK)*

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 online and in person 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

[January 03 2022 \(click for audio\)](#)

New Rhythms: Prayer

Today is Monday the 3rd of January, and this week, as we begin a new year, we are exploring how we fix our eyes on Jesus through the six practices at the heart of Lectio 365. These are: **Prayer, Creativity, Justice, Hospitality, Learning, and Mission**. We are beginning this week with the rhythm 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 choose to rejoice and respond to God's invitation today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 27...

Hear me as I pray, O LORD.

Be merciful and answer me!

My heart has heard you say, "Come and talk with me."

And my heart responds, "Lord, I am coming."

Psalm 27:7-8 (NLT)

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on Jesus' commitment to prayer even on the busiest of demanding days.

He told the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve baskets full of broken pieces that were left over. The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone.

Matthew 14:19-23 (NIV UK)

Jesus was under pressure. He had tried to get away for a well-deserved desert retreat, but He was pursued by a mob. Jesus taught them, healed the sick, organized the catering and ensured crowd safety. Finally, having arranged transport for his team of disciples, He was alone.

So He climbed a mountain, where He prayed until the early hours of the morning.

Ask

Have I excused my failure to pray by telling myself, 'God will understand; He knows how busy I am'? I forget that it is not God who needs prayer, but me.

Lord, teach me to pray. Not just how to pray, but to have the discipline to keep praying day by day.

Pause and pray

Father, I pray for someone I know who is distracted, stressed, and stretched by all their many responsibilities. In the busyness of life, may they find rest in You through prayer.

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 told the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve baskets full of broken pieces that were left over. The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone.

Matthew 14:19-23 (NIV UK)

'He was there alone', but Jesus wasn't lonely. Jesus had taught his disciples, 'when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father.' (Matthew 6:6 NIVUK). Jesus had a room under the open skies of a solitary mountain. It was here, as He prayed to his Father, that He was re-energized with all the resources of heaven for the task of a new day.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord, at the start of this new year, I yield to Your invitation to embrace the disciplined practice of prayer. As I close the door to distraction, may my 'prayer-room' become a solitary place of intimacy with 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:

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

Matthew 28:20 (NIV UK)

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.

January 04 2022 (click for audio)

New Rhythms: Creativity

Today is Tuesday the 4th of January, and this week we are looking again at how the six practices at the heart of Lectio 365 can help us live like Jesus. These are: **Prayer, Creativity, Justice, Hospitality, Learning, and Mission**. Today we are exploring Creativity.

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

Creator God, who formed us from dust, breathe in me again. Give me fresh imagination to perceive new possibilities today.

Rejoice and Reflect

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

*The LORD is good to everyone.
He showers compassion on all his creation.
All of your works will thank you, LORD,
and your faithful followers will praise you.
Psalm 145:9-10 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on the way Jesus loved to teach people through imaginative storytelling...

*He told them still another parable: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about thirty kilograms of flour until it worked all through the dough.’
Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables; he did not say anything to them without using a parable. So was fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet:
‘I will open my mouth in parables,
I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world.’
Matthew 13:33-35 (NIV UK)*

Prophets, poets, musicians, and painters have long known that when an artist tells the truth in a beautiful way, rich meaning is revealed. Beauty opens my senses to mystery and brings God's hidden things into the light.

Ask

Lord of the Universe, maker of beetles and galaxies, let Your image in me fire my creative imagination; may I reflect a unique facet of Your beauty in the world today.

Pause and pray

God, I pray for artists I know, professionals as well as those who create for the love of making. May this be the start of a richly productive year of inspiration for them

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...

He told them still another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about thirty kilograms of flour until it worked all through the dough.'

Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables; he did not say anything to them without using a parable. So was fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet:

'I will open my mouth in parables,

I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world.'

Matthew 13:33-35 (NIV UK)

Jesus used parables to uncover 'hidden things'. A parable puts the familiar and the unfamiliar side by side and suggests connections. It invites us to step into a new world of imagination, just as every good artist, novelist, and film-maker does.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord, I yield myself to Your creative nature in me. Open my imagination to fresh ideas and connections that I too may uncover 'hidden things.'

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:

'Every student of the Scriptures who becomes a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like someone who brings out new and old treasures from the storeroom.'

Matthew 13:52 (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.

January 05 2022 (click for audio)

New Rhythms: Justice

Today is Wednesday the 5th of January, and this week we are exploring how we are fixing our eyes on Jesus using the six practices at the heart of Lectio 365. These are: **Prayer, Creativity, Justice, Hospitality, Learning, and Mission**. Today we are looking at **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 justice today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 40...

*I have told all your people about your justice.
I have not been afraid to speak out,
as you, O Lord, well know.
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 40:9-10 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on one of the most controversial incidents in the Gospels – the day Jesus got fierce!

*When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, 'Who is this?'
The crowds answered, 'This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.'
Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money-changers and the benches of those selling doves. 'It is written,' he said to them, "'My house will be called a house of prayer," but you are making it "a den of robbers."
The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them.
Matthew 21:10-14 (NIV UK)*

Jesus wasn't born just so that I could invite Him to be my personal Savior. He came to transform the world and put everything right. Sometimes bringing justice can mean overturning the tables of economic structures and shining a light on the 'respectable' robbers who are running the system. It's a risky thing to do.

Ask

Is Jesus inviting me to join hands with him to turn over a few tables?

Lord, is there something you are inviting me to do today? Is there a petition I need to sign or a march which needs my feet?

Pause and pray

Lord, I pray for a community of people I know who are suffering because of systemic injustice. God of justice, have mercy. Let Your righteousness Prevail.

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...

When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, 'Who is this?'

The crowds answered, 'This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.'

Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money-changers and the benches of those selling doves. 'It is written,' he said to them, "'My house will be called a house of prayer," but you are making it "a den of robbers."

The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them.

Matthew 21:10-14 (NIV UK)

God's justice is not about retribution, but restoration. Worship in the temple had become a money-making racket. "My house will be called a house of prayer", says Jesus, because prayer is where justice begins.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord, I yield myself to Your call to heal broken things, and make things right in the world. 'Let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!' (Amos 5:24)

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 Luke:

Will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly.
Luke 18:7-8a (NIV UK)

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.

January 06 2022 (click for audio)

New Rhythms: Hospitality

Today is Thursday the 6th of January, and this week we are exploring how we can order our lives around the six practices at the heart of Lectio 365. These are: **Prayer, Creativity, Justice, Hospitality, Learning, and Mission**. Today our focus is on **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

God of welcome, You invite me into Your family. I sit at Your table and savor Your word to me. Help me receive all the nourishment You have for me today.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's hospitality today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of 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 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on the way Jesus welcomed children...

*People brought little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them.
But the disciples rebuked them.
Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.' When he had placed his hands on them, he went on from there.
Matthew 19:13-15 (NIV UK)*

The disciples think Jesus is too important to be bothered with a bunch of grubby children shouting and crowding around him, but Jesus doesn't need an entourage to protect him; he welcomes the kids. His kingdom belongs to them!

Ask

Are there people I am reluctant to welcome into my church or home? Am I embarrassed at the thought of how they might behave?

Lord, who needs my welcome today?

Pause and pray

I think of someone I know who has not felt welcomed by a church community, and who is afraid they might not be welcome if they try again. I pray for them 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.

People brought little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked them.

Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.' When he had placed his hands on them, he went on from there.

Matthew 19:13-15 (NIV UK)

Before this moment, Jesus had been debating with the Pharisees. I wonder whether Jesus was relieved to put arguments aside so he could welcome the children. He was hospitable – making time for the serious business of blessing and play!

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord, I yield to your priorities. May I never be duped into thinking that my work or my ministry is more important than offering a welcome to people others deem unimportant.

Yielding Promise

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

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!

1 John 3:1a (NIV UK)

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.

January 07 2022 (click for audio)

New Rhythms: Learning

Today is Friday the 7th of January, and this week we are exploring the six practices at the heart of Lectio 365. These are: **Prayer, Creativity, Justice, Hospitality, Learning, and Mission**. Today our focus is on **Learning**.

Pause

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

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

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

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's faithful leading today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 25...

*The Lord is good and does what is right;
he shows the proper path to those who go astray.
He leads the humble in doing right,
teaching them his way.
The Lord leads with unfailing love and faithfulness...
Psalm 25:8-10a (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on the Beatitudes, the most direct expression of Jesus' teaching in the Bible...

*'Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.
Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.*

*Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.
Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Matthew 5:3-10 (NIV UK)*

This is Jesus' manifesto for his upside-down kingdom: where the spiritually destitute are blessed; where it is not the powerful but the meek who inherit the earth. Jesus' teaching upends all that this world values.

Ask

Lord, open my ears to hear your word afresh and learn from it. Which of the blessings in this passage do you want to speak to me about today?

Pause and pray

I pray for a learning community that I know – a school, a college, a church, or even an Alpha Course. Jesus, may it be a place filled with kindness, reflecting the values of your upside-down Kingdom.

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.

*'Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.
Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.
Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Matthew 5:3-10 (NIV UK)*

Learning can be hard work, but reading this passage again, I notice that Jesus' teaching is infused with joy: the mourners, the merciful, the peacemakers, and the persecuted are all pronounced fortunate, blissful, and blessed. Joy indeed!

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord, I yield myself to you as a learner. Teach me the joyous ways of your upside-down kingdom. May I never cease to learn from 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 Isaiah:

*The Lord God gives me
the right words
to encourage the weary.
Each morning he awakens me
eager to learn his teaching
Isaiah 50:4 (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.

January 08 2022 (click for audio)

New Rhythms: Mission

Today is Saturday the 8th of January, and this week we are exploring the six practices at the heart of Lectio 365. These are: **Prayer, Creativity, Justice, Hospitality, Learning, and Mission**. Today, we are exploring God's call to **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 today in the way the whole creation speaks of God, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 19...

The heavens proclaim the glory of God.

The skies display his craftsmanship.

Day after day they continue to speak;

night after night they make him known.

Psalm 19:1-2 (NLT)

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on the Great Commission, which Jesus entrusted to his disciples.

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 (NIV UK)

Jesus has one final instruction for his disciples. He's brought them back to a familiar place, a mountain overlooking the lake where many of them once fished. It is about to become a launch-pad into all the world.

Ask

Is there someone to whom Jesus is asking me to go? Someone I could introduce to Jesus – perhaps a neighbor, or someone from another nation?

Pause and pray

I think of someone I know who has heard the call to 'Go', and who has moved to a different nation, or an unfamiliar culture, for the sake of the gospel. I pray for them 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 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 (NIV UK)

Jesus, the man from Galilee, is now the resurrected King of kings and Lord of lords. His followers have been appointed as envoys – ambassadors sent to represent His kingdom. And I am sent too, with Jesus' promise ringing in my ears, 'I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord, I yield myself to the 'go' of the gospel. Knowing that you are with me, here I am, send me.

Yielding Promise

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

'My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.'
Exodus 33:14 (NIV UK)

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.

January 09 2022 (click for audio)

A Sabbath Prayer

Today is Sunday the 9th of January. This week, at the beginning of a new year, we have reflected on how we can fix our eyes on Jesus through the six practices at the heart of Lectio 365. These are **Prayer and Creativity, Justice and Hospitality, Mission and Learning**.

And so, as I settle into this time of prayer, I ask God to renew in me a tender and teachable Heart.

Pause and pray

Jesus said...

'Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.'

Matthew 11:28-30 (NIV UK)

Pause and pray

In his book, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, John Mark Comer says: *'If you want to experience the life of Jesus, you have to adopt the lifestyle of Jesus... He offers his apprentices a whole new way to bear the weight of our humanity: with ease. At his side. Like two oxen in a field, tied shoulder to shoulder. With Jesus doing all the heavy lifting. At his pace. Slow, unhurried, present to the moment, full of love and joy and peace. An easy life isn't an option; an easy yoke is*'*.

*John Mark Comer, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, p82, p88

Jesus, I choose again, the path of an apprentice. Teach me to love You with all my mind, all my heart, all my body, and all my strength. Help me to imitate and include You as I plan my diary, write my to-do list, waste time on my phone, even as I walk through my neighborhood. Shape my life around Your 'unforced rhythms of grace' (Matthew 11:29 MSG).

Pause and pray

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

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

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

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

Pause and pray

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

Pause and pray

Sabbath Blessing

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

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

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

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

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

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

[January 10 2022 \(click for audio\)](#)

Be Still: Treasures

Today is Monday the 10th of January. This week we are exploring themes from Be Still: the 24-7 Prayer book and course. Together we will look at how we can develop a culture of quiet time at the beginning of this New Year.

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 I come to You today, to take time to pause and hear Your word. I open my heart to Your still small voice, and I say to You, 'Speak Lord for Your servant is listening' (1 Sam. 3:10).

Rejoice and Reflect

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

*I will praise you as long as I live,
lifting up my hands to you in prayer.
You satisfy me more than the richest feast.
I will praise you with songs of joy.
Psalm 63:4-5 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on what I treasure in my life...

*Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.
Matthew 6:19-21 (NIV UK)*

What I treasure reveals a lot about me: my priorities, loves, desires. I treasure my family, my marriage, my friendships, my church, my holiday. These are good, maybe even heavenly, treasure; but there are other things that I treasure that I'm less happy to admit, and I'm pretty sure they are not heavenly.

Ask

Have I buried God under the weight of all my treasure?

Lord, have I accumulated unhelpful, or even destructive clutter, that I treasure? Forgive me for this, and help me to remove the treasure in my life that obscures my view of you.

Pause and pray

Lord, we live in a world where we are encouraged to get more 'stuff'. I pray a big prayer now: change our culture from one that encourages consumerism to one that encourages simplicity.

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...

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Matthew 6:19-21 (NIV UK)

What word or phrase jumped out at me?

I am drawn to the phrase, 'thieves break in and steal'. What do I treasure that steals from me? What robs me of my time with others and my time with God?

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord, help me to identify what is robbing me and help me realign my life to treasure heavenly things. May You and You alone be all that I treasure. May You be my first thought and my last thought. I trust that you are enough.

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 45...

*I will give you hidden treasures,
riches stored in secret places,
so that you may know that I am the Lord,
the God of Israel, who summons you by name.*

Isaiah 45:3 (NIV UK)

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.

January 11 2022 (click for audio)

Be Still: Honesty

Today is Tuesday the 11th of January. This week we are exploring themes from Be Still: the 24-7 Prayer book and course. Together we will look at how we can develop a culture of quiet time at the beginning of this New Year.

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

Father I come to You today, to take time to pause and hear Your word. I open my heart to Your still small voice, and I say to You, ‘Speak Lord for Your servant is listening’ (1 Sam. 3:10).

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God’s attention today, joining with the ancient praise of all God’s people in the words of Psalm 17...

O Lord, hear my plea for justice.

Listen to my cry for help.

*Pay attention to my prayer,
for it comes from honest lips.*

Psalm 17:1 (NLT)

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on how I can be honest with my prayers and articulate the ramblings of my heart...

*For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is always before me.*

*Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight...*

*Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.*

*Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones you have crushed rejoice.*

Hide your face from my sins

*and blot out all my iniquity.
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 51:3-4a,7-12 (NIV UK)*

I love that the Bible contains prayers with this level of beautiful honesty. William Wordsworth sums it up very well when he says: 'Fill your paper with the breathings of your heart.'** David did this too: in this Psalm I get to read the breathing of his heart; the brokenness and sense of repentance that drove him to God. His Psalm reveals to me that it is OK to express myself honestly to God.

**William Wordsworth wrote these words in a letter to his wife on April 29th, 1812.

Ask

Lord forgive me when I am not honest with You. I sometimes forget about Your love and concern for me and allow fear and shame to stop me from speaking to You. I speak with You honestly now...

Pause and pray

Who do I know who thinks they're too messed up or too broken to talk to God?

Lord Help me to express to them today how much You want to hear their pain and how You long for honest conversations with 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...

*For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is always before me.
Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight..
Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.
Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones you have crushed rejoice.
Hide your face from my sins
and blot out all my iniquity.
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 51:3-4a,7-12 (NIV UK)*

I am not a songwriter like David, but I do write to God in another way. I write in my journal as if writing to God, which makes it a prayer. He loves my transparency and meets me in the midst of my questions, fears, and doubts; even the ones that feel wrong to think. In the writing, in the honesty, as I open up my heart to God I experience cleansing, restoration and joy.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord I yield to You; I turn my heart to You. All that You see of me, I give to You. Take these honest breathings of my heart and make me new.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says un Psalm 116...

*I love the Lord, because he has heard
my voice and my pleas for mercy.
Psalm 116:1 (ESV)*

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.

[January 12 2022 \(click for audio\)](#)

Be Still: Posture

Today is Wednesday the 12th of January. This week we are exploring themes from Be Still: the 24-7 Prayer book and course. Together we will look at how we can develop a culture of quiet time at the beginning of this New Year.

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 I come to You today, to take time to pause and hear Your word. I open my heart to Your still small voice, and I say to You, 'Speak Lord for Your servant is listening' (1 Sam. 3:10).

Rejoice and Reflect

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

*I will praise you as long as I live,
lifting up my hands to you in prayer.
You satisfy me more than the richest feast.
I will praise you with songs of joy.
Psalm 63:4-5 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on how different postures will help me to focus on the Lord...

*But when the assembly gathered in opposition to Moses and Aaron and turned towards the tent of meeting, suddenly the cloud covered it and the glory of the Lord appeared. Then Moses and Aaron went to the front of the tent of meeting, and the Lord said to Moses, 'Get away from this assembly so that I can put an end to them at once.' And they fell face down. Then Moses said to Aaron, 'Take your censer and put incense in it, along with burning coals from the altar, and hurry to the assembly to make atonement for them. Wrath has come out from the Lord; the plague has started.' So Aaron did as Moses said, and ran into the midst of the assembly. The plague had already started among the people, but Aaron offered the incense and made atonement for them. He stood between the living and the dead, and the plague stopped.
Numbers 16:42-48 (NIV UK)*

I notice the many different postures adopted by Aaron as he prays: he falls face down, he runs, he stands. I too can have different postures when it comes to prayer.

I often stand during prayer to help me concentrate. I sometimes take my prayer time outside and walk with God. If I am particularly struggling with distraction, I might kneel to help me focus. I put my hands together in prayer because, if nothing else, it stops me from fidgeting.

Ask

I notice my posture right now.

Lord help me to adopt different postures throughout the day that will help me focus on You.

Pause and pray

Aaron stood between God and his nation and interceded for them. I stand and pray for my nation now.

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...

But when the assembly gathered in opposition to Moses and Aaron and turned towards the tent of meeting, suddenly the cloud covered it and the glory of the Lord appeared. Then Moses and Aaron went to the front of the tent of meeting, and the Lord said to Moses, 'Get away from this assembly so that I can put an end to them at once.' And they fell face down. Then Moses said to Aaron, 'Take your censer and put incense in it, along with burning coals from the altar, and hurry to the assembly to make atonement for them. Wrath has come out from the Lord; the plague has started.' So Aaron did as Moses said, and ran into the midst of the assembly. The plague had already started among the people, but Aaron offered the incense and made atonement for them. He stood between the living and the dead, and the plague stopped. Numbers 16:42-48 (NIV UK)

As I journey through Lectio 365 I am often challenged to slow down, which is so important. However today I am struck by the urgency of Aaron's posture: 'he ran'. He was over 70 years old and he ran! The state of his world sent him running to the altar for fire.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord, I want to be filled with this same sense of urgency; an urgency that drives me to the altar of prayer so that I can intercede for my world.

Yielding Promise

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

...if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

2 Chronicles 7:14 (NIV UK)

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.

[January 13 2022 \(click for audio\)](#)

Be Still: Contributions

Today is Thursday the 13th of January. This week we are exploring themes from Be Still: the 24-7 Prayer book and course. Together we will look at how we can develop a culture of quiet time at the beginning of this New Year.

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 I come to You today, to take time to pause and hear Your word. I open my heart to Your still small voice, and I say to You, 'Speak Lord for Your servant is listening' (1 Sam. 3:10).

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's generosity today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 16...

Lord, you alone are my inheritance, my cup of blessing.

You guard all that is mine.

The land you have given me is a pleasant land.

What a wonderful inheritance!

Psalm 16:5-6 (NLT)

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on whether I am a contributor or a consumer...

Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, 'children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.' Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain. But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.

Philippians 2:14-18 (NIV UK)

The apostle Paul talks on several occasions about 'pouring himself out' for the sake of the gospel. Paul wasn't a consumer. Paul was a contribution. He poured himself out generously and fully.

I often wonder if I'm pouring myself out, or if I'm holding back and just dripping a little?

Ask

Lord help me today to be a contribution to those around me. Forgive me for so often making it all about myself.

How can I listen well, speak kindly, contribute time, invite people, serve others, open my home, give money, and share possessions today?

Pause and pray

Who in my life regularly contributes to me? Maybe with how they listen, with their time, with their words or even their possessions. I pray a blessing over them 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...

Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, 'children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.' Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain. But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.

Philippians 2:14-18 (NIVUK)

I am struck by the idea that I can shine like a star in this world. Not like the star of celebrity, but the star of service. Paul encourages me in Romans to 'Take [my] everyday, ordinary life—[my] sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering.' (Rom 12:1 MSG)

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord, help me today to pour my life out for the sake and service of others. I want to be known as one who gives and not one who takes.

Yielding Promise

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

I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

Philippians 4:13 (NIV UK)

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.

[January 14 2022 \(click for audio\)](#)

Be Still: Objects

Today is Friday the 14th of January. This week we are exploring themes from Be Still: the 24-7 Prayer book and course. Together we will look at how we can develop a culture of quiet time at the beginning of this New Year.

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 I come to You today, to take time to pause and hear Your word. I open my heart to Your still small voice, and I say to You, 'Speak Lord for Your servant is listening' (1 Sam. 3:10).

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God the creator today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 121...

*I look up to the mountains -
does my help come from there?
My help comes from the Lord,
who made heaven and earth!
Psalm 121:1-2 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on how a pile of stones helped Israel to remember what God had done for them as they entered the promised land...

When the whole nation had finished crossing the Jordan, the Lord said to Joshua, 'Choose twelve men from among the people, one from each tribe, and tell them to take up twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan, from right where the priests are standing, and carry them over with you and put them down at the place where you stay tonight.'

So Joshua called together the twelve men he had appointed from the Israelites, one from each tribe, and said to them, 'Go over before the ark of the Lord your God into the middle of the Jordan. Each of you is to take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, to serve as a sign among you. In the future, when your children ask you, "What do these stones mean?" tell them that the flow of the Jordan was cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord. When it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel for ever.'
Joshua 4:1-7 (NIV UK)

I like the idea that Israel chose stones as a memorial, as a witness to the work of God. I often hold a stone that I have placed next to my computer to remind me that God is my rock. It helps me and grounds me. The stone is a reminder, a signpost that points to something beyond itself. I often use other objects to help me focus on God. God is not in the object, but the object reminds me of some aspect of His character.

Ask

What could I use to remind me of God's character throughout my day today? What could I carry with me?

Pause and pray

The stones were a reminder to Israel of how God had worked in the past. It gave them faith that God was at work in their day. How has God worked in the history of my nation?

God, would you do it again?

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 whole nation had finished crossing the Jordan, the Lord said to Joshua, 'Choose twelve men from among the people, one from each tribe, and tell them to take up twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan, from right where the priests are standing, and carry them over with you and put them down at the place where you stay tonight.'

So Joshua called together the twelve men he had appointed from the Israelites, one from each tribe, and said to them, 'Go over before the ark of the Lord your God into the middle of the Jordan. Each of you is to take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, to serve as a sign among you. In the future, when your children ask you, "What do these stones mean?" tell them that the flow of the Jordan was cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord. When it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel for ever.'

Joshua 4:1-7 (NIV UK)

Every time the children of Israel saw these stones, they remembered. As I look around me, I notice the objects in my life that remind me of God and what He's done for me. The photographs of friends that are a memorial to God's goodness; the things that I own that are a testament to God's provision.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord, I choose to remember Your goodness towards me today. I thank you for your provision. I look around at the objects in my life, and in Your creation, that make me think of you. I say, 'Thank 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 James...

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

James 1: 17 (NIV UK)

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.

January 15 2022 (click for audio)

Be Still: Seasons

Today is Friday the 14th of January. This week we are exploring themes from Be Still: the 24-7 Prayer book and course. Together we will look at how we can develop a culture of quiet time at the beginning of this New Year.

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, I come to You today, to take time to pause and hear Your word. I open my heart to Your still small voice, and I say to You, 'Speak Lord for Your servant is listening' (1 Sam. 3:10).

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's being with me through all the seasons of life today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 23...

*Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me
all the days of my life,
and I will live in the house of the Lord
forever.
Psalm 23:6 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on God's faithfulness throughout all the seasons of my life...

*There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under the heavens:
a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build,
a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance,
a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,
a time to search and a time to give up,
a time to keep and a time to throw away,
a time to tear and a time to mend,
a time to be silent and a time to speak,*

*a time to love and a time to hate,
a time for war and a time for peace
Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 (NIV UK)*

I live in a rural part of England where agriculture is one of the main industries. I pass the same fields throughout the changing seasons of the year; I see them fallow and full, green and golden. Each stage is necessary in its own way to allow for the seed to be planted, take root, shoot, and grow into all that it was meant to be.

All the seasons of my life are necessary, some are good, some are challenging; but in each one I find God. Sometimes easily, sometimes with difficulty.

Ask

What season am I in right now?

Lord reveal Yourself to me in this season

Pause and pray

What season is my family in right now?

Lord, where are You at work, and how can I join in?

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...

*There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under the heavens:
a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build,
a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance,
a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,
a time to search and a time to give up,
a time to keep and a time to throw away,
a time to tear and a time to mend,
a time to be silent and a time to speak,
a time to love and a time to hate,
a time for war and a time for peace
Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 (NIV UK)*

Seasons are necessary; they allow for death, incubation, rest, rebirth, restoration, and growth. The implicitly wonderful thing about seasons, especially the tough ones, is that they pass.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Father, I accept this season that I am in. I acknowledge that You are Lord and that You are in control. Give me the strength to persevere in this season, because this too shall pass.

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 43...

*Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have summoned you by name; you are mine.
Isaiah 43:1 (NIV UK)*

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.

January 16 2022 (click for audio)

A Sabbath Prayer

Today is Sunday the 16th of January and like every Sunday we take a break from our usual rhythm of Pausing, Rejoicing and 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.
Psalm 131 (NIV UK)*

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**

[January 17 2022 \(click for audio\)](#)

Martin Luther King, Jr. - Hero of Justice

Today is Monday the 17th of January, feast of the activist Martin Luther King, Jr. who is celebrated today in the USA. On Feast Days we pause 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 example of Martin Luther King Jr, an extraordinary hero 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, NIVUK)

Rejoice and Reflect

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

*Lord, give me your unfailing love,
the salvation that you promised me.
Then I can answer those who taunt me,
for I trust in your word.
Do not snatch your word of truth from me,
for your regulations are my only hope.
I will keep on obeying your instructions
forever and ever.
I will walk in freedom...
Psalm 119:41-54a (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Martin Luther King Jr was born on the 15th of January 1929 in what was then the segregated south of the United States of America.

Martin Luther King Jr is perhaps best known for leading the civil rights movement in America. While others such as Malcolm X and the Brotherhood of Islam advocated for violent protest, King called for transformation through non-violence and civil disobedience. In 1964, aged just 35, he won the Nobel Peace Prize for his civil rights work. Four years later, while standing on the balcony of a motel, he was shot and killed for the same reason.

In August 1963, a year before he won the Nobel Peace Prize, King led a quarter of a million people on the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. On the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, he delivered a 17-minute speech to the huge crowd, and as he reached the end of it, the gospel singer, Mahalia Jackson, who was sitting behind him, shouted, 'Tell them about the dream!'

It's possible that this is what prompted Martin Luther King Jr to depart from his script and declare the revolutionary words, 'I have a dream...'

'Even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream,' he said.

His dream was that his nation would live out the truth that everyone is created equal. His dream was that people, those who had suffered and those who had caused the suffering, would eventually be able to sit at a table together. His dream was that places where injustice had taken place would become places of freedom. His dream was that people would 'not be judged by the color of their skin but the content of their character.'*

*Martin Luther King Jr. "I Have a Dream", August 28, 1963.

https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/mlk01.asp

Martin Luther King Jr's speech, and his life's work, led to the American Civil Rights Act of 1964, which became the foundation for resolving racial disputes, promoting equal opportunities in employment, and the desegregation of schools, parks and other public facilities.

'All people are created equal,' he said, and he was right. However, not all people are treated equally. This is still a reality today. In our society, people are still judged for the color of their skin, their gender, their education, where they come from, who they support; and this happens in our local schools and universities, on our sports fields and down our streets.

Martin Luther King's dream has not come true. Yet.

Ask

It's easy for me to point the finger at others, to recognize racism and other forms of unjust judgment in others, but I ask You, Holy Spirit, to test me and try me. Show me what is in my heart. Forgive me for judging others.

Pause and pray

As I think about my church, my local community, and in particular the schools in my area, who is experiencing inequality? Who is being judged, excluded, or treated unfairly simply because of who they are? I pray for them now.

Pause and pray

Yield

The day before he was shot and killed, Martin Luther King Jr gave an extraordinary (some say prophetic) speech of yielding:

'Well, I don't know what will happen now. We've got some difficult days ahead. But it doesn't matter with me now. Because I've been to the mountaintop. And I don't mind. Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over. And I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land. So I'm happy, tonight. I'm not worried about anything. I'm not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord.' **

**Martin Luther King Jr. "I've Been to the Mountaintop", April 3, 1968.

<https://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkivebeentothemountaintop.htm>

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Father God, I don't know what will happen tomorrow. I may have difficult days ahead. But it doesn't matter. I want to do Your will today.

Yielding Promise

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

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

John 10:27-28 (NIV UK)

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.

January 18 2022 (click for audio)

Amy Carmichael, Hero of Mission and Creativity

Today is Tuesday the 18th of January, we're pausing for a second day this week to celebrate the life of another hero of the Christian faith – Amy Carmichael. On Feast Days we pause to celebrate stories and learn from lives of heroes of faith, whose collective witness embodies our six practices at the heart of Lectio 365. Today we are thanking God for the passionate example of Amy Carmichael, a hero of mission and 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

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 good news today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 96...

Sing a new song to the Lord!

Let the whole earth sing to the Lord!

Sing to the Lord; praise his name.

Each day proclaim the good news that he saves.

Publish his glorious deeds among the nations.

Tell everyone about the amazing things he does.

Psalm 96:1-3 (NLT)

Pause and pray

Born in Northern Ireland in 1867, Amy Carmichael felt the call to mission at a young age. She served in Japan and Sri Lanka before ending up in India – all before intercontinental air travel! The focus of her work was rescuing young women from prostitution and she developed a community that provided sanctuary for over a thousand children. Amy was a prolific writer, publishing at least 18 books.

'Blessed are the single-hearted,' she wrote, 'for they shall enjoy much peace. If you refuse to be hurried and pressed, if you stay your soul on God, nothing can keep you from that clearness of spirit which is life and peace. In that stillness you will know what His will is.'*

* Amy Carmichael, *Candles in the Dark: Letters of Hope and Encouragement* (Fort Washington: CLC Publications, 1981) p.56

In the midst of the complexity of life as a missionary in another culture, and in the midst of the intensity of front line justice work, Amy prioritized the pursuit of God's presence and peace. She understood that in order to have a wide impact, she needed to cultivate a deep spirituality.

Ask

I ask myself, am I single-hearted? Have I allowed the complexity of my life (and the notifications on my phone) to crowd out God's presence and drown out God's still, small voice?

Heavenly Father, I turn my heart towards You. I still myself and listen.

Pause and pray

God, I pray for Your servants in far flung places. Those living in inhospitable environments and those facing insurmountable challenges. I ask You to be their peace. May they know Your presence in a tangible way this week. I name those I know before You now.

Pause and pray

Yield

In her book, *A Very Present Help*, Amy Carmichael talks of God's tests:

'The best training is to learn to accept everything as it comes, as from Him whom our soul loves. The tests are always unexpected things, not great things that can be written up, but the common little rubs of life, silly little nothings, things you are ashamed of minding one scrap.'**

** Amy Carmichael, *A Very Present Help*

Amy's life, it seems, was characterized by some big yeses. Yes to a life of singleness. Yes to leaving her homeland and family and serving in a culture completely different to her own. Yes to the risky work of rescuing the vulnerable from sexual slavery. But in this quote she emphasizes not the big yeses but the small ones. The 'common little rubs of life'; the 'silly little nothings'. The decisions in the seemingly small and mundane – these are the yeses that matter.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

God, I yield to You my preferences and those things to which I feel entitled. Help me say the smaller yeses as well as the bigger ones to You, to endure hardships both large and minute.

Yielding Promise

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

no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by [me] to the glory of God.

2 Corinthians 1:20 (NIV UK)

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.

January 19 2022 (click for audio)

The Storm Inside

Today is Wednesday the 19th of January, and this week we are returning to the Gospel of Mark where we will continue following the life of Jesus.

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

Jesus, light of the world, as I follow You today would You illuminate the darkness within me and around me. Show me Your presence and Your path as I welcome the light of life. (Adapted from John 8:12)

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God’s protection, joining with the ancient praise of all God’s people in the words of Psalm 121...

The Lord himself watches over you!

The Lord stands beside you as your protective shade.

*The sun will not harm you by day,
nor the moon at night.*

*The Lord keeps you from all harm
and watches over your life.*

*The Lord keeps watch over you as you come and go,
both now and forever.*

Psalm 121:5-8 (NLT)

Pause and pray

Jesus and his disciples had been searching for a quiet place when a huge crowd found them. Jesus was moved with compassion, and so he fed them – all 5000 families. Today, I’m reflecting on what Jesus did next...

Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray.

Later that night, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he was alone on land. He saw the

disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them.

Mark 6:45-48a (NIV UK)

Recently, the place where I live was battered by a storm. In some places, trees were uprooted and roofs were ripped off. Those who went outside strained to stay upright and struggled to catch their breath.

Sometimes the wind and the storm isn't outside me though, it's inside.

Ask

In what areas of my life do I feel like I'm in a storm, with the 'wind against me'? Where does it feel like I'm trying hard but getting nowhere?

Lord Jesus, I know that You see me, just like You saw your disciples on that lake. I need Your help.

Pause and pray

As I imagine the disciples struggling in their boat, I find myself thinking about the news reports I may have seen in recent months of refugees in small boats, risking their lives to cross seas in the hope of better lives.

Lord Jesus, I know that You see them too. I cry out to You – keep them safe, Lord. And I also ask You to turn the hearts of governments and leaders so that these refugees are welcomed and cared for.

Pause and pray

Yield

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

Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray.

Later that night, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he was alone on land. He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them.

Mark 6:45-48a (NIV UK)

Most Prayer Spaces in Schools have an area for 'being still', somewhere with nothing to do, but an invitation to simply be with God. Perhaps surprisingly, children and young people often say that it is their favorite part of a prayer space. It's like they crave stillness and solitude, but they just don't know how to do it for themselves.

Jesus regularly left the crowds, and sometimes even His friends, to make space for stillness and solitude with His Father.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Heavenly Father, I am challenged and inspired by Jesus' example. I yield to Your invitation to come and simply be with You this week, wherever that may be: in a quiet corner of my house, in my car, or even on a mountainside.

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:

Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest.

Matthew 11:28 (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.

January 20 2022 (click for audio)

Jesus Passes By

Today is Thursday the 20th of January and this week we are continuing to explore the life of Jesus as told in the Gospel of Mark.

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

Jesus, light of the world, as I follow You today would You illuminate the darkness within me and around me. Show me Your presence and Your path as I welcome the light of life. (Adapted from John 8:12)

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's power and authority today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 107...

*Their ships were tossed to the heavens
and plunged again to the depths;
the sailors cringed in terror.
They reeled and staggered like drunkards
and were at their wits' end.
"Lord, help!" they cried in their trouble,
and he saved them from their distress.
He calmed the storm to a whisper
and stilled the waves.
Psalm 107:26-29 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today, I am reflecting on what Jesus did when he saw his disciples straining at the oars of their small boat, while the wind was against them.

*Shortly before dawn he went out to them, walking on the lake. He was about to pass by them, but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, because they all saw him and were terrified.
Immediately he spoke to them and said, 'Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid.' Then he climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed, for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened.
Mark 6:48b-52 (NIV UK)*

Mark says that Jesus ‘was about to pass by’ the disciples when he reached them. This sounds a bit odd – why would Jesus walk all that way, only to pass by without stopping?

However, this expression, ‘to pass by’, is mostly used to describe God arriving, not God withdrawing. It describes significant moments of God’s self-revelation.* And so, as Jesus walks on the surface of the lake, He goes to ‘pass by’, to reveal His glory. But instead of seeing glory, Jesus’ disciples see a ghost.

*For example, God said to Moses, ‘I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you...’ (Exodus 33:18, NIV UK) and then God said to Elijah, ‘the Lord is about to pass by.’ (1 Kings 19:11, NIV UK).

Ask

Lord Jesus, sometimes fear and insecurity get the better of me, and I miss what You are trying to reveal. I ask You to help me recognize that You are with me in all of my circumstances, in all Your glory.

Pause and pray

Who do I know who is suffering a storm in their lives right now? Maybe they are afraid, even if they don’t show it outwardly.

Lord Jesus, I ask that they would hear these words of comfort in an unmistakable way today: ‘Take courage. It is I. Don’t be afraid.’

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...

Shortly before dawn he went out to them, walking on the lake. He was about to pass by them, but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, because they all saw him and were terrified.

Immediately he spoke to them and said, ‘Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.’ Then he climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed, for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened.

Mark 6:48b-52 (NIV UK)

Jesus’ disciples had been there when he’d healed the paralyzed man, when he’d set the man with many demons free and when he’d fed 5000 families. They’d even just seen him walk on water, and yet Mark says that their hearts were still hardened. They still hadn’t fully realized and received who Jesus was, nor what He had the authority to do.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord Jesus, I know that my heart is hardened sometimes, through fear and insecurity; but also because of disappointment, hurt, anger and other things too. I surrender all of this to You, and I ask that You soften my heart, 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 Ezekiel:

I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart.

Ezekiel 36:26 (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.

January 21 2022 (click for audio)

Direction

Today is Friday the 21st of January, and this week we are continuing to explore the life of Jesus as told in Mark's Gospel

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

Jesus, light of the world, as I follow You today would You illuminate the darkness within me and around me. Show me Your presence and Your path as I welcome the light of life. (Adapted from John 8:12)

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's guidance today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 25...

*Show me the right path, O Lord;
point out the road for me to follow.
Lead me by your truth and teach me,
for you are the God who saves me.
All day long I put my hope in you.
Psalm 25:4-5 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today, I am reflecting on what happened after Jesus walked across the lake and got into the boat with his disciples...

*When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret and anchored there. As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized Jesus. They ran throughout that whole region and carried those who were ill on mats to wherever they heard he was. And wherever he went – into villages, towns or countryside – they placed those who were ill in the market-places. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched it were healed.
Mark 6:53-56 (NIV UK)*

Mark says that Jesus told them the disciples to go to Bethsaida, but they ended up much further south, on the other side of the lake, in Gennesaret, presumably blown off course by the strong winds.

I realize that over the course of my life I often set out in one direction, aiming to reach one destination, only to end up somewhere completely different.

Ask

When have I experienced this? Setting out in one direction, only to end up somewhere else. How do I feel about this?

I take a few moments to talk honestly with God about this now, especially any regrets, disappointments or unfulfilled dreams that I am carrying.

Pause and pray

Who do I know that is asking God for direction in their life right now? Maybe it's to do with their career, their relationships or where they live?

Lord Jesus, I ask You to guide them, but also to reassure them that You are in 'the boat' with them, and that they can trust You, come what May.

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 they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret and anchored there. As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized Jesus. They ran throughout that whole region and carried those who were ill on mats to wherever they heard he was. And wherever he went – into villages, towns or countryside – they placed those who were ill in the market-places. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched it were healed.
Mark 6:53-56 (NIV UK)

Jesus and his disciples landed somewhere completely different to where they'd planned. And yet, at once, as soon as people recognized Jesus, good things began to happen; remarkable things, even!

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord Jesus, help me to fix my eyes less on the hopes and aspirations, the plans and directions that I have for my life, and to fix my eyes more on You. I yield to You again today, trusting that You will do good things.

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 32:

I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you.
Psalm 32:8 (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.

January 22 2022 (click for audio)

Freedom Beyond Rules

Today is Saturday the 22nd of January, and this week we have been exploring the life of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark.

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

Jesus, light of the world, as I follow You today would You illuminate the darkness within me and around me. Show me Your presence and Your path as I welcome the light of life. (Adapted from John 8:12)

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's freedom today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 146...

*He gives justice to the oppressed
and food to the hungry.
The Lord frees the prisoners.
The Lord opens the eyes of the blind.
The Lord lifts up those who are weighed down.
The Lord loves the godly.
Psalm 146:7-8 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on one of the many run-ins that Jesus had with the religious leaders...

*The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered round Jesus and saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. (The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders. When they come from the market-place they do not eat unless they wash. And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles.)
So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, 'Why don't your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with defiled hands?'
Mark 7:1-5 (NIV UK)*

When I was a child, before almost every meal, my mother would ask; 'Have you washed your hands yet?' The answer, of course, was usually a guilty 'no', which meant a trip to the sink.

What the Pharisees were asking seemed to make sense. However, sensible rules can easily be misused and abused. God's rules were meant to help people live freely and live well with one another, but the Pharisees had turned them into lifeless regulations, using them to exclude and control people.

Ask

The truth is that any spiritual practice, any sacrament, can become a lifeless regulation.

Holy Spirit, I ask You to breathe on me and in me once again. Revive me where the life of God has dwindled. Rekindle the fire within me.

Pause and pray

Who do I know that has left or lost interest in church because all they can see are rules and regulations?

Lord Jesus, I ask You to reveal Yourself to them. Restore to them their first love, their first encounter 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...

The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered round Jesus and saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. (The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders. When they come from the market-place they do not eat unless they wash. And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles.)

So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, 'Why don't your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with defiled hands?'

Mark 7:1-5 (NIV UK)

It seems like the Pharisees had traveled all the way from Jerusalem to try and trip Jesus up with another seemingly sensible, but deliberately difficult question. But Jesus saw the deceit beneath the surface. On one occasion, he described the Pharisees as 'whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead.' (Matthew 23:27, NIVUK)

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord Jesus, I'm more like the Pharisees than I'd like to admit sometimes; carrying around lifeless stuff on the inside while keeping up appearances on the outside. I yield myself fully to You; search my heart and make me new, I pray.

Yielding Promise

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

if [I am] in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!
2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV UK)

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.

January 23 2022 (click for audio)

A Sabbath Prayer

Today is Sunday the 23rd of January, and today we are taking a break from our usual rhythm to pray a special Sabbath prayer.

I've been learning from the life of Jesus again this week, and reflecting on some of the ways that he taught those around him, through His words, His works and His wonders. And so, as I settle into this time of prayer now, I ask God to renew in me a tender, teachable Heart

Pause and pray

*I have hidden your word in my heart,
that I might not sin against you...
Open my eyes that I may see
wonderful things in your law.
I am a stranger on earth;
Do not hide your commands from me.
My soul is consumed with longing
For your laws at all times...
Your statutes are my delight;
they are my counselors.
Psalm 119:11,18–20,24 (NIV UK)*

Pause and pray

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

* Wayne Muller, Sabbath, p1

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

Pause and pray

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

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

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

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

Pause and pray

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

Pause and pray

Sabbath Blessing

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

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

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

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

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

**Pete Greig, Sabbath Blessing, petegreig.info

January 24 2022 (click for audio)

Hypocrisy and Control

Today is Monday the 24th of January, and this week we are continuing our journey meditating on every single verse in the Gospel of Mark. Together we will pray through Jesus' words and respond to the invitation to come and follow Him.

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

Jesus, light of the world, as I follow You today would You illuminate the darkness within me and around me. Show me Your presence and Your path as I welcome the light of life. (Adapted from John 8:12)

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 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?
Psalm 24:1-3 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on an argument between Jesus and the Pharisees, a group of people who had political and religious influence in Israel...

So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, 'Why don't your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with defiled hands?' He replied, 'Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules." You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions.'
Mark 7:5-8 (NIV UK)

Wow - Jesus is not holding back! His reply cuts right to the heart of the issue; can human rules and traditions make me right with God? To Jesus it's pretty clear, no matter how much I sanitize my hands, if my heart isn't right, then I'm wasting my time.

Ask

I pause and ask myself: how close is my heart to God today?

Pause and pray

Though living well is a beautiful way to show my love for God, I ask myself: am I trying to get into God's good books through good behavior alone?

Jesus, I cannot see myself clearly. Search me. Show me where am I more concerned about my external behavior than my internal motivation.

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...

So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, 'Why don't your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with defiled hands?' He replied, 'Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules." You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions.'

Mark 7:5-8 (NIV UK)

The Pharisees aren't really upset about hygiene or table manners. These were just some of many strict rules they had invented to help them keep God's law. Jesus, who fulfilled God's law (Matthew 5:17), reminds me that I can't earn or control God's love and acceptance no matter how many rules I invent. My salvation is a gift made possible only by Him.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Jesus, my Savior, I sometimes try to earn the un-earnable. It's hard to wrap my head around Your grace. Today, I surrender and receive afresh the gift I don't deserve. Thank You for the love, forgiveness and new life You have given to me.

Yielding Promise

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

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Romans 6:23 (NIV UK)

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.

January 25 2022 (click for audio)

No Competition

Today is Tuesday the 25th of January, and this week we are continuing to pray through every single verse of the Gospel of Mark. 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 moment from Jesus’ life. ‘**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

Jesus, light of the world, as I follow You today would You illuminate the darkness within me and around me. Show me Your presence and Your path as I welcome the light of life. (Adapted from John 8:12)

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God’s righteousness today, joining with the ancient praise of all God’s people in the words of Psalm 99...

*Mighty King, lover of justice,
you have established fairness.
You have acted with justice
and righteousness throughout Israel.
Exalt the Lord our God!
Bow low before his feet, for he is holy!
Psalm 99:4-5 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today I return to an argument between Jesus and the Pharisees; a religious group who challenged Jesus because His disciples weren’t obeying Jewish regulations around eating...

*And [Jesus] continued, ‘You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions! For Moses said, “Honor your father and mother,” and, “Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.” But you say that if anyone declares that what might have been used to help their father or mother is Corban (that is, devoted to God) – then you no longer let them do anything for their father or mother. Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that.’
Mark 7:9-13 (NIV UK)*

The Pharisees were placing human rules and traditions next to God's commands. But Jesus is clear; there is no comparison. If a human idea, or even an expression of worship, blocks an act of love commanded by God, then it doesn't matter how 'good' it appears. It's hypocrisy.

Ask

Holy Spirit, show me the commands of God that I am ignoring because they are too hard or require more from me than I am willing to give.

Pause and pray

Jesus, I pray for Your Church. Call us to the kind of holiness that is marked not by public displays of purity, but by a Spirit-fueled willingness to sacrifice for the sake of others.

Pause and pray

Yield

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

And [Jesus] continued, 'You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions! For Moses said, "Honor your father and mother," and, "Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death." But you say that if anyone declares that what might have been used to help their father or mother is Corban (that is, devoted to God) – then you no longer let them do anything for their father or mother. Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that.'
Mark 7:9-13 (NIV UK)

The question at the heart of this argument is: how do I live for God? The words of the prophet Micah remind me that centuries before, God had, '...already made it plain how to live... It's quite simple: [I should] do what is fair and just to [my] neighbor, be compassionate and loyal in [my] love, And don't take [myself] too seriously—take God seriously.' (Micah 6:8 MSG)

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

God, it's hard to live up to Your most important commands (Matt 22:37-39). I do love You and I love other people (well, at least some of them), but I often prioritize myself. Help me to follow Jesus into a greater level of selflessness today.

Yielding Promise

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

Blessed... are those who hear the word of God and obey it.
Luke 11:28 (NIV UK)

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.

January 26 2022 (click for audio)

Bon Appetit

Today is Wednesday the 26th of January, and this week we are responding to Jesus' invitation to follow Him by praying through His life as captured in the Gospel of Mark.

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

Jesus, light of the world, as I follow You today would You illuminate the darkness within me and around me. Show me Your presence and Your path as I welcome the light of life. (Adapted from John 8:12)

Rejoice and Reflect

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

Come, let us worship and bow down.

*Let us kneel before the Lord our maker,
for he is our God.*

*We are the people he watches over,
the flock under his care.*

Psalm 95:6-7 (NLT)

Pause and pray

Today I continue to reflect on Jesus' response to the Pharisees' challenges about Jewish law and traditions about eating...

Again Jesus called the crowd to him and said, 'Listen to me, everyone, and understand this. Nothing outside a person can defile them by going into them. Rather, it is what comes out of a person that defiles them.' After he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about this parable. 'Are you so dull?' he asked. 'Don't you see that nothing that enters a person from the outside can defile them? For it doesn't go into their heart but into their stomach, and then out of the body.' (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean.)

Mark 7:14-19 (NIV UK)

It's easy to miss how radical Jesus' words were for His audience. God's law told the Jews what they could and could not eat (Leviticus 11), and these regulations distinguished the Jews from other nations. What they ate was baked into their identity as God's people. But Jesus was declaring that it wasn't obedience to food laws that defined them, and it wasn't what they ate that defiled them.

Ask

What defines my identity as a Christian? What are the behaviors or rules I live by that set me apart from those who don't follow Jesus?

God, have any of these rules become an unhelpful focus?

Pause and pray

Jesus was teaching a new 'yoke'; a new way to understand and live out God's commands. I pray for all the teachers I know, in education and in the church.

God, anoint their gifts and skills. Help them teach others about Your goodness and love.

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...

Again Jesus called the crowd to him and said, 'Listen to me, everyone, and understand this. Nothing outside a person can defile them by going into them. Rather, it is what comes out of a person that defiles them.' After he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about this parable. 'Are you so dull?' he asked. 'Don't you see that nothing that enters a person from the outside can defile them? For it doesn't go into their heart but into their stomach, and then out of the body.' (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean.)
Mark 7:14-15, 17-19 (NIV UK)

Jesus wasn't doing away with God's law, He was simply saying that the law was always meant to point the Jews toward something deeper. You could say that God's law was like a magnifying glass. His people were never meant to just look at the magnifying glass, but to look through it to the inner motivations their obedience (or disobedience) revealed.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

God, as I examine my actions and words today, help me to go further than saying sorry. Help me look closer at the reasons why I choose to do or say things that fall short of Your love.

Yielding Promise

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

...the law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith. Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian.
Galatians 3:24-25 (NIV UK)

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.

January 27 2022 (click for audio)

(Don't) Follow Your Heart

Today is Thursday the 27th of January, and this week we are continuing to pray through the life and teaching of Jesus, in the Gospel of Mark. Together we will pray through Jesus' words and respond to the invitation to come and follow Him.

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

Jesus, light of the world, as I follow You today would You illuminate the darkness within me and around me. Show me Your presence and Your path as I welcome the light of life. (Adapted from John 8:12)

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's strength today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 73...

*Whom have I in heaven but you?
I desire you more than anything on earth.
My health may fail, and my spirit may grow weak,
but God remains the strength of my heart;
he is mine forever.
Psalm 73:25-26 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on my motivations and desires...

[Jesus] went on: 'What comes out of a person is what defiles them. For it is from within, out of a person's heart, that evil thoughts come – sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and defile a person.'
Mark 7:20-23 (NIV UK)

Jesus holds me to a high standard. It's not simply a standard of good behavior, but a standard of self-awareness; of honesty and integrity. Following Jesus isn't about airbrushing my life and presenting the appearance of perfection; it's an invitation to face my shadow, to be open about my brokenness and to receive the healing and forgiveness I need in Him.

Ask

I think back through the last 24 hours. When have I said something, watched something, done something (or maybe not done something) that falls short of God's best?

Pause and pray

Holy Spirit, show me the insecurities, fears and desires, the inner motivations behind my behavior.

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...

[Jesus] went on: 'What comes out of a person is what defiles them. For it is from within, out of a person's heart, that evil thoughts come – sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and defile a person.'

Mark 7:20-23 (NIV UK)

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

I am struck by the word 'heart'. Time and again, culture tells me to 'follow my heart', to follow my deepest desires. But what if my desires are unhealthy? What if what I long for isn't good for me or for others?

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Jesus, my heart is a mixture of the good, the bad and the ugly. I surrender it again into Your safe and loving hands. Show me the motivations that lead me to sin, and transform me from the inside out, by Your Spirit.

Yielding Promise

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

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.

Ezekiel 36:26 (NIV UK)

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.

January 28 2022 (click for audio)

Thomas Aquinas, Hero of Learning

Today is Friday the 28th of January, feast day of the theologian and priest Thomas Aquinas. On Feast Days we pause our usual rhythm to celebrate the stories and learn from the lives of heroes of faith, whose collective witness embodies our six practices at the heart of Lectio 365. These are: **Prayer and Creativity, Justice and Hospitality, Learning and Mission**. Today therefore we are thanking God for the example of Thomas Aquinas, a legendary hero of learning.

Together we will pray through Jesus' words and respond to the invitation to come and follow Him.

Pause

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

Pause and Pray

Prayer of Approach

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

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's unfailing love and faithfulness today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 117...

Praise the Lord, all you nations.

Praise him, all you people of the earth.

*For his unfailing love for us is powerful;
the Lord's faithfulness endures forever.*

Psalm 117:1-2 (NLT)

Pause and pray

Thomas Aquinas was born in the Kingdom of Sicily in Italy, in 1274. His parents were landowners and placed him in a local monastery when he was just a boy, with the hopes that he might one day become a monk. After nine years of monastic life, the Emperor of Italy expelled the monks for their obedience to the Pope, and Aquinas was forced to leave. Soon after, he moved to study at the University of Naples and it was there, in his twenties, that Aquinas decided to join the Dominican Order.

His commitment to both his religious vocation and his intellectual studies grew despite fierce opposition from those closest to him. Aquinas was abducted by his family who held him captive for a year, before finally releasing him and allowing him to move to Paris to pursue his passion. Thomas Aquinas dedicated his life from that moment on, to learning, debating and teaching. Today he is recognized as one of the greatest theologians of the Middle Ages.

‘William of Tocco, Aquinas’s first biographer... says: “Brother Thomas raised new problems in his teaching, invented a new method, used new systems of proof. To hear him teach a new doctrine, with new arguments, one could not doubt that God, by the irradiation of this new light and by the novelty of this inspiration, gave him the power to teach, by the spoken and written word, new opinions and new knowledge.”’*

*Marie-Dominique Chenu, www.britannica.com/biography/Saint-Thomas-Aquinas/Legacy

One of the many things that Aquinas taught was that reason can lead us to believe in ‘a God’, but only revelation can show us God as He really is.

He once wrote: ‘Three things are necessary for the salvation of man: to know what he ought to believe, to know what he ought to desire, and to know what he ought to do.’

For Aquinas, right beliefs were insufficient. Right beliefs and right action were also insufficient. It is the transformation of our desires – the inner orientation of our hearts, tied with belief and action – that are demonstrations of the life of God within us.

Ask

God, reveal Yourself to me the way You really are. I invite You not only to change my mind, but also my affections and my actions. In this time of quiet, I invite You to make me new again today.

Pause and pray

Who around me struggles to line up head, heart, and hands? I pray for them now.

God, would You integrate us so that we would be holy and wholly given over to You.

Pause and pray

Yield

Aquinas is also famous for saying, ‘The things we love tell us what we are.’ I think about the things that are first and foremost in my heart. What do they say about me?

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

God, I hold the things I love before You. I thank You for every good gift You have placed in my life, and I receive them with joy. And God, I give them all back to You. May they take their rightful place in my affections.

Yielding Promise

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

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

Romans 5:5 (NIV UK)

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.

January 29 2022 (click for audio)

Pride and Prejudice

Today is Saturday the 29th of January, and this is the final day this week that we are praying through the life and teaching of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark.

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

Jesus, light of the world, as I follow You today would You illuminate the darkness within me and around me. Show me Your presence and Your path as I welcome the light of life. (Adapted from John 8:12)

Rejoice and Reflect

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

*The Lord is a shelter for the oppressed,
a refuge in times of trouble.
Those who know your name trust in you,
for you, O Lord, do not abandon those who search for you.
Psalm 9:9-10 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on a challenging conversation Jesus had with a desperate woman...

*Jesus left that place and went to the vicinity of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know it; yet he could not keep his presence secret. In fact, as soon as she heard about him, a woman whose little daughter was possessed by an impure spirit came and fell at his feet. The woman was a Greek, born in Syrian Phoenicia. She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter. 'First let the children eat all they want,' he told her, 'for it is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs.' 'Lord,' she replied, 'even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.' Then he told her, 'For such a reply, you may go; the demon has left your daughter.' She went home and found her child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.
Mark 7:24-30 (NIV UK)*

The language Jesus uses to speak to this woman disturbs me; but what shocks me is not the same as what would have shocked those present at the time. Rabbis didn't speak to non-Jews, and many wouldn't speak with women in public. This desperate Mother broke both taboos to plead for help.

Those present would have been disturbed that Jesus didn't ignore her or send her away, but instead he allowed her to humbly plead her case and, with boundary-breaking mercy, saved her daughter.

Ask

What prejudices do I have against people of other faiths, nationalities, political perspectives or economic backgrounds? Is there anyone I would struggle to see Jesus have mercy on?

Pause and pray

This Mother was willing to do anything to see her daughter recover. Who do I know who is caring for a family member?

Jesus, bless them, renew their strength and let them know Your presence and mercy today.

Pause and pray

Yield

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

Jesus left that place and went to the vicinity of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know it; yet he could not keep his presence secret. In fact, as soon as she heard about him, a woman whose little daughter was possessed by an impure spirit came and fell at his feet. The woman was a Greek, born in Syrian Phoenicia. She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter. 'First let the children eat all they want,' he told her, 'for it is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs.' 'Lord,' she replied, 'even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.' Then he told her, 'For such a reply, you may go; the demon has left your daughter.' She went home and found her child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

Mark 7:24-30 (NIV UK)

Author Kenneth Bailey suggests that when Jesus compared this woman to a dog, he may have been voicing the deeply held prejudices of those present.* Jews did not like Gentiles and the feeling was mutual. It was only by exposing what was simmering beneath the surface that Jesus could challenge and ultimately change it. Through moments of mercy like this one, Jesus was preparing His disciples to lead a church that would one day welcome all nations into one, big multi-ethnic family.

*For more on this passage see Kenneth E Bailey, *Jesus through Middle Eastern Eyes*, p217-226

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Jesus, I have my own deeply held prejudices that influence my opinions of others – some of it I'm aware of and some of it I'm not. I invite You to expose what's simmering beneath the surface. Challenge me and change me today.

Yielding Promise

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

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

1 John 4:16b (NIV UK)

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.

January 30 2022 (click for audio)

A Sabbath Prayer

Today is Sunday the 30th of January and this week we have been reflecting on Jesus' teaching and His boundary-breaking mission. Today, we pause our journey through the Gospel of Mark and pray in a simpler way, on this day of rest.

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

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

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

Pause and pray

Today I stop striving to save the world and instead make space for the Lord to preach the gospel to me, to come and save me. I take time now to get right with God, to repent of my sins, to give thanks for the cross, and to receive the Spirit once more...

*Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.
Psalm 139:23-24 (NIV UK)*

Pause and pray

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

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

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

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

Pause and pray

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

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

Thank You, Jesus, that You gave up everything and died for me. Please help me to lay down my life for those who don't yet know You.

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

Pause and pray

Sabbath Blessing

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

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

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

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

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

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

January 31 2022 (click for audio)

Open Up!

Today is Monday the 31st of January, and this week we are continuing to explore Jesus' invitation to follow him in the book of Mark.

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

Jesus, light of the world, as I follow You today would You illuminate the darkness within me and around me. Show me Your presence and Your path as I welcome the light of life. (Adapted from John 8:12)

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's power today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 59...

*But as for me, I will sing about your power.
Each morning I will sing with joy about your unfailing love.
For you have been my refuge,
a place of safety when I am in distress.
O my Strength, to you I sing praises,
for you, O God, are my refuge,
the God who shows me unfailing love.
Psalm 59:16 – 17 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today, I am with Jesus on the journey to the Sea of Galilee...

*Then Jesus left the vicinity of Tyre and went through Sidon, down to the Sea of Galilee and into the region of the Decapolis. There some people brought to him a man who was deaf and could hardly talk, and they begged Jesus to place his hand on him.
After he took him aside, away from the crowd, Jesus put his fingers into the man's ears. Then he spat and touched the man's tongue. He looked up to heaven and with a deep sigh said to him, 'Ephphatha!' (which means 'Be opened!').
Mark 7:31-34 (NIV UK)*

Several times in his Gospel, Mark reverts to the original Aramaic, rather than his customary Greek. When raising the little girl (Mark 5:41), Jesus commands 'Talitha koum.' On the cross (Mark 15:34), He

cries 'Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani!' Jesus' words in his native language bring us deep into the immediacy of the moment.

Ask

Have I lost my voice? Through loss of confidence, fatigue or disappointment? Is it easier these days just to keep my mouth shut?

God, I ask that You touch my ears. Ephphatha! Be opened! Touch my tongue. Ephphatha! Be opened!

Pause and pray

God, I pray for the deaf community today. I pray that You would remove any isolation or communication barriers so that they would know Your heart for them and that they might find life-giving community in Your church. Place Your hands on them so that they may find their own unique voice. I take a moment to pray for a deaf friend or family member 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...

Then Jesus left the vicinity of Tyre and went through Sidon, down to the Sea of Galilee and into the region of the Decapolis. There some people brought to him a man who was deaf and could hardly talk, and they begged Jesus to place his hand on him.

After he took him aside, away from the crowd, Jesus put his fingers into the man's ears. Then he spat and touched the man's tongue. He looked up to heaven and with a deep sigh said to him, 'Ephphatha!' (which means 'Be opened!').

Mark 7:31-34 (NIV UK)

Pope Emeritus Benedict says that, 'this little word, "Ephphatha – Be opened," sums up Christ's entire mission.' He goes on to say,

*'[Jesus] became man so that man, made inwardly deaf and dumb by sin, would become able to hear the voice of God, the voice of love speaking to his heart, and learn to speak in the language of love, to communicate with God and with others.'**

*Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, 2012 Angelus address (Sept. 9, 2012)

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

God, today I yield myself to Your voice of love speaking to my heart. Help me to learn to speak in the language of love, to communicate with You and with others.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, I lean into the promise in Isaiah 50:

*The Sovereign Lord has given me a well-instructed tongue,
to know the word that sustains the weary.
He wakens me morning by morning,
wakens my ear to listen like one being instructed.
Isaiah 50:4 (NIV UK)*

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.