

LECTIO 365 Day Prayers

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

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

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

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

May 2022

May 1	May 2	May 3	May 4
May 5	May 6	May 7	May 8
May 9	May 10	May 11	May 12
May 13	May 14	May 15	May 16
May 17	May 18	May 19	May 20
May 21	May 22	May 23	May 24
May 25	May 26	May 27	May 28
May 29	May 30	May 31	

Audio for Each Day in MP3 Format

[Month of May 2022](#)

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May 01 2022 (click for audio)

How To Hear God Sabbath

Today is Sunday the 1st of May, a day of rest on which we pause our weekday **P.R.A.Y.** rhythm to pray more simply. This week we have been exploring how to hear God's voice, drawing wisdom from Pete Greig's book *How to Hear God**. Today, instead of learning and doing, I intentionally pause to welcome God's presence in my resting and being.

*To find out more about the book go to <https://www.24-7prayer.com/how-to-hear-god/>

Lauren F. Winner describes Sabbath as 'a true cessation from the rhythms of work and world, a time set wholly apart... toward God.'**

** Lauren F Winner, *Mudhouse Sabbath*, Paraclete Press, 2003, p10

Father God, You are worthy of my complete attention and utter adoration. I pause to simply be with You today. As I become aware of the distractions in my mind, I set them aside, one by one, so that I can focus on resting in You.

Pause and pray

Today I remember that God's original plan for humanity was not to achieve great things or strive for success; it was a simple invitation to walk and talk with Him each day...

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day.

Genesis 3:18 (NIV UK)

I take a moment to pause and remember that the only thing God desires in this moment is my presence in His presence.

Pause and Pray

When Jesus met Bartimaeus on the road to Jericho, he asked a simple question: '*What do you want me to do for you?*' (Mark 10:51, NIV UK)

I imagine Jesus asking me the same question, and I take a few moments to respond.

Pause and pray

When Jesus spoke to the crowds, he said, 'My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.' (John 10:27, NIV UK)

I take a few moments now to listen for what Jesus might want to say to me; whether a picture, a phrase or a Bible verse that will bring encouragement or comfort.

Pause and Pray

In Exodus 33, God said to Moses, '*My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.*' (Exodus 33:14, ESV)

Turning my prayers outwards, I name someone I know who really needs to feel God's presence and experience God's rest today. I pray for them now.

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, A Sabbath Blessing, www.petegreig.info

May 02 2022 (click for audio)

The Unrecognisable Voice

Today is Monday the 2nd of May, and together we are exploring how we recognize God's voice in our everyday lives. This week we are reflecting on how God speaks through prophecy and dreams, drawing wisdom from Pete Greig's book, *How to Hear God*.

Pause

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

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

As I become aware of Your presence, open my ears to hear You and reawaken my heart to receive You, now and throughout the day to come.

Rejoice and Reflect

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

*Though a mighty army surrounds me,
my heart will not be afraid.
Even if I am attacked,
I will remain confident.
The one thing I ask of the LORD—
the thing I seek most—
is to live in the house of the LORD all the days of my life,
delighting in the Lord's perfections
and meditating in his Temple.*

Psalm 27:3-4 (NLT)

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on Samuel, a young boy who served in the house of the Lord under Eli the priest. I pick up the story after Samuel has been woken twice by an unknown voice calling his name...

A third time the Lord called, 'Samuel!' And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, 'Here I am; you called me.'

Then Eli realized that the Lord was calling the boy. So Eli told Samuel, 'Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening." So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

The Lord came and stood there, calling as at the other times, 'Samuel! Samuel!'

Then Samuel said, 'Speak, for your servant is listening.'

1 Samuel 3:8-10 (NIV UK)

'It's easy to assume that people in the Bible found faith easier, and certainly that they found hearing God's voice simpler than I do. But Samuel was living at a time when God's voice was far rarer and more unfamiliar than it is for me today. No wonder it took him a few attempts to understand... It's such a relief to see in the story of Samuel that God doesn't give up on him when he fails to recognize his voice. The Lord keeps calling until finally Samuel recognizes and responds.' *

* Pete Greig, *How to Hear God*, (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2022), p.121 and p.123 (quote adapted into the first person).

Ask

Could God be speaking to me but, for whatever reason, I'm not recognizing His voice?

Lord, thank You for Your patience and persistence. I join in with Samuel and pray, 'Speak Lord, Your servant is listening.'

Pause and pray

Who is my Eli? Who helps me to recognize the voice of God in my life?

Lord, what do You want to say to them rather than through them today? Can I give them a Bible verse or a word of encouragement from 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.

A third time the Lord called, 'Samuel!' And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, 'Here I am; you called me.'

Then Eli realized that the Lord was calling the boy. So Eli told Samuel, 'Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening."'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

The Lord came and stood there, calling as at the other times, 'Samuel! Samuel!'

Then Samuel said, 'Speak, for your servant is listening.'

1 Samuel 3:8-10 (NIV UK)

The Hebrew word translated in this passage as 'listening' is often connected with obedience. Samuel is not passively waiting for God to speak; he's actively and attentively listening, ready to act on what he hears. Maybe it was his willing obedience, his readiness to say 'Yes!' to God, that helped Samuel grow to become an important prophet who anointed kings and spoke God's word to Israel.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord, I want to listen for Your prophetic 'now' word to my community and my nation, but when I listen to You my default answer isn't always 'yes'. It's often 'maybe' and sometimes 'no'. I'm sorry. Today, I choose obedience. I am listening attentively, ready to trust in Your direction.

Yielding Promise

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

Blessed... are 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.

Go deeper on today's topic with the book [How to Hear God](#) by Pete Greig.

May 03 2022 (click for audio)

The Eager Prophet

Today is Tuesday the 3rd of May, and this week we are learning to recognize God's voice through dreams and prophecy. Together we are drawing wisdom from Pete Greig's book, *How to Hear God*.

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 and His voice 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

As I become aware of Your presence, open my ears to hear You and reawaken my heart to receive You, now and throughout the day to come.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's direction today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 85...

*Show us your unfailing love, O LORD,
and grant us your salvation.*

*I listen carefully to what God the LORD is saying,
for he speaks peace to his faithful people.*

Psalm 85:7-8a (NLT)

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on the Apostle Paul's teaching about the purpose of prophecy...

Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy. For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to people but to God. Indeed, no one understands them; they utter mysteries by the Spirit. But the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort.

1 Corinthians 14:1-3 (NIV UK)

'...the primary focus of prophecy is others, and the primary purpose of prophecy is their strengthening, encouraging, comfort and edification. In other words, it is not, as is often supposed, a way of exposing, criticizing or pulling people down, and it's only rarely a way of pronouncing judgment. Neither is it primarily about predicting the future. In both Old and New Testaments, prophecy is predominantly a means of declaring God's will and powerfully communicating his heart.' *

* Pete Greig, *How to Hear God*, (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2022), p.115.

Ask

Have I ever received a prophetic word that strengthened, encouraged and comforted me, words that expressed God's loving heart? Have I ever received a word that was called prophetic but did the opposite?

Father, give me a greater measure of discernment – help me to identify the life-giving words You have spoken to me.

Pause and pray

I think of someone I know who has been hurt or disillusioned when someone has handled the gift of prophecy poorly.

Holy Spirit, bring them healing and restore their hope in You.

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...

Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy. For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to people but to God. Indeed, no one understands them; they utter mysteries by the Spirit. But the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort.

1 Corinthians 14:1-3 (NIV UK)

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

I noticed the word 'eagerly'. What do I eagerly desire? How hungry am I today to listen for the 'now' word of God for my family, my church or my nation?

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Holy Spirit, I know that Your word speaks life. Give me Your gift of prophecy. Empower me to share something that brings life, strength and love with everyone I meet today, whether they would call themselves Christians or not.

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:

*What I have said, that I will bring about;
what I have planned, that I will do.
Isaiah 46:11b (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.

Go deeper on today's topic with the book [How to Hear God](#) by Pete Greig.

May 04 2022 (click for audio)

The Hidden Messiah

Today is Wednesday the 4th of May, and this week we are exploring how we recognize God's voice in our everyday lives, drawing wisdom from Pete Greig's book, *How to Hear God*.

Pause

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

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

As I become aware of Your presence, open my ears to hear You and reawaken my heart to receive You, now and throughout the day to come.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in how God reveals His will to me today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 119...

*Be good to your servant,
that I may live and obey your word.
Open my eyes to see
the wonderful truths in your instructions.
I am only a foreigner in the land.
Don't hide your commands from me!
Psalm 119:17-19 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today I return to the story of Jesus' followers leaving Jerusalem after He had been crucified. For those two travelers, all hope seems lost...

*Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; but they were kept from recognizing him.
Luke 24:13-16 (NIV UK)*

How could they not know they were walking with Jesus? Maybe it was because, 'Jesus simply looked slightly different after his resurrection... Sometimes I miss God's presence because he no longer appears to me, or speaks to me, in the familiar ways of yesterday... Sometimes when I think God has gone silent, it's actually that he is speaking differently, in a new dialect more appropriate to the new landscape I am about to enter. If I remain locked in the past by tradition, nostalgia or a stale imagination I will almost certainly miss the new thing that the 'Now God' is forever saying.' *

* Pete Greig, *How to Hear God*, (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2022), p.153 (adapted into the first person).

Ask

Do I find hearing God's voice easy or difficult at present?

God, am I missing what You're saying because I'm too attached to the familiar ways You've spoken to me before? Show me how You are speaking new things to me in new ways today.

Pause and pray

I pray for someone I know who, like the people in this story, is mourning the loss of a loved one.

Jesus, walk the path of grief with them. Help them find comfort in Your presence, even if they don't recognize that You're near them right now.

Pause and pray

Yield

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

Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; but they were kept from recognizing him.

Luke 24:13-16 (NIV UK)

I find it deeply moving that Jesus chose to join His friends as they processed the trauma of His execution. As the resurrected Messiah, Jesus could have been in any place, with anyone, yet He made time to walk and talk with His frightened friends.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Jesus, thank You for walking with me through the painful seasons of my life, even when I haven't recognized Your presence or voice. I choose to trust that You are with me today, speaking to me now, whether I perceive You or not.

Yielding Promise

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

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

Revelation 3:20 (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.

Go deeper on today's topic with the book [How to Hear God](#) by Pete Greig.

May 05 2022 (click for audio)

When God Whispers

Today is Thursday the 5th of May, and this week we are exploring how we listen for God's whisper, drawing wisdom from Pete Greig's book, *How to Hear God*.

Pause

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

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

As I become aware of Your presence, open my ears to hear You and reawaken my heart to receive You, now and throughout the day to come.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's life-giving voice today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 33...

*The word of the LORD holds true,
and we can trust everything he does.
He loves whatever is just and good;
the unfailing love of the LORD fills the earth.
The LORD merely spoke,
and the heavens were created.
He breathed the word,
and all the stars were born.
Psalm 33:4-6 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on how God spoke to Elijah, a burned out, angry and disappointed prophet. Elijah has climbed a mountain to pour out his pain in prayer and now it's God's turn to speak...

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

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

1 Kings 19:11-13a (NIV UK)

‘Elijah must have climbed Mount Horeb with great expectations. He knew very well that this was where Moses had received the Ten Commandments. Stone tablets [that] had been inscribed by the very finger of God amid howling winds, burning trees and boulders split by lightning. And sure enough, these same signs do indeed break loose... and yet after each one a very surprising thing is said: “The Lord was not in [them]”...

‘Where, then, is God? And the answer, of course, is that his presence is manifest in the dullness after the drama. The Great Elemental Force shows himself gentle and makes himself personal in a “still small voice”.’ *

* Pete Greig, *How to Hear God*, (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2022), p.151-152.

Ask

Lord, I'd love a dramatic encounter with You, but on this ordinary morning I quiet myself to meet with my extraordinary God. Help me to hear Your whisper in the midst of the dullness and familiar routines of another day.

Pause and pray

I name someone I know who, like Elijah, is exhausted or struggling with their mental health.

God, gently whisper to them of Your love; speak words of healing and restoration today.

Pause and pray

Yield

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

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

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

1 Kings 19:11-13a (NIV UK)

My daughter is an expert whisperer – she has mastered making as little sound as possible so I have to get very close and be completely quiet in order to hear what she’s saying. Maybe God chose to whisper to Elijah because He, like my daughter, wanted Elijah to come a lot closer. At God’s quiet invitation, this bruised and broken man left his cave to listen attentively to words that healed his heart and changed the direction of His life.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

God, recognizing Your gentle whisper isn't easy. Sometimes I'm making so much noise I'm pretty sure I drown You out. Today, I yield the conversation to You. Help me quiet my mind and body long enough to hear Your still small voice.

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:

'...there is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs.'

Matthew 10:26-27 (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.

Go deeper on today's topic with the book [How to Hear God](#) by Pete Greig.

May 06 2022 (click for audio)

The Dreamers

Today is Friday the 6th of May, and we are exploring how God speaks through dreams and visions. Together we will meditate on the word and draw wisdom from Pete Greig's book, *How to Hear God*.

Pause

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

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

As I become aware of Your presence, open my ears to hear You and reawaken my heart to receive You, now and throughout the day to come.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice that God was with me as I slept last night, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 16...

*I will bless the LORD who guides me;
even at night my heart instructs me.
I know the LORD is always with me.
I will not be shaken, for he is right beside me.
No wonder my heart is glad, and I rejoice.
My body rests in safety.
Psalm 16:7-9 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on part of Joel's prophecy to the people of Judah...

*'And afterwards,
I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,
your old men will dream dreams,
your young men will see visions.
Even on my servants, both men and women,
I will pour out my Spirit in those days.'
Joel 2:28-29 (NIV UK)*

According to Joel, 'The primary mark of the outpouring of the Spirit on all flesh in these last days... is not speaking in tongues, shaking or falling to the ground. It is an increase in dreams and visions. If I am filled with the Spirit, I should therefore expect God to speak to me in this way.' *

* Pete Greig, *How to Hear God*, (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2022), p.172 (adapted into the first person).

Ask

When I get into bed each night, how expectant am I that God will speak to me as I dream?

God, most nights all I hope for as my head hits the pillow is an undisturbed night. But I don't want to miss out on any way You want to speak. I invite You into my dreams. Speak to me through my subconscious tonight.

Pause and pray

The Bible tells stories of God speaking to rulers and people in authority through their dreams (Gen. 41, Dan. 2, Matt. 27:19).

God, I name the leaders of my nation. Speak to them in dreams and connect them with Christians who can help them interpret what You're saying.

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 afterwards,
I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,
your old men will dream dreams,
your young men will see visions.
Even on my servants, both men and women,
I will pour out my Spirit in those days.'*

Joel 2:28-29 (NIV UK)

Joel's prophecy was fulfilled when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Early Church at Pentecost. It was this prophesied Spirit that propelled Peter out of a prayer meeting to preach and see thousands choose to follow Jesus (Acts 2). It's that same Spirit that fills and empowers me, opening my ears to hear God speak through Jesus, through the Bible and through prophecies, dreams and visions today.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

God, I confess that I can miss Your voice, inattentive to the many surprising ways You speak. I don't want my expectations to limit how I hear You, so I ask today – give me dreams and visions 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 John's Gospel:

...God gives the Spirit without limit.

John 3:34 (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.

Go deeper on today's topic with the book [How to Hear God](#) by Pete Greig.

May 07 2022 (click for audio)

The Interpreter

Today is Saturday the 7th of May, and we are exploring how God speaks through dreams. Together we will meditate on His word and draw wisdom from Pete Greig's book, *How to Hear God*.

Pause

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

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

As I become aware of Your presence, open my ears to hear You and reawaken my heart to receive You, now and throughout the day to come.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice that God reveals mysteries today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Daniel 2...

*'Praise the name of God forever and ever,
for he has all wisdom and power.
He controls the course of world events;
he removes kings and sets up other kings.
He gives wisdom to the wise
and knowledge to the scholars.
He reveals deep and mysterious things
and knows what lies hidden in darkness,
though he is surrounded by light.'*

Daniel 2:20-22 (NLT)

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on the story of one of the most famous dreamers in the Bible: Daniel, a young Jewish man, living in exile under a foreign power. The king he now serves is disturbed by a dream and none of his advisors have been able to interpret it...

Arioch took Daniel to the king at once and said, 'I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can tell the king what his dream means.'

The king asked Daniel... 'Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?'

Daniel replied, 'No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about, but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown

King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come.'

Daniel 2:25-28a (NIV UK)

It's tempting to try and approach dreams as a code to be cracked or a language to be deciphered, but Daniel was, 'careful to say that the interpretation of dreams was not a skill [he] had learned, but [rather] a gift [he] had received from God. I will never understand dreams and visions until I ask God to give me insight.' *

* Pete Greig, *How to Hear God*, (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2022), p.180-181 (adapted into the first person).

Ask

God, revealer of mysteries, help me be alert to You in my dreams, and give me insight to interpret what You're saying. Is there a dream I've had recently that You are speaking through?

Pause and pray

Daniel was an exile, forced to leave his homeland and serve a foreign king in Babylon. The United Nations Refugee Agency estimated that by mid 2021, more than 84 million people had been forcibly displaced from their homes.**

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

I choose a nation like Ukraine, Syria or Afghanistan and pray for the millions of refugees who have been forced to flee. Lord, lead them to safe homes and welcoming communities; speak words of hope to them as they dream of a new future.

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.

Arioch took Daniel to the king at once and said, 'I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can tell the king what his dream means.'

The king asked Daniel... 'Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?'

Daniel replied, 'No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about, but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come.'

Daniel 2:25-28a (NIV UK)

When Daniel learned of Nebuchadnezzar's absurd challenge to not only interpret his dream, but to somehow discern its content, he gathered his friends and asked them to pray. In response to their united prayers, God revealed the mystery to Daniel in a vision.

Who are the people I ask to pray with me when I need to hear the voice of God?

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord, I confess that, unlike Daniel, I often rely on my own knowledge and instincts when I need direction. God in heaven, who reveals mysteries, I yield my decision-making to You. Teach me to trust You fully and to continually return to You for insight throughout my day.

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:

If you don't know what you're doing, pray to the Father. He loves to help. You'll get his help, and won't be condescended to when you ask for it. Ask boldly, believingly, without a second thought.

James 1:5-7 (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.

Go deeper on today's topic with the book [How to Hear God](#) by Pete Greig.

May 08 2022 (click for audio)

A Sabbath Prayer

Today is Sunday the 8th of May, a day of rest on which we pause our weekday P.R.A.Y. rhythm and pray more simply.

This week we have been exploring how to hear God's voice, drawing wisdom from Pete Greig's book *How to Hear God*.* Today, instead of learning and doing, I return to this season's Sabbath prayer and intentionally pause to welcome God's presence in my resting and being.

*To find out more about the book go to <https://www.24-7prayer.com/how-to-hear-god/>

Lauren F. Winner describes Sabbath as 'a true cessation from the rhythms of work and world, a time set wholly apart... toward God.'**

** Lauren F Winner, *Mudhouse Sabbath*, (Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2003), p.10.

Father God, You are worthy of my complete attention and utter adoration. I pause to simply be with You today. As I become aware of the distractions in my mind, I set them aside, one by one, so that I can focus on resting in You.

Pause and pray

Today I remember that God's original plan for humanity was not to achieve great things or strive for success; it was a simple invitation to walk and talk with Him each day...

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day.

Genesis 3:8 (NIV UK)

I take a moment to pause and remember that the only thing God desires in this moment is my presence in His presence.

Pause and Pray

When Jesus meets Bartimaeus on the road to Jericho, he asks a simple question: 'What do you want me to do for you?'(Mark 10:51)

I imagine Jesus asking me the same question, and I take a few moments to respond.

Pause and pray

When Jesus spoke to the crowds, he said, 'My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.' (John 10:27)

I take a few moments now to listen for what Jesus might want to say to me, whether a picture, a phrase or a Bible verse, that will bring encouragement or comfort.

Pause and Pray

In Exodus 33, God said to Moses, 'My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.' (Exodus 33:14 ESV)

Turning my prayers outwards, I name someone I know who really needs to feel God's presence and experience God's rest today. I pray for them now.

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, A Sabbath Blessing, www.petegreig.info

May 09 2022 (click for audio)

A Question of Conscience

It's Monday the 9th of May. This week we will conclude our three-week series exploring God's Word and God's Whisper in our lives. Last week we focused on how God speaks through prophecy and dreams, and today we turn our attention to the way he whispers to and through our consciences.

Pause

But first, 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

Like Your servant Samuel in the temple long ago, sometimes I mistake Your voice for others, and then at other times I miss it altogether. So I echo Samuel's prayer now, making his heartfelt words my own as I say: 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.' (1 Samuel 3:9)

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's amazing grace today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 103:

*The Lord is compassionate and gracious,
slow to anger, abounding in love.
He will not always accuse,
nor will he harbor his anger for ever;
he does not treat us as our sins deserve
or repay us according to our iniquities.
For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
so great is his love for those who fear him;
as far as the east is from the west,
so far has he removed our transgressions from us.*

Psalm 103:8-12 (NIVUK)

Pause and pray

One of the most pervasive ways in which God whispers to the human soul is through the conscience. It is vital therefore to nurture and respect my conscience, keeping it 'clear', as the apostle Paul urges his disciple Timothy in today's reading:

Timothy, my son, here are my instructions for you, based on the prophetic words spoken about you earlier. May they help you fight well in the Lord's battles. Cling to your faith in Christ, and keep your conscience clear. For some people have deliberately violated their consciences; as a result, their faith has been shipwrecked.

1 Timothy 1: 18-19 (NLT)

My conscience can be ‘seared’ (1 Tim. 4:2), ‘corrupted’ (Titus 1:15), ‘defiled’ (1 Cor. 8:7) and ‘deliberately violated’ as Paul says here to Timothy. I know this is true through personal experience. When I sin for the first time in a particular way, my conscience stabs me with guilt. But if I continue sinning in this way, the objections of my conscience will gradually be dulled and even silenced. Eventually, tragically, I will stop feeling guilt altogether. But the good news is that this damage can be reversed, my conscience can be re-sensitized. It’s not quick, but it is entirely possible through the simple practices of prayerful self-examination and regular repentance at the heart of Lectio 365.*

* Adapted from Pete Greig, *How To Hear God: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2022), pp. 185-6.

Ask

I pause now to examine my conscience. Is it troubling me in any way? What thoughts, words or deeds do I need to confess to the Lord?

Pause and pray

I pray now for those who have ‘deliberately violated their consciences,’ so that, ‘as a result, their faith has been shipwrecked’ (V 19)

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.

Timothy, my son, here are my instructions for you, based on the prophetic words spoken about you earlier. May they help you fight well in the Lord’s battles. Cling to your faith in Christ, and keep your conscience clear. For some people have deliberately violated their consciences; as a result, their faith has been shipwrecked.

1 Timothy 1: 18-19 (NLT)

God certainly speaks through our consciences, but ... they are not infallible. Sometimes we may feel guilty about things that simply aren’t wrong... Or we may experience a crippling sense of shame regarding past sins, even when we’ve been fully forgiven. It’s important to resist such false feelings of guilt, and to stand instead upon God’s promise that ‘there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus’ (Rom. 8:1).** Is my conscience lying to me – making me feel ashamed in areas I’ve been forgiven, or making me feel guilty for things that aren’t sinful?

** ibid p. 186.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

I yield to the Lord now using the words of King David from Psalm 51:

*Oh, give me back my joy again;
you have broken me—
now let me rejoice.
Don't keep looking at my sins.
Remove the stain of my guilt.
Create in me a clean heart, O God.
Renew a loyal spirit within me.
Do not banish me from your presence,
and don't take your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and make me willing to obey you.
Amen*

Psalm 51:8-12 (NLT)

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says to me again in Psalm 103:

*As high as the heavens are above the earth,
so great is my love for you who fear me;
as far as the east is from the west,
so far have I removed your transgressions from you.*

Personalized from Psalm 103:11-12 (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.

Go deeper on today's topic with the book *How to Hear God* by Pete Greig.

May 10 2022 (click for audio)

God's Whisper in Community

It's Tuesday the 10th of May. Yesterday we focused our prayers on the way God whispers through our consciences, and today we turn our attention to the way he speaks through others in community.

Pause

But first, 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

Like Your servant Samuel in the temple long ago, sometimes I mistake Your voice for others, and then at other times I miss it altogether. So I echo Samuel's prayer now, making his heartfelt words my own as I say: 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.' (1 Samuel 3:9)

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in the great assembly, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 22:

*I will praise you in the great assembly.
I will fulfill my vows in the presence of those who worship you.
The poor will eat and be satisfied.
All who seek the Lord will praise him.
Their hearts will rejoice with everlasting joy.
The whole earth will acknowledge the Lord and return to him.*

Psalm 22: 25-27a (NLT)

Pause and pray

One of the main ways God speaks into our lives is through other people in the Christian community – through sermons and testimonies, godly counsel, and personal conversation. Today's reading uses the metaphor of a body to describe how this works:

Speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.
Ephesians 4:15-16 (NIV UK)

'There's a story from the lives of the Desert Fathers about an old man who fasted for seventy weeks, allowing himself to eat only once a week, because he was zealously seeking a word from God.

Eventually, he said to himself, "See how much labor I have undertaken and it has been of no profit to me. I will go, therefore, to my brother and ask him about it."

'He went outside and an angel of the Lord was sent to him, to say, "The seventy weeks you fasted did

not make you any closer to God. Now because you have been humbled and are going off to your brother, I have been sent to explain the passage to you." ... Sometimes, no matter how much we pray and fast for a supernatural word from God, or a dramatic discovery in Scripture, the Lord refuses to oblige. Instead, he waits for us to humble ourselves like that old Desert Father, to seek his voice "merely" through another person.*

* Pete Greig, *How To Hear God: A Simple Guide for Normal People*(London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2022), pp. 202-3.

Ask

Is there someone who consistently speaks God's wisdom and word into my life? Is there anything I'm asking of God right now that I could also be asking of another person?

Pause and pray

The apostle James cautions those who teach the Scriptures that they 'will be judged more strictly' (James 3:1). I take time now to pray for someone who carries the serious responsibility of bringing God's word to his church.

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.

Speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Ephesians 4:15-16 (NIV UK)

Do I ever feel frustrated with my local church? The apostle Paul says a surprising thing in these verses: that the key to Christian maturity is a culture of loving candor in which people talk to one another with both honesty and kindness. Is there anyone the Holy Spirit might be asking me to have an uncomfortable conversation with this week?

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Open my ears, Lord, to hear You speaking through other people.

Open my eyes, Lord, to see You working in other people.

Open my heart, Lord, to receive Your help from other people today.

Amen

Yielding Promise

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

*'Though the mountains be shaken
and the hills be removed,
yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken
nor my covenant of peace be removed.'*

Isaiah 54:10

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,

being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,

being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost,

proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.

Amen.

Go deeper on today's topic with the book *How to Hear God* by Pete Greig.

May 11 2022 (click for audio)

God's Whisper in Creation

It's Wednesday the 11th of May. This week we are concluding our series exploring God's word and God's whisper in our lives. On Monday we focused on conscience, yesterday on community, and today we turn our attention to the ways in which He whispers to our souls in and through creation.

Pause

But first, 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

Like Your servant Samuel in the temple long ago, sometimes I mistake Your voice for others, and then at other times I miss it altogether. So I echo Samuel's prayer now, making his heartfelt words my own as I say: 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.' (1 Samuel 3:9)

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in the great works of God today, joining with the ancient praise of all His people in the words of Psalm 92:

*It is good to give thanks to the LORD,
to sing praises to the Most High.
It is good to proclaim your unfailing love in the morning,
your faithfulness in the evening,
accompanied by a ten-stringed instrument, a harp,
and the melody of a lyre.
You thrill me, LORD, with all you have done for me!
I sing for joy because of what you have done.
O Lord, what great works you do!
And how deep are your thoughts.
Psalm 92:1-5 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today I am celebrating the ways in which the Creator of the cosmos speaks to me through the wonderful world He has made:

*The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.
Day after day they pour forth speech;
night after night they reveal knowledge.
They have no speech, they use no words;*

*no sound is heard from them.
Yet their voice goes out into all the earth,
their words to the ends of the world.
Psalm 19:1-4a (NIV UK)*

In the third century AD, Anthony of the Desert moved out into the Egyptian wilderness to pray. On one occasion, a visitor observing his simple lifestyle asked the great man how he coped without the comfort of books. 'My book,' replied Anthony, 'is the nature of created things, and as often as I have a mind to read the words of God, it is at my hand.'*

* Gary Thomas, *Sacred Pathways*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000) p. 39

Ask

Allowing my eyes to focus upon some aspect of God's creation that is visible to me now, I ask myself what it shows me of His nature. What might He be saying to me through this particular work of His hands?

Pause and pray

Creation speaks of God's glory, but also of our neglect. For example, there will be more plastic than fish in the world's oceans by 2050 unless we stop using single-use items such as plastic bags and bottles.** And so I pray now for my own political leaders to honor the environmental pledges they made at COP26 in Glasgow.

** This is a prediction from the United Nations. To join a worldwide community of intercessors addressing the environmental crisis check out <https://www.climateintercessors.org>.

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 heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.
Day after day they pour forth speech;
night after night they reveal knowledge.
They have no speech, they use no words;
no sound is heard from them.
Yet their voice goes out into all the earth,
their words to the ends of the world.
Psalm 19:1-4a (NIV UK)*

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin was a Jesuit priest, a renowned scientist, paleontologist and philosopher. He once said that, 'The world has little by little caught fire in my sight until, aflame all around me, it has become almost luminous from within... By means of all created things, without exception, the

divine assails us, penetrates us and molds us.' I pause now to let the fullness of that statement sink in: God is speaking, he says, through 'all created things, without exception'.***

*** Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, cited in *How to Hear God: A Simple Guide for Normal People*, by Pete Greig, (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2022) pp. 100 and 197

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Creator God, forgive me for the times I have discounted or even despised Your voice in the natural world, because I only wanted to hear You speak in supernatural ways. Open my eyes to see You today in the world all around me. Open my ears to hear You in other people. Open my heart to host Your presence in every experience that comes my way.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me affirms my attentiveness in Proverbs 8:

*Blessed are those who listen to me,
watching daily at my doors,
waiting at my doorway.
For those who find me find life
and receive favor from the LORD.*
Proverbs 8:34-35 (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.

Go deeper on today's topic with the book How to Hear God by Pete Greig.

May 12 2022 (click for audio)

God's Whisper in Culture

It's Thursday the 12th of May. This week we are concluding our series exploring How to Hear God. Having focused over the last three days on conscience, community, and creation, today we turn our attention to the ways in which God whispers in and through culture.

Pause

But first, 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

Like Your servant Samuel in the temple long ago, sometimes I mistake Your voice for others, and then at other times I miss it altogether. So I echo Samuel's prayer now, making his heartfelt words my own as I say: 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.' (1 Samuel 3:9)

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's relentless attentiveness towards me today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 139...

*How precious are your thoughts about me, O God.
They cannot be numbered!
I can't even count them;
they outnumber the grains of sand!
And when I wake up,
you are still with me!
Psalm 139:17-18 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

In today's reading I join the apostle Paul in Athens. He is about to use a pagan cultural reference point, that should have been deeply offensive to him as a Jew, in order to point his hearers towards Jesus.

Paul... stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: 'People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship – and this is what I am going to proclaim to you.

'The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. ... He is not far from any one of us. "For in him we live and move and have our being." As some of your own

poets have said, “We are his offspring.”

Acts 17:22-26, 28 (NIV UK)

‘[Paul’s] years studying the Scriptures and learning to hear the voice of God have brought him to this extraordinary place in which he can trace the whisper of God in a pagan text amid a culture littered with idolatrous shrines. And in many ways, this is the aim of [Lectio365]: that we become so familiar with the word of God in... Scripture... that we are enabled to hear God speak in all the earth through people and things that are not in any way consciously Christian.’*

* Pete Greig, *How To Hear God: A Simple Guide for Normal People*(London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2022), p. 211.

Ask

Where in the so-called ‘secular’ world can I see God at work right now? Is there a non-Christian voice through which the Holy Spirit might be speaking to me?

Pause and pray

Thinking of a friend who doesn’t yet know Jesus, I ask God to speak to them through the music or the movies or the celebrities they particularly admire.

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.

Paul... stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: ‘People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship – and this is what I am going to proclaim to you.

‘The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else... He is not far from any one of us. “For in him we live and move and have our being.” As some of your own poets have said, “We are his offspring.”’

Acts 17:22-26,28 (NIV UK)

Paul was “greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols” (Acts 17:16). It’s worth pausing to register that;... some of us probably feel very differently. We are so comfortable within our context that we are in danger of assimilation. We no longer find any aspect of its idolatry “greatly” – or even mildly – distressing. Our problem is not with hearing God’s voice in the culture, but rather with completely confusing the spirit of the age with the Spirit of God. We switch off the gift of “discernment of spirits” when we go to the cinema ... or when we attend a lecture, or when we shop

at the mall. We would never consider abandoning a box set because of its darkness or depravity, or withdrawing from an acquaintance whose influence was consistently detrimental to our holiness. Our consciences are rarely troubled by the culture.'**

** Pete Greig, *How To Hear God: A Simple Guide for Normal People*(London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2022), p. 211.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Holy God, I am sorry for the ways in which I tolerate, accommodate and even celebrate things that are evil in my culture. Set me apart today so that I can hear You and speak of You in all things. Amen

Yielding Promise

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

'Call to me, and I will answer and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.'
Jeremiah 33:3 (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.

Go deeper on today's topic with the book [How to Hear God](#)by Pete Greig.

May 13 2022 (click for audio)

The Word, the Whisper and the Way

It's Friday the 13th of May and, for almost three weeks now, we've been reflecting each day on the dynamics of God's word and His whisper in our lives. Today and tomorrow we will conclude this series, drawing together the various themes we've been exploring.

Pause

And so, 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

Like Your servant Samuel in the temple long ago, sometimes I mistake Your voice for others, and then at other times I miss it altogether. So I echo Samuel's prayer now, making his heartfelt words my own as I say: 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.' (1 Samuel 3:9)

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice today in the amazing way God believes in me, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 41...

*You know me inside and out, you hold me together,
you never fail to stand me tall in your presence
so I can look you in the eye.*

*Blessed is God, Israel's God,
always, always, always.
Yes. Yes. Yes.*

Psalm 41:12-13 (MSG)

Pause and pray

In today's reading we join Jesus at a dramatic moment. He is just about to turn six stone jars of water into 120 gallons – almost 1,000 bottles – of exceptionally good wine...

On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, 'They have no more wine.'

'Woman, why do you involve me?' Jesus replied. 'My hour has not yet come.'
His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.'

John 2:1-5 (NIV UK)

When Jesus says to Mary, 'My hour has not yet come', she says to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you'. 'With these words, Mary single-handedly kick-starts the miracle-working ministry of Jesus. She's been sitting on the angelic prophecies for thirty years, watching her son growing into manhood,

knowing him better than anyone else on earth, and now it is Mary (not Jesus) who senses that his time has come.* By simply saying 'yes' to Jesus in quite a menial way – filling six stone jars with 120 gallons of water – those servants stepped from the side-lines of that party into the headlines of human history.

* Pete Greig, *How To Hear God: A Simple Guide for Normal People*(London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2022), p.231.

Ask

Reflecting upon the coming day, what simple task might Jesus be asking me to do for His glory?

Pause and pray

Thinking about the significance of this first miracle taking place at a wedding, I pray now for someone I know who is nearly or newly married.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I look out for the rich symbolism within this familiar story...

On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, 'They have no more wine.'

'Woman, why do you involve me?' Jesus replied. 'My hour has not yet come.'

His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.'

John 2:1-5 (NIV UK)

In her beautiful memoir, *Even the Sparrow*, Jill Weber (one of our Lectio365 hosts) describes approaching the Lord with a heart willing to 'do whatever he tells you'. It's a posture, she says, in which we say to God: 'The answer is yes, but what's the question? Basically: yes. Yes to whatever God thinks I should do because he's obviously smarter, wiser, more creative than I am ... Yes, because he knows the opportunities or peril lurking around the next corner. Yes, before he tells me what I'm saying yes to ... I say yes then I listen with the intent to obey what I hear. Because it's all just a crazy big experiment anyway.'**

** Jill Weber, *Even the Sparrow: A Pilgrim's Guide to Prayer, Trust, and Following Jesus*(Edinburgh: Muddy Pearl, 2019) p.20.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord, I simply say yes to you today. Now what is the question?

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this challenging time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me reminds me of my priorities in John 10:

'My sheep listen to my voice,' he says. '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.

Go deeper on today's topic with the book [How to Hear God](#) by Pete Greig.

May 14 2022 (click for audio)

Burning Hearts

It's Saturday the 14th of May, the final day in our three-week series of prayerful reflections drawn from my book *How to Hear God*. I hope it's been a helpful and encouraging journey.

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

Like Your servant Samuel in the temple long ago, sometimes I mistake Your voice for others, and then at other times I miss it altogether. So I echo Samuel's prayer now, making his heartfelt words my own as I say: 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.' (1 Samuel 3:9)

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's glory, strength, and peace today, joining with the ancient praise of all His people in the words of Psalm 29...

*The voice of the LORD twists mighty oaks
and strips the forests bare.*

In his Temple everyone shouts, "Glory!"

The Lord rules over the floodwaters.

The Lord reigns as king forever.

The Lord gives his people strength.

The Lord blesses them with peace.

Psalm 29:9-11 (NLT)

Pause and pray

As we conclude our series on hearing God, we return to the Emmaus road story which has guided our prayers more than any other during these past three weeks:

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

Luke 24:30-32 (NIV UK)

'Having explored many different ways in which the Lord speaks – through the Bible and prophecy, through dreams, conscience, community, creation and culture – we finish where we began: with the ultimate Word of God in Jesus Christ. It is Jesus who comes to us covertly, disguised in the ordinary... He enters our homes before we've had a chance to tidy them, sits down at our meal tables, half

uninvited, and breaks our hearts by breaking bread... The more we say "yes" to the things he says, the more familiar and precious his voice becomes, until, ultimately, at the end of the road, at the end of the day, at the end of our lives, we will look back with a mixture of wonder and joy and say with those first disciples: "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked?"**

* Pete Greig, *How To Hear God: A Simple Guide for Normal People*(London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2022), p.235.

Ask

Remembering a time when Jesus spoke to me in the past, and when perhaps my heart burned within me, I ask Him to do it again; opening my eyes to His presence and setting my heart on fire.

Pause and pray

The couple from Emmaus rushed back to Jerusalem and 'told what had happened on the way' (v.35).I ask You Lord to give me both the excitement and the opportunity today to share with someone what You've said and done in my life.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I imagine the warm glow of the oil lamp, the smell of the cooking, and the crumbs falling to the table from the loaf that Jesus is tearing in two.

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

Luke 24:30-32 (NIVUK)

'They hurried out immediately, walking seven miles in the darkness back to Jerusalem. "There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together and saying, 'It is true! The Lord has risen'" (Luke 24:33-34a). Within five weeks of this epiphany in Emmaus, some 3,000 people in Jerusalem were saying the same thing: "It is true! The Lord has risen!" Within a decade, it's estimated that five thousand people in every part of the Roman Empire were saying it too. By the end of the third century, there were perhaps five million people in some sixty-five thousand house churches also declaring: "It is true! The Lord has risen!" And today there are some two billion people on every continent and in most (not all) nations who call themselves believers in the resurrected Christ.'**

**ibid p.232.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Living Lord Jesus, I love Your voice. You have opened my ears to hear Your words, now loosen my tongue to speak Your words to those who can't or won't hear You in any other way. In my heart I

revere you as Lord, and prepare myself to give an answer today to anyone who asks me to explain the hope I have in You. (1 Peter 3:15)

Amen.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Luke 12:

'Don't worry... The Holy Spirit will give you the right words when the time comes.'

Luke 12:12 (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.

Go deeper on today's topic with the book How to Hear God by Pete Greig.

May 15 2022 (click for audio)

A Sabbath Prayer

Today is Sunday the 15th of May, a day of rest on which we pause our weekday P.R.A.Y. rhythm and pray more simply.

This week we have been exploring how to hear God's voice, drawing wisdom from Pete Greig's book *How to Hear God*.* Today, instead of learning and doing, I return to this season's Sabbath prayer and intentionally pause to welcome God's presence in my resting and being.

*To find out more about the book go to <https://www.24-7prayer.com/how-to-hear-god/>

Lauren F. Winner describes Sabbath as 'a true cessation from the rhythms of work and world, a time set wholly apart... toward God.'**

** Lauren F Winner, *Mudhouse Sabbath*, (Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2003), p.10.

Father God, You are worthy of my complete attention and utter adoration. I pause to simply be with You today. As I become aware of the distractions in my mind, I set them aside, one by one, so that I can focus on resting in You.

Pause and pray

Today I remember that God's original plan for humanity was not to achieve great things or strive for success; it was a simple invitation to walk and talk with Him each day...

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day.

Genesis 3:8 (NIV UK)

I take a moment to pause and remember that the only thing God desires in this moment is my presence in His presence.

Pause and pray

When Jesus meets Bartimaeus on the road to Jericho, he asks a simple question: 'What do you want me to do for you?' (Mark 10:51)

I imagine Jesus asking me the same question, and I take a few moments to respond.

Pause and Pray

When Jesus spoke to the crowds, he said, 'My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.' (John 10:27)

I take a few moments now to listen for what Jesus might want to say to me, whether a picture, a phrase or a Bible verse, that will bring encouragement or comfort.

Pause and Pray

In Exodus 33, God said to Moses, 'My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.' (Exodus 33:14 ESV)

Turning my prayers outwards, I name someone I know who really needs to feel God's presence and experience God's rest today. I pray for them now.

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, A Sabbath Blessing,www.petegreig.info

May 16 2022 (click for audio)

An Anxious Age

Today is Monday the 16th of May. We live in an anxious age. It's easy to worry about our health, our finances, about war and conflict that seem closer than ever. This week we are exploring what it means to live without anxiety or fear.

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 Peace, I offer You my worries, I bring You my brokenness and I surrender my striving. As I rest in Your presence, I receive Your peace.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's love today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 94...

*When I said, 'My foot is slipping,'
your unfailing love, LORD, supported me.
When anxiety was great within me,
your consolation brought me joy.
Psalm 94:18-19 (NIV UK)*

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on words the Apostle Paul wrote from Rome whilst imprisoned and under the threat of execution.

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

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

Philippians 4:4-9 (NIV UK)

If anyone has a reason to be miserable, it is someone chained in a cell. If there has ever been a place designed to discourage the gentle treatment of others, it is a prison. If anyone has a reason to be

anxious – emotions pulled in all directions – it is a prisoner on death row who is still hoping for release. Yet Paul says: Rejoice! Be kind! Don't be anxious! Pray!

Ask

Lord, whatever is making me fearful or anxious now, let me know that You are near. Help me to pray well, to be thankful, and to experience Your peace today.

Pause and pray

I think of someone whose situation is much worse than mine right now, someone who is experiencing debilitating fear and anxiety.

Lord, may they experience You today as the God of Peace

Pause and pray

Yield

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

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

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

Philippians 4:4-9 (NIV UK)

It is much easier for me to stop worrying about something when I know what is going on. Uncertainty makes me anxious because it means I am not in control. But Paul promises 'the peace of God, which transcends all understanding'. I don't have to know the answers. I do need to trust God.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord, sometimes I get anxious, but today I yield myself to the nearness of Your presence. Letting go of my desperate need to understand everything first, I put my trust in You, that You will guard my fragile heart.

Yielding Promise

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

[He] is able [to] keep [me] from stumbling and to present [me] before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy.

Jude 24 (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.

May 17 2022 (click for audio)

Facing The Fear Of Sickness And Disease

Today is tuesday the 17th of May, and this week we are exploring what it means to live without anxiety or fear.

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

God of Peace, I offer You my worries, I bring You my brokenness and I surrender my striving. As I rest in Your presence, I receive Your peace.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God’s practical kindness today, joining with the ancient praise of all God’s people in the words of Psalm 94...

*The minute I said, ‘I’m slipping, I’m falling,’
your love, GOD, took hold and held me fast.
When I was upset and beside myself,
you calmed me down and cheered me up.
Psalm 94:18-19 (MSG)*

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on an ancient poem, written at a time when life was much less certain than it is even in our own uncertain age.

*Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High
will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.
I will say of the LORD, ‘He is my refuge and my fortress,
my God, in whom I trust.’
Surely he will save you
from the fowler’s snare
and from the deadly pestilence.
He will cover you with his feathers,
and under his wings you will find refuge;
his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.*

*You will not fear the terror of night,
nor the arrow that flies by day,
nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness,
nor the plague that destroys at midday.
A thousand may fall at your side,
ten thousand at your right hand,
but it will not come near you.*

Psalm 91:1-7 (NIV UK)

It would be nice to think that following Christ would provide immunity from every sickness and disease, from coronavirus to cancer. We pray for protection. We pray for healing, but, being human, we will each face grief and sorrow in our lives. What the psalmist offers is the way to be free from the crippling fear of disease – by learning to live in God.

Ask

Lord, may I learn to dwell in the shelter of your presence, to know you as a mighty fortress – a place of refuge against all the fears and anxieties which trouble me.

Pause and pray

I think of someone I know who is seriously unwell, or who is caring for someone close to them who is sick.

Father, may they experience your calming peace in the middle of their trauma and discomfort. May they put their trust in You, and experience Your healing touch.

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.

*Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High
will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.
I will say of the LORD, 'He is my refuge and my fortress,
my God, in whom I trust.'
Surely he will save you
from the fowler's snare
and from the deadly pestilence.
He will cover you with his feathers,
and under his wings you will find refuge;
his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.
You will not fear the terror of night,
nor the arrow that flies by day,*

*nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness,
nor the plague that destroys at midday.
A thousand may fall at your side,
ten thousand at your right hand,
but it will not come near you.*
Psalm 91:1-7 (NIV UK)

I notice that the psalmist doesn't just say, 'The Lord is my refuge and my fortress'. He announces, 'I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.'" This is more than a promise I need to hear; it is a declaration to be spoken aloud – a bold confession of my faith.
'Whatever the circumstances, God, I trust in you.'

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord, whatever challenge I face, to my health or that of my family and friends, both now and in the future, I yield myself to You, my refuge and my fortress, my God in whom I trust.

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 121:

*The LORD will keep you from all harm –
he will watch over your life;
the LORD will watch over your coming and going
both now and for evermore.*

Psalm 121:7-8 (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.

May 18 2022 (click for audio)

Facing The Fear Of Violence And War

Today is Wednesday the 18th of May, and this week we are exploring what it means to live without anxiety or fear.

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 Peace, I offer You my worries, I bring You my brokenness and I surrender my striving. As I rest in Your presence, I receive Your peace.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's works of power today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 46...

He causes wars to end throughout the earth.

He breaks the bow and snaps the spear;

he burns the shields with fire.

'Be still, and know that I am God!

I will be honored by every nation.

I will be honored throughout the world.'

Psalm 46:9-10 (NLT)

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on a psalm which speaks of the terrible impact of war in the ancient world.

O God, the nations have invaded your inheritance;

they have defiled your holy temple,

they have reduced Jerusalem to rubble.

They have left the dead bodies of your servants

as food for the birds of the sky,

the flesh of your own people for the animals of the wild.

They have poured out blood like water

all around Jerusalem,

and there is no one to bury the dead.

We are objects of contempt to our neighbors,

of scorn and derision to those around us.

How long, LORD? Will you be angry for ever?

*How long will your jealousy burn like fire?
Pour out your wrath on the nations
that do not acknowledge you,
on the kingdoms
that do not call on your name;
for they have devoured Jacob
and devastated his homeland.*

Psalm 79:1-7 (NIV UK)

Brutal wars are nothing new. When the Babylonians conquered Jerusalem, as the final verse of this text says, they both massacred the population and razed the city to the dust. The psalmist responds with an angry, honest prayer, which is full of questions. He is wrestling with God in the face of devastating grief, trauma, and injustice.

Ask

God, sometimes I am afraid and sometimes I don't understand why You seem to allow people to act the way they do with such cruel violence. Help me not to turn away from the suffering of those who are my neighbors. Show me how to pray well. May Your kingdom come, and Your will be done.

Pause and pray

*Lord, I pray for children, women and men who are suffering today because of wars around the world. I pray for Ukraine, but also for those caught up in the now less-remembered wars in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Yemen, and Mexico's drug war, in which more than 350,000 people have lost their lives.**

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.

*O God, the nations have invaded your inheritance;
they have defiled your holy temple,
they have reduced Jerusalem to rubble.
They have left the dead bodies of your servants
as food for the birds of the sky,
the flesh of your own people for the animals of the wild.
They have poured out blood like water
all around Jerusalem,
and there is no one to bury the dead.
We are objects of contempt to our neighbors,
of scorn and derision to those around us.*

*How long, LORD? Will you be angry for ever?
How long will your jealousy burn like fire?
Pour out your wrath on the nations
that do not acknowledge you,
on the kingdoms
that do not call on your name;
for they have devoured Jacob
and devastated his homeland.*

Psalm 79:1-7 (NIV UK)

Lament and the expression of grief is not something people of the western world tend to be very good at. As Christians, we have learned to smile through tragedy and to always look as if we are rejoicing, come what may. And so, trauma weighs heavy on our hearts. Not so the psalmist. He is honest about how he feels.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord, the world feels like a mess right now and I'm not always sure where You are. But, if I find it hard to nestle in Your arms, may I at least engage with You enough to keep wrestling.

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 16:

'I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.'
John 16:33 (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.

*<https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/countries-currently-at-war>

May 19 2022 (click for audio)

Facing The Fear Of 'Not Enough'

Today is Thursday the 19th of May, and this week we are exploring what it means to live without anxiety or fear.

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 Peace, I offer You my worries, I bring You my brokenness and I surrender my striving. As I rest in Your presence, I receive Your peace.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's bountiful supply today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 65...

*You take care of the earth and water it,
making it rich and fertile.*

*The river of God has plenty of water;
it provides a bountiful harvest of grain,
for you have ordered it so.*

*You drench the plowed ground with rain,
melting the clods and leveling the ridges.*

*You soften the earth with showers
and bless its abundant crops.*

*You crown the year with a bountiful harvest;
even the hard pathways overflow with abundance.*

Psalm 65:9-11 (NLT)

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on what is certainly the most famous of all the psalms.

*The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul.
He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.
Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;*

*your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
Surely your goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord
for ever.*

Psalm 23:1-6 (NIV UK)

Writer and historian, Michael Ignatieff, not himself a man of faith, stated recently, 'These are some of the most consoling words ever written.* The psalm is a testimony to the experience of what it is to live a life of trust in God. It is God who lifts me up through life so that I lack nothing. Or, as The Message translation puts it: 'God, my Shepherd! I don't need a thing.'

*Michael Ignatieff, *On Consolation: Finding Solace in Dark Times* (New York: Picador, 2021) p. 17.

Ask

Lord Jesus, You taught Your disciples to pray, 'Give us today our daily bread.' May I know you always as my shepherd and provider. In the hard times and the good, You are with me. May my table be full, and may my cup always overflow.

Pause and pray

Lord, I pray for someone I know who is struggling with their finances and fearful for the future. May they know Your goodness and love and Your provision always.

Pause and pray

Yield

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

*The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,
he refreshes my soul.
He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.
Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I will fear no evil, for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.*

*You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
Surely your goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord
for ever.*
Psalm 23:1-6 (NIV UK)

‘If you are grieving,’ Michael Ignatieff writes, ‘Psalm 23 can help you through the night. If you are in prison, they are the words a chaplain may read out to you.’** It is a favorite psalm to be read or sung at funerals, speaking as it does, in the King James Version, of ‘the valley of the shadow of death’. But it is, at heart, a psalm about how to live well, trusting God for every provision ‘all the days of my life’.

**Ibid.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord, I yield myself to the goodness of Your plans and Your provision. When You ‘make me lie down in green pastures’ and lead me ‘beside quiet waters’ may I yield to Your peaceful path trusting You for all I need as I walk in Your way.

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 6:

Do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Matthew 6:31-33 (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.

May 20 2022 (click for audio)

Facing Death, Darkness, And Despair

Today is Friday the 20th of May, and this week we are exploring what it means to live without anxiety or fear.

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 Peace, I offer You my worries, I bring You my brokenness and I surrender my striving. As I rest in Your presence, I receive Your peace.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's help today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 46...

*God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.*

*Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;
though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble with its tumult.*

Psalm 46:1-3 (NRSV)

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on the words of a psalmist who was not afraid to face the darkness of death, and to sit with the reality of sorrow, without feeling the need to lighten the tone and bring a superficial resolution to his pain.

*LORD, you are the God who saves me;
day and night I cry out to you.*

*May my prayer come before you;
turn your ear to my cry.*

*I am overwhelmed with troubles
and my life draws near to death.*

*I am counted among those who go down to the pit;
I am like one without strength.*

*I am set apart with the dead,
like the slain who lie in the grave,*

*whom you remember no more,
who are cut off from your care. [...]
From my youth I have suffered and been close to death;
I have borne your terrors and am in despair. [...]
You have taken from me friend and neighbor –
darkness is my closest friend.*
Psalm 88:1-5, 15, 18 (NIV UK)

Few families have escaped the COVID pandemic entirely untouched by grief. Beloved grandparents passed away alone in care homes. Fathers died before their time; mothers still suffer from long-term effects of the disease.

Today's psalm is a lament to heal my troubled soul. If I am to experience the joy of Easter Sunday, I must first stand at the foot of the cross and wait in the darkness of Holy Saturday. I cannot avoid sorrow and grief, for it comes to everyone who loves.

Ask

What sorrow or grief am I carrying? Is there sadness or trauma which I have not processed?

Pause and pray

I think of someone I know who has lost a loved one recently.

Lord, would You bring healing to their wounded heart. Be to them 'a very present help in trouble'.

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.

*LORD, you are the God who saves me;
day and night I cry out to you.
May my prayer come before you;
turn your ear to my cry.
I am overwhelmed with troubles
and my life draws near to death.
I am counted among those who go down to the pit;
I am like one without strength.
I am set apart with the dead,
like the slain who lie in the grave,
whom you remember no more,
who are cut off from your care. [...]
From my youth I have suffered and been close to death;*

I have borne your terrors and am in despair. [...]
You have taken from me friend and neighbor –
darkness is my closest friend.
Psalm 88:1-5, 15, 18 (NIV UK)

Trouble rarely comes at a convenient time. When crises arrive, bringing grief and pain, they are often overwhelming, just as they were for this psalmist. From this I take comfort.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord, I yield myself to the darkness of unknowing. Help me to let go of my need to always understand everything and see my path clearly before I put my whole trust in 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 Romans 8:

The Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.

Romans 8:26 (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.

May 21 2022 (click for audio)

Becoming A Non-anxious Presence

Today is Saturday the 21st of May, and this week we have been exploring what it means to live without anxiety or fear.

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 Peace, I offer You my worries, I bring You my brokenness and I surrender my striving. As I rest in Your presence, I receive Your peace.

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 112...

*Those who are righteous will be long remembered.
They do not fear bad news;
they confidently trust the LORD to care for them.
They are confident and fearless
and can face their foes triumphantly.*
Psalm 112:6b-8 (NLT)

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on what it means to be a non-anxious presence at a time when so many people are overwhelmed by anxiety, grief, and uncertainty.

As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, 'Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!'

'Martha, Martha,' the Lord answered, 'you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed – or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.'

Luke 10:38-42 (NIV UK)

In his translation of the New Testament, J.B. Phillips describes Martha as, 'very worried about her elaborate preparations'. Martha seems restless, irritable, on edge; she is distracted – struggling to

concentrate on anything. She feels uncared for. Martha doesn't need someone to help her. She just needs to stop.

Ask

Have I become worried and distracted by a whole lot of things that I don't need to be doing?

Is there one thing I should be doing which I have neglected?

I talk to God about it now.

Pause and pray

I think of someone I know who is struggling with anxiety and I take time to pray 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...

As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, 'Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!'

'Martha, Martha,' the Lord answered, 'you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed – or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.'

Luke 10:38-42 (NIV UK)

The word 'chosen' caught my attention. Jesus says that 'Mary has chosen what is better', suggesting that Martha could have chosen it too. When I am distracted and overwhelmed, there is an alternative. Like Mary, I too can choose to sit at Jesus' feet and listen to Him.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord Jesus, I yield my life to Your best purpose today. Through everything I do, may I, like Mary, be a non-anxious presence, heeding the words of Psalm 116:7, 'Return to your rest, my soul'.

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 Peter:

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

1 Peter 5:7 (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.

May 22 2022 (click for audio)

Sabbath Prayer

It's Sunday the 22nd of May, and today we pause our normal **P.R.A.Y.** rhythm and pray a special Sabbath prayer.

I've been thinking this week about how to be free from anxiety and fear. And so, as I settle into this time of prayer now, I ask for the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, to guard my heart and mind in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 4:7, NIV UK)

Pause and pray

*I love the LORD, for he heard my voice;
he heard my cry for mercy.
Because he turned his ear to me,
I will call on him as long as I live.
The cords of death entangled me,
the anguish of the grave came over me;
I was overcome by distress and sorrow.
Then I called on the name of the LORD:
'Lord, save me!'
The LORD is gracious and righteous;
our God is full of compassion.
The LORD protects the unwary;
when I was brought low, he saved me.
Return to your rest, my soul,
for the LORD has been good to you.*

Psalm 116:1-7 (NIV UK)

Pause and pray

In his book, *Sabbath as Resistance*, Walter Brueggemann says: 'I have come to think that the fourth commandment on Sabbath is the most difficult and most urgent of the commandments in our society, because it summons us to intent and conduct that defies the most elemental requirements of a commodity-propelled society that specializes in control and entertainment, bread and circuses ... along with anxiety and violence ... Sabbath becomes a decisive, concrete, visible way of opting for and aligning with the God of rest.*'

* Walter Brueggemann, *Sabbath as Resistance* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014).

Pause

God of rest, I opt for You and I align myself with You today. Give me the quiet strength to defy anxiety and control, and instead help me to fully enter into rest. I trust You, and I welcome Your presence and Your peace today.

Pause and pray

Father God, I thank You that millions of people around the world will hear Your Word being preached today. I pray that those who speak will have their 'feet fitted with readiness' to preach the gospel of peace (Ephesians 6:15 NIVUK). And I pray that those who listen will have open ears and hearts, so that many will be saved and made whole today.

Jesus, I pray especially for children and young people in church today who need You to be their Prince of Peace. Those who secretly feel alone. Those who are struggling with anxiety and fear. May Your peace be with them, Jesus.

And Holy Spirit, breathe upon us today. Inspire parents and politicians, artists and journalists, health workers and bar workers in church today. Enable us all to bring peace to the places where we are, so that we 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 practicing peacemaking in simple ways in their home, their school or their workplace.

Pause and pray

As I bring this short Sabbath prayer to a close, the Lord who loves me says in John's Gospel:

'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.'

John 20:21-22 (NIV UK)

I receive the promise and the commissioning in these words, and I pause for a moment now to receive the Holy Spirit.

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.

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

May 23 2022 (click for audio)

Finding The Kingdom

Today is Monday the 23rd of May, and as we approach the ten days of thy Kingdom Come, a global prayer initiative leading up to Pentecost Sunday we are exploring the themes of the kingdom of God.

Pause

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

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

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

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's rule and reign today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 103...

*The LORD has made the heavens his throne;
from there he rules over everything.*

*Praise the LORD, you angels,
you mighty ones who carry out his plans,
listening for each of his commands.*

*Yes, praise the LORD, you armies of angels
who serve him and do his will!*

*Praise the LORD, everything he has created,
everything in all his kingdom.*

Psalm 103:19-22a (NLT)

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on the nature of God's kingdom, and the joy we experience when we find it.

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

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

Matthew 13:44-46 (NIV UK)

Dallas Willard says God's own 'kingdom,' or 'rule,' is the range of his effective will, where what he wants done is done...So when Jesus directs us to pray, "Thy kingdom come," he does not mean we

should pray for it to come into existence. Rather, we pray for it to take over at all points in the personal, social, and political order where it is now excluded:^{*} British evangelist Alan Redpath invites us to enter into God's kingdom. 'The kingdom of God,' he says, 'is His personal reign within us. He is king. We are his subjects.'^{**}

^{*}Willard, Dallas. *The Divine Conspiracy*. HarperCollins. Kindle Edition. p. 34.

^{**} Alan Redpath, *The Life of Victory*, Marshall Pickering, 1991.

Ask

How did I feel when I first began to experience God's personal rule and reign within me? Can I relate to the joy that Jesus is speaking about in this parable? I take time now to talk to God about it.

Pause and pray

God, I pray for those I know who sit firmly on the throne of their own lives and suffer the consequences of that. I imagine one person in particular in my mind's eye right now. Would You give them a desire to seek the treasure of Your kingdom, and grant them joy when they discover it?

Pause and pray

Yield

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

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

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

Matthew 13:44-46 (NIV UK)

Alan Redpath goes on to say, 'Before we can pray, "Lord, Thy Kingdom come", we must be willing to pray, "My Kingdom go".'^{***} That's challenging! Where have I built my own little kingdom, hung on to my own autonomy? How's that working for me?

^{***}Ibid

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

I yield today with this prayer attributed to Eastern Orthodox Saint Philaret.

O Lord, grant me to greet the coming day in peace. Help me in all things to rely upon thy holy will. In every hour of the day reveal thy will to me. Bless my dealings with all who surround me... In all my deeds and words guide my thoughts and feelings. In unforeseen events let me not forget that all are sent by thee. Teach me to act firmly and wisely, without embittering or embarrassing others... Direct my will, teach me to pray, pray thou thyself in me. Amen.^{****}

^{****}Saint Philaret, (1782-1867).

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 kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.
Romans 14:17 (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.

May 24 2022 (click for audio)

John Wesley – Hero of Mission

Today is Tuesday the 24th of May. Regular users of the Lectio 365 app will know that we occasionally pause from praying the Bible to celebrate the stories and learn from the lives of heroes of faith, whose collective witness embodies the six practices at the heart of Lectio 365. We call these Feast Days.

Today we're celebrating the life of the English revivalist and the founder of Methodism, John Wesley, a pioneering hero of mission. It was his encounter with the Holy Spirit on this day in 1738 that triggered what Pete Greig calls perhaps 'the greatest British spiritual awakening for a thousand years'.*

*Pete Greig, *Dirty Glory*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2018), p. 269.

Pause

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

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

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

Rejoice and Reflect

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

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

I have talked about your faithfulness and saving power.

*I have told everyone in the great assembly
of your unfailing love and faithfulness.*

Psalm 40:10 (NLT)

Pause and pray

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

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

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

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

**John and Charles Wesley, Selected Prayers, Hymns, Journal Notes, Sermons, Letters and Treatises, Paulist Press; 1st Edition (1 Jan. 1981) p. 20.

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

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

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

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

Ask

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

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

Pause and pray

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

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

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

Pause and pray

Yield

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

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

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

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

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

Yielding Promise

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

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 28:19 (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.

May 25 2022 (click for audio)

Receiving The Kingdom

Today is Wednesday the 25th of May, and as we approach the ten days of Thy Kingdom Come and Pentecost Sunday, we are exploring the themes of the kingdom of God.

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

Rejoice and Reflect

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

For the LORD God is our sun and our shield.

He gives us grace and glory.

*The LORD will withhold no good thing
from those who do what is right.*

*O LORD of Heaven’s Armies,
what joy for those who trust in you.*

Psalm 84:11-12 (NLT)

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on seeking and receiving God’s kingdom.

And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.

Luke 12:29-32 (NIV UK)

I love Jesus’ affectionate tone as He calls His followers His ‘little flock’, His term of endearment. Jesus addresses their anxieties, and assures them of His loving care and provision under His good leadership.

Ask

Is it hard for me to believe that God will take care of me? What am I worrying about today? Maybe work, finances or relationships? In the quiet, one by one, I hand God my worries, and I receive His kingdom.

Pause and pray

God I pray for those who have experienced unhealthy and unloving leadership, whether in their families, their workplaces or their churches. Heal their hearts and emotions, and show them that You are different, that You are a good leader, and that You can be trusted.

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 do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.
Luke 12:29-32 (NIV UK)

I wonder if the reason I get worried and tied in knots is that I make things too complicated? Jesus said in the Gospel of Mark, 'Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it' (Mark 10:15). How might I stop stressing and striving, and start receiving instead?

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Today I yield to God with Dallas Willard's take on the Lord's Prayer:

*Dear Father always near us, may your name be treasured and loved, may your rule be completed in us— may your will be done here on earth in just the way it is done in heaven. Give us today the things we need today, and forgive us our sins and impositions on you as we are forgiving all who in any way offend us. Please don't put us through trials, but deliver us from everything bad. Because you are the one in charge, and you have all the power, and the glory too is all yours—forever—which is just the way we want it! Whoopee!**

* Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life In God*(London: Harper Collins, 1998. P. 296).

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:

'Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!'
Matthew 7:9-11 (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.

May 26 2022 (click for audio)

Ascension

Today is Thursday the 26th of May, and for the next eleven days we are joining with Christians around the world for the global prayer initiative, Thy Kingdom Come. Between now and Pentecost Sunday, each Lectio 365 Morning Prayer will include an insight from the Most Revd Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury, leader of the Anglican Communion around the world. Together we are asking God to empower us afresh by His Spirit to be effective witnesses for Jesus.

Pause

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

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

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

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in the reassurance that God hears my prayers today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 27...

*Yet I am confident I will see the LORD's goodness
while I am here in the land of the living.
Wait patiently for the LORD.
Be brave and courageous.
Yes, wait patiently for the LORD.
Psalm 27:13-14 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

On this day, millions of Christians worldwide are remembering the moment when the resurrected Jesus ascended to heaven. Today I reflect on this incredible event by listening to the final words Jesus spoke to His disciples...

*'Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about ... you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.'
After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight...*

Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city. When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying... They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

Acts 1:4b, 8-9, 12-13a, 14 (NIV UK)

The disciples' entire lives had been shaken. Jesus' death and resurrection had defeated sin and death for good, but now He was leaving. What were they supposed to do? I'm not sure whether I would have been more tempted to rush off and tell everyone what had happened, or go home and sleep for

a week. But in the midst of the uncertainty, Jesus' closest friends did neither. Instead of rushing or retreating they chose to obediently do the last thing Jesus asked of them: return to Jerusalem and wait.

Ask

What was the last thing God asked me to do? Maybe it was a command I read in the Bible, direction I received through prayer, or something else.

Have I done what God asked?

Pause and pray

The Holy Spirit empowered the disciples and now empowers the whole Church to be effective witnesses for Jesus, testifying about all He's done.

Jesus, please give me the names of five people who don't know You; friends and family I can be a witness to. Every day for the next 11 days, I commit to praying for each one by name.

Pause and pray

Yield

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

'Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about ... you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.'

After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight...

Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city. When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying... They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

Acts 1:4b, 8-9, 12-13a, 14 (NIV UK)

'The instruction to wait for the Holy Spirit is so important because without the Spirit's empowering presence, it is impossible to be a faithful witness to Christ. We need this gift of the Father to be the people Christ is calling us to be. The Spirit then isn't for some private experience, but for the sake of our life for Christ in the world.' *

*Archbishop Justin Welby, *Thy Kingdom Come: Novena, Reflections on 1 Peter*, (London: Church House Publishing 2022), Introduction, p.4.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

God, I know I need Your empowering presence today, so I won't wait until Pentecost Sunday. Instead I start with a simple but powerful prayer... Come Holy 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 Joel:

*I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,
your old men will dream dreams,
your young men will see visions.
Even on my servants, both men and women,
I will pour out my Spirit in those days.
Joel 2:28-29 (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.

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

May 27 2022 (click for audio)

Finding Identity In Christ

Today is Friday the 27th of May and this week we are joining with Christians around the world for the global prayer initiative Thy Kingdom Come. Between now and Pentecost Sunday, we are reflecting on 1 Peter with the Most Revd Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury. Together we are asking God to empower us afresh by His Spirit to be effective witnesses for Jesus.

Pause

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

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

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

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's faithfulness today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 94...

*The Lord will not reject his people;
he will not abandon his special possession.
Judgment will again be founded on justice,
and those with virtuous hearts will pursue it.
Psalm 94:14-15 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

How you start a letter is important. Today I read Peter's reassuring opening lines and find the same reassurance speaking to me.

*Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,
To God's elect, exiles, scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia
and Bithynia, who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father,
through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his
blood:
Grace and peace be yours in abundance.
1 Peter 1:1-2 (NIV UK)*

'To be a Christian is to be marked out as 'different'. In his First Letter the apostle Peter writes to an exiled people, communities who are living as strangers and foreigners in Asia Minor. These people knew what it was like to be alien in their society – harassed and rejected. But Peter is also writing to a people who are exiled in a different sense: as Christians, we spend our lives on Earth in exile, separated from our eternal home in Heaven with the Father. To be a Christian is to have been given a different identity to others: rather than defining ourselves according to our family, our nationality, how much money we have, or any of the other things we sometimes think make us who we are, we, the baptized, are 'in Christ', a deep truth which is both given and yet to be fully realized. We are called to find our identity solely in the person of Jesus Christ.' *

*Archbishop Justin Welby, *Thy Kingdom Come: Novena, Reflections on 1 Peter*, (London: Church House Publishing 2022), Day 1, p. 6.

Ask

At times I feel different – that by being a Christian in a secular world I have made an unusual choice.

Lord, I ask that today I would find my identity in You. Show me if there is any other place or person I'm finding my identity in today.

Pause and pray

Lord, I pray for someone I know today who is struggling to find their place in the world. I pray that You would meet them with deep reassurance and grant them peace in You.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage I listen out for any particular word or phrase that the Holy Spirit seems to be highlighting for me personally.

*Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,
To God's elect, exiles, scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood:
Grace and peace be yours in abundance.
1 Peter 1:1-2 (NIV UK)*

What word or phrase stood out to me from the passage?

I love that Peter speaks of abundant grace and peace at the end of this introduction. There is blessing for those who are in Christ, not necessarily material blessing but an abundance of grace and peace. This world lacks grace and often steals my peace; today I really need both in abundance.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

I yield to You today, Father. Thank You that my identity is found in You. I surrender and ask You to fill me with abundant grace and peace.

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...

*But now, O Jacob, listen to the LORD who created you.
O Israel, the one who formed you says,
'Do not be afraid, for I have ransomed you.
I have called you by name; you are mine.'
Isaiah 43:1 (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.

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

[May 28 2022 \(click for audio\)](#)

Longing

Today is Saturday the 28th of May, and this week we are joining with millions of Christians around the world who are participating in the global prayer movement, Thy Kingdom Come. In particular, we are including insights from the Most Revd Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Pause

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

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

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

Rejoice and Reflect

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

*O God, you are my God;
I earnestly search for you.
My soul thirsts for you;
my whole body longs for you
in this parched and weary land
where there is no water.
I have seen you in your sanctuary
and gazed upon your power and glory.
Your unfailing love is better than life itself.
Psalm 63:1-3a (NLT)*

Pause and pray

I am continuing to reflect on the Apostle Peter's first letter, which was written to persecuted believers living across the region of Asia Minor. Peter reassures them that the suffering they are facing will produce faith, and they will receive salvation.

Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

1 Peter 1:10-12 (NIV UK)

'Every single person seeks meaning for their life. All of us go through life searching for something. Perhaps we long to be loved, or accepted, or seen for who we really are. Maybe we yearn to

understand who we are ourselves, and why we're here on this Earth. We desire to be closer to our God and creator, even if we aren't aware of it. We have this desire for meaning because this is how God has made us. And it is only his meaning which fulfills our searching. "You have made us O Lord for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you," as St Augustine famously put it.*

*Archbishop Justin Welby, *Thy Kingdom Come: Novena, Reflections on 1 Peter*, (London: Church House Publishing 2022), Day 2, p.8

Ask

Peter writes that the prophets searched intently for Jesus' coming, and that the angels long to fully understand our salvation.

What am I searching for in this season of my life? What am I longing for?

Pause and pray

Thinking about the five friends who don't yet know Jesus that I have been praying for this week, what are they searching and longing for?

Loving Father, I ask You to light their path. Help them to find You, even if they're not fully aware that, ultimately, You are the One that they are looking 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.

Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

1 Peter 1:10-12 (NIV UK)

For centuries, God's people had searched high and low for the Messiah, even though they weren't sure what they were looking for. And when Jesus arrived, they still weren't sure. Philip, one of Jesus' followers, even asked him one day, 'Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.' Jesus replied, 'Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me?' (John 14:8, 10a NIV UK). Everything that I am searching and longing for in God, I find in Jesus Christ.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

I use Augustine's prayer as my own prayer of yielding today...

You have made me, O Lord, for yourself, and my heart is restless until it finds its rest in 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 Philippians that:

I will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything I can understand. His peace will guard my heart and mind as I live in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:7 (NLT) (Adapted into the first person)

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.

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

May 29 2022 (click for audio)

Spiritual Milk

Today is Sunday the 29th of May and on this Sabbath day we are joining millions of Christians around the world in the global prayer movement, Thy Kingdom Come. Each day we are meditating on the Bible and being encouraged by Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Pause

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

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

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

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's nourishing word today, joining with the ancient praises of all God's people in the words of Psalms 119...

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

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on the benefits of setting my heart on God and His nourishing word...

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

1 Peter 2:2-3 (NIV UK)

'Milk in the Bible often represents blessing and abundance ... What is this milk, which strengthens and feeds us to grow in this new life?

I think it is the word of God – through Scripture, and the call of the Holy Spirit on our hearts. We are fragile, but His word strengthens us.*

*Archbishop Justin Welby, Thy Kingdom Come: Novena, Reflections on 1 Peter, (London: Church House Publishing 2022), Day 3, p. 10.

God's word is a blessing to me – the source of my life, the source of my wisdom, hope and strength. God's word is the only food that can satisfy my soul's hunger and quench my soul's thirst.

Ask

Lord, may Your word strengthen and feed me, refreshing my weary and yearning soul. As I open my Bible this morning and meditate on Your word – let my soul find a nourishing feast that You have so lovingly prepared!

Pause and Pray

Lord, I also pray for someone I know, a friend, a colleague, a neighbor or even a family member, whose soul is weary and yearning right now. Let Your word bring hope and renewed strength. (Psalm 119: 114)

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage I listen out for any particular word or phrase that the Holy Spirit seems to be highlighting for me personally.

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

1 Peter 2:2-3 (NIV UK)

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

I am captured by the word 'crave'; the idea of an unrestrained hunger. Peter is not describing a passive or polite feeling but a strong and deep desire for God.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

LORD, create in me an unrestrained hunger, a craving for Your word; let it forever remain in my heart and on my lips. Help me to meditate on Your word day and night so I might live in accordance with what You say.

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 1:

*Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked...
but whose delight is in the law of the LORD,
and who meditates on his law day and night.*

Psalm 1:1-2 (NIV UK)

Sabbath blessing

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

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

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

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

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

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

For more information and further prayer resources visit Thy Kingdom Come

[May 30 2022 \(click for audio\)](#)

Build Your House

Today is Monday the 30th of May, and this week as we move towards Pentecost, we continue to join in with the global prayer movement Thy Kingdom Come. Each day we are reflecting on a part of Peter's first letter with insights from the Most Revd Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Pause

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

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

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

Rejoice and Reflect

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

*O LORD, I am your servant;
yes, I am your servant, born into your household;
you have freed me from my chains.*

*I will offer you a sacrifice of thanksgiving
and call on the name of the LORD.*

*I will fulfill my vows to the LORD
in the presence of all his people.*

Psalm 116:16-18 (NLT)

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on Peter's letter to the exiled believers under his care. They are persecuted, rejected and scattered, but in some mysterious way also being built together as God's house.

As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him— you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For in Scripture it says:

*'See, I lay a stone in Zion,
a chosen and precious cornerstone,
and the one who trusts in him
will never be put to shame.'*

1 Peter 2:4-6 (NIVUK)

This passage is good news to those of us who have struggled with shame, who have felt rejected and can't seem to figure out how we fit in God's plan.

*'To be a living stone is to glorify God with our lives, rather than build to our own glory or power. It is to transform the way we understand power and status. It is to go exactly where God needs us to be. It is to transform and be transformed – from being ignored, neglected, and oppressed – to being a part of God's divine plan. It is to inhabit the language of living as God's people. And each person is essential in this.'**

* Archbishop Justin Welby, *Thy Kingdom Come: Novena, Reflections on 1 Peter*, (London: Church House Publishing 2022), Day 4, p. 12.

Ask

Have I ever felt ignored, neglected, ashamed?

God would you show me where you are at work healing me, shaping me, making me part of the house You are building? Come Lord and build Your house.

Pause and pray

God I pray for the misfits, the misunderstood and the marginalized. Would you put the lonely in families, would you lead out the prisoners with singing (Psalm 68:6)? Come Lord and build Your house

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.

As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him— you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For in Scripture it says:

*'See, I lay a stone in Zion,
a chosen and precious cornerstone,
and the one who trusts in him
will never be put to shame.'*

1 Peter 2:4-6 (NIV UK)

Every building begins with the foundation. Archbishop Justin comments,

'No structure will ever hold if the foundations aren't deep and sure. As Christians, as living stones in the construction of God, we have one foundation: Jesus Christ.' **

**Ibid

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

God I want to glorify You with my life. I want to go where You need me to be. I want to be transformed. I want to be part of Your divine plan. Come Lord and build Your house.

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:

*I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.
Matthew 16:18 (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.

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

May 31 2022 (click for audio)

The Chosen

Today is Tuesday the 31st of May and this week we are joining with Christians around the world for the global prayer initiative Thy Kingdom come. Between now and Pentecost Sunday, we are reflecting on 1 Peter with the Most Revd Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury. Together we are asking God to empower us afresh by His Spirit to be effective witnesses for 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

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

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God’s presence today, joining with the ancient praise of all God’s people in the words of Psalm 134...

*Come, bless GOD,
all you servants of GOD!
You priests of GOD, posted to the night watch
in God's shrine,
Lift your praising hands to the Holy Place,
and bless GOD.
In turn, may GOD of Zion bless you—
GOD who made heaven and earth!
Psalm 134 (MSG)*

Pause and pray

Today I return to the Apostle Peter’s first letter and reflect on his description of the Church...

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

1 Peter 2:9-10 (NIV UK)

'In this verse, we are called – perhaps challenged – to see ourselves not as the world sees us, but as God sees us. We are called to judge ourselves not according to the values which seem to matter most to the world – status, wealth, power – but according to God's boundless love in Christ. Because of God's work for us in Christ we are called worthy, loved, chosen. You are called worthy, loved, and chosen in the eyes of God.' *

* Archbishop Justin Welby, *Thy Kingdom Come: Novena, Reflections on 1 Peter*, (London: Church House Publishing 2022), Day 5, p. 14.

Ask

I imagine myself standing in front of a mirror or, if I can, I find one now. How do I see myself? How do I measure my worth?

God, help me to see myself through Your eyes. Worthy. Loved. Chosen.

Pause and pray

I think of one of the people I'm praying for throughout the eleven days of Thy Kingdom Come. Someone who hasn't yet experienced God's love for themselves. How do they see and define themselves?

God, help me to show them how You see them, and just how much You love them. Invite them to take their place among Your chosen people.

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 you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

1 Peter 2:9-10 (NIV UK)

What word or phrase did I notice in this passage?

I was struck by the command to, 'declare the praises of him who called [me]'. I am chosen for a purpose. As Psalm 134 puts it, I am made to bless God. How can I praise and bless Him today?

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Jesus, because of You I am welcomed into God's people. I am imperfect. I make mistakes. You love me just as I am, but You promise not to leave me the way I am. You've chosen me and You're changing me, bringing out Your image in me, a little clearer each day. 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 Hebrews:

Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Hebrews 4:16 (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.

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