

LECTIO 365 Day Prayers

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

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

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

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

June 2022

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

[Month of June 2022](#)

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

June 01 2022 (click for audio)

Unfading Beauty

Today is Wednesday the 1st of June and this week we are joining with Christians around the world for the global prayer initiative Thy Kingdom Come4. 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 love today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 42...

*Deep calls to deep
in the roar of your waterfalls;
all your waves and breakers
have swept over me.
By day the LORD directs his love,
at night his song is with me –
a prayer to the God of my life.*

Psalm 42:7-8 (NIV UK)

Pause and pray

I return to the Apostle Peter's letter and read his words as if they were written for me today...

Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight.

1 Peter 3:3-4 (NIV UK)

'The women Peter is addressing [in this verse] have little social status. They were often objectified, often seen as something to be 'owned', rather than as individual humans seen and loved by God. Yet Peter recognizes that they have a rich inner life – one that is subversive to the expectations of the time – a life lived not for others but for Jesus. Peter affirms that neither men nor masters are the supreme authority, but the God who makes us in His own image.'

Christ Jesus – the one in whom God is made visible – calls us to see people for who they really are. It's a call to really and truly hear and know people properly, to work with God's Spirit who encounters us and opens us up in our deepest places. ... Today we reflect on the true beauty we will surely encounter if we put our trust in God's abundant love, rather than our own fear of not being enough. Only God can enable this.' *

* Archbishop Justin Welby, *Thy Kingdom Come: Novena, Reflections on 1 Peter*, (London: Church House Publishing 2022), Day 6, p. 16.

Ask

Is there someone I am struggling to get on with right now?

Lord I don't truly see; I make snap judgments about people. I allow past mistakes to define them. Forgive me for not looking beyond this and help me to see this person as they truly are.

Pause and pray

I think of someone I know who is struggling with insecurity.

Lord, would You meet them in their deepest places, invoking in them a deep sense of Your love.

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.

Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight.

1 Peter 3:3-4 (NIV UK)

What word or phrase did the Holy Spirit highlight to me? What did it make me think of?

I'm thinking about what I clothe myself in, the image that I portray to others. So often what I am projecting externally is not what I am feeling internally. I'm sometimes struck by the thought, 'if people really knew what I was like...' and this fills me with fear. Then I realize that God does know what I am really like, and that fills me with peace.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord, Your acceptance overwhelms me. I yield to You today, Father, feeling deep joy because I know that I am seen for who I truly am and that You love me deeply.

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:

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:1 (NIVUK)

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](#)

June 02 2022 (click for audio)

Suffering

Today is Thursday the 2nd of June, 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 protection today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 71...

*O LORD, I have come to you for protection;
don't let me be disgraced.*

*Save me and rescue me,
for you do what is right.*

*Turn your ear to listen to me,
and set me free.*

*Be my rock of safety
where I can always hide.*

Psalm 71:1-3a (NLT)

Pause and pray

I am continuing to reflect on the Apostle Peter's first letter, which was written to believers living across the region of Asia Minor, who were suffering persecution because of their faith in Jesus.

For it is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit.

1 Peter 3:17-18 (NIV UK)

'In this passage, Peter places suffering on a whole new, cosmic axis. What God has done for us reverberates around the whole universe, and yet is centered on one beaten, broken man. Later, Peter writes: "You are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed". Our sufferings are not trivial to the God who intimately knows suffering. But they are not

final either. On the other side of suffering is victory. For what took place in Jesus takes place in us – death in the body but being made alive in the Spirit.*

* Archbishop Justin Welby, *Thy Kingdom Come: Novena, Reflections on 1 Peter*, (London: Church House Publishing 2022), Day 7, p. 18

Ask

In what ways am I suffering right now?

Father God, I bring my suffering – my struggling, my pain – to You. Where it is ongoing, I ask You for the grace and strength to endure. And help me to remember that suffering is not final, that there is victory on the other side.

Pause and pray

Peter's letter was written to believers in the region of Asia Minor, which is roughly what we now know as Turkey. Today, only 0.2% of the population there are Christians, and it isn't easy for them to practice their faith.**

**<https://www.opendoorsuk.org/persecution/world-watch-list/turkey/>

Lord Jesus, I pray for my sisters and brothers in Turkey – protect them, and give them strength and courage to share their faith with others.

Pause and pray

Yield

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

For it is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit.

1 Peter 3:17-18 (NIV UK)

Being a Christian doesn't give me a free pass to avoid suffering, or an instant solution to it. It doesn't stop bad things happening to me. I will feel pain. I will grieve the loss of those I love. I may experience hostility and even violence because of my faith. But I will do none of this alone, says Peter. Christ brings me to the God who suffers, who comforts me, and ultimately delivers me.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord Jesus, I surrender my suffering and my struggling to You. I'd much prefer an easier life, but I trust You in the times and the places where things aren't easy. Let Your will be done, and Your kingdom come, in me and through me.

Yielding Promise

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

Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy.

John 16:20 (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.

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

June 03 2022 (click for audio)

Life To The Dead

Today is Friday the 3rd of June, and this week 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 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 unfailing love today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 100...

Worship the Lord with gladness.

Come before him, singing with joy.

Acknowledge that the Lord is God!

He made us, and we are his...

For the Lord is good.

*His unfailing love continues forever,
and his faithfulness continues to each generation.*

Psalm 100:2-3a, 5 (NLT)

Pause and pray

Today I am continuing to explore Peter's words to the Early Church, and the significance that they have for the way that I live today...

For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead, so that they might be judged according to human standards in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit.

The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

1 Peter 4:6-8 (NIV UK)

'The generosity of God overflows with such power that even death is swept away. Whilst we do not fully understand the mechanisms of salvation, we are encountered by the one who gives life to the dead.

Where people turn away, God welcomes. Where we are tempted to judge, God calls us to love. When flesh inevitably dies, spirit lives. It is a call to live according to God's standards, rather than wither according to our own.*

* Archbishop Justin Welby, *Thy Kingdom Come: Novena, Reflections on 1 Peter*, (London: Church House Publishing 2022), Day 8, p. 20.

Ask

What does the gospel mean to me? Am I living in the reality of the beautiful truth that God has saved me from death, or are the challenges and worries of the world distracting me from that truth at present?

Pause and pray

I think of someone who, because of negative experiences of Christians or Christianity, feels they are not welcomed by the Church or maybe even by God.

Holy Spirit, I ask You to show them Your unfailing love. Give me one thing I could do for them today that would demonstrate Your welcome.

Pause and pray

Yield

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

For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead, so that they might be judged according to human standards in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit.

The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

1 Peter 4:6-8 (NIV UK)

These words of Peter encourage me that life as a Christian should reflect the gospel I believe. I am called by God to love others deeply, even and especially when I feel like they don't deserve it.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Jesus, I receive Your promise of life and forgiveness afresh today. Help me to live in a way that glorifies You, and displays Your gospel with those around me.

Yielding Promise

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

So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: the old has gone, the new is here!

2 Corinthians 5:16-17 (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.

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

June 04 2022 (click for audio)

Come, Holy Spirit

Today is Saturday the 4th of June, and this week we are joining with the Archbishop of Canterbury and millions of Christians around the world in the prayer movement Thy Kingdom Come. Together we have been asking God to empower us by His Spirit to share the good news of Jesus.

Pause

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

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

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

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's compassion today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 22...

*Praise the LORD, all you who fear him!
Honor him, all you descendants of Jacob!
Show him reverence, all you descendants of Israel!
For he has not ignored or belittled the suffering of the needy.
He has not turned his back on them,
but has listened to their cries for help.*

Psalm 22:23-24 (NLT)

Pause and pray

As the Apostle Peter writes to his exiled followers, he speaks directly to their suffering:

Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.

1 Peter 4:12-14 (NIV UK)

'As we live as Christians we experience God's blessings, even as we know humankind's suffering. St Paul talks about us sharing His sufferings, that we may enter into His glory. It is the depth of glory found in the unexpected places, in the darkest corners, in those who are rejected and abused. It is knowing that God considers us worth dying for, and that no experience of suffering or sorrow is able to overcome the capacity of God to bring life.*'

*Archbishop Justin Welby, *Thy Kingdom Come: Novena, Reflections on 1 Peter*, (London: Church House Publishing 2022), Day 9, p. 22.

Ask

I think back over the last couple of years. How have I suffered during the pandemic and all of its effects? How has God brought life to me in those places? In the quiet, I offer up both my lament and my thanksgiving.

Pause and pray

God I pray for those who are still suffering due to the impact of the pandemic and of war and conflict, wherever on earth that may be. God would You bring Your glory in the unexpected places and in the darkest corners of our world. Come, Holy Spirit.

Pause and pray

Yield

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

Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.

1 Peter 4:12-14 (NIV UK)

God is always at work, by the Holy Spirit, to bring light in darkness, hope in despair, healing in pain and desolation, glory in suffering. Whatever we are going through, the prayer, “Come Holy Spirit” changes things.’

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

In my darkness, I pray, ‘Come, Holy Spirit.’

In my despair, I pray, ‘Come, Holy Spirit.’

In pain and desolation, I pray, ‘Come, Holy Spirit.’

In my suffering, I pray ‘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 Luke’s Gospel:

How much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!

Luke 11:13b

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](#)

June 05 2022 (click for audio)

Pentecost Sunday

It's the 5th of June and today we celebrate Pentecost Sunday. For the past ten days we've been part of the prayer movement Thy Kingdom Come.

Millions of Christians around the world have been crying out to God, asking Him to empower us, by His Spirit, to be effective witnesses for Jesus. Today, on this special day of rest, we remember the moment the Spirit was poured out on the Church and welcome God's presence afresh into our hearts and homes.

Pause

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 today in God's majesty, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 104...

Let all that I am praise the LORD.

O LORD my God, how great you are!

You are robed with honor and majesty.

You are dressed in a robe of light.

You stretch out the starry curtain of the heavens;

you lay out the rafters of your home in the rain clouds.

You make the clouds your chariot;

you ride upon the wings of the wind.

The winds are your messengers;

flames of fire are your servants.

Psalm 104:1-4 (NLT)

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

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

Spirit enabled them.

Acts 2:1-4 (NIV UK)

I often long for an encounter with God as dramatic as this Pentecost moment, but it's easy to forget what happened before the Spirit came. The first believers were all together in one place because they had been persistently praying for ten days. Jesus had promised that God would send the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-5), so, in prayer, they obediently waited and prepared themselves to Receive.

Ask

Thank You, Father, that the same Spirit that fell on these first believers is with me now. On this very special day, at the culmination of ten days of Thy Kingdom Come prayer, I cry, 'Come, Holy Spirit!'

Pause and pray

Empowered by the Spirit, the first followers of Jesus were propelled out from their place of prayer to tell thousands about Jesus.

God, we need Your Spirit to empower us for mission today! I name my church and the churches in my area - send us Your Spirit and give us courage to share the good news of Jesus with our neighbors.

Pause and pray

I think of the five people who don't know Jesus that I have been praying for during Thy Kingdom Come.

Father, I ask You to empower me to be Your witness to them this week. I name each person before You and ask You to draw them to Your Son..

Pause and pray

Yield

Today, instead of returning to the same verses, I reflect on the next part of the Pentecost story. I notice the response of the crowds who witnessed the Spirit-filled followers of Jesus bursting out onto the streets of Jerusalem...

Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. Utterly amazed, they asked: 'Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? ...Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, 'What does this mean?'

Acts 2:5-8, 12 (NIV UK)

The confusion on the streets of Jerusalem reminds me of the story of the Tower of Babel. In Genesis 11 I read about a community of people who tried to make a name for themselves by building a tower, but they were scattered in confusion as God turned one language into many. At Pentecost, a

community of people, acting in the name of Jesus, miraculously spoke many languages – making the good news understandable and accessible to all.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

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

Yielding Promise

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

...you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.'

Acts 1:8 (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.*

Amen

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

For more information and further prayer resources visit [Thy Kingdom Come](http://ThyKingdomCome.org).

June 06 2022 (click for audio)

Snap Out Of It!

Today is Monday the 6th of June, the first week of our 'Shape my Life' series. Over the next few weeks, we will be looking at different women and men in the Scriptures and reflecting on how their lives have been shaped by the six practices at the heart of Lectio 365: Prayer, Creativity, Justice, Hospitality, Mission and Learning. This week we are exploring the story of Hannah in the book of 1 Samuel, reflecting on how her life was shaped by prayer.

Pause

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

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

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

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's compassion today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 86...

*But you, O Lord,
are a God of compassion and mercy,
slow to get angry
and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness.
Look down and have mercy on me.
Give your strength to your servant;
save me, the son of your servant.
Psalm 86:15-16 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on the story of Hannah, the barren wife of Elkanah.

Year after year this man went up from his town to worship and sacrifice to the LORD Almighty at Shiloh, where Hophni and Phinehas, the two sons of Eli, were priests of the LORD. Whenever the day came for Elkanah to sacrifice, he would give portions of the meat to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters. But to Hannah he gave a double portion because he loved her, and the LORD had closed her womb. Because the LORD had closed Hannah's womb, her rival kept provoking her in order to irritate her. This went on year after year. Whenever Hannah went up to the house of the LORD, her rival provoked her till she wept and would not eat. Her husband Elkanah would say to her, 'Hannah, why are you weeping? Why don't you eat? Why

are you downhearted? Don't I mean more to you than ten sons?'

1 Samuel 1:3-8 (NIV UK)

Hannah is struggling. Firstly there is the issue of her infertility and her longing for a child. Secondly there is the lack of compassion from her rival, and from her husband himself! Peninnah seems happy to rub Hannah's nose in her inability to bear children, and although Elkanah means well, he's not able to understand the depth of her sorrow and why she can't just snap out of it.

Ask

Am I able to empathize with those who suffer, especially those who suffer over the long haul? Or do I diminish their experience or grow impatient with them?

God, I'm sorry. Please help me to grow in compassion for those in my life who are struggling.

Pause and pray

God, I pray for those who are infertile. Would you open closed wombs? I pray for single women who are aching to be mums. Would you hear and respond to the longing of their hearts? I hold before You now someone I know who is waiting for motherhood and struggling in the waiting.

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.

Year after year this man went up from his town to worship and sacrifice to the LORD Almighty at Shiloh, where Hophni and Phinehas, the two sons of Eli, were priests of the LORD. Whenever the day came for Elkanah to sacrifice, he would give portions of the meat to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters. But to Hannah he gave a double portion because he loved her, and the LORD had closed her womb. Because the LORD had closed Hannah's womb, her rival kept provoking her in order to irritate her. This went on year after year. Whenever Hannah went up to the house of the LORD, her rival provoked her till she wept and would not eat. Her husband Elkanah would say to her, 'Hannah, why are you weeping? Why don't you eat? Why are you downhearted? Don't I mean more to you than ten sons?'

1 Samuel 1:3-8 (NIV UK)

The Hebrew word for compassion, 'rachamim', comes from the root 'rechem', which literally means 'womb'. How might I grow in compassion, to hold and help, nurture and nourish people until God's purposes are born in their lives?

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

God as You have been faithful to care for me in the hidden and broken seasons of my life, may I also grow in compassion and in my ability to do the same for others.

Yielding Promise

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

'I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

Exodus 33:19 (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.

June 07 2022 (click for audio)

Holy Desperation

Today is Tuesday the 7th of June, and this week we are exploring the story of Hannah in the book of 1 Samuel, reflecting on how her life was shaped by prayer.

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

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

Rejoice and Reflect

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

*Lead me by your truth and teach me,
for you are the God who saves me.
All day long I put my hope in you.*

*Remember, O LORD, your compassion and unfailing love,
which you have shown from long ages past.*

Do not remember the rebellious sins of my youth.

*Remember me in the light of your unfailing love,
for you are merciful, O LORD.*

Psalm 25:5-7 (NLT)

Pause and pray

Hannah is visiting the Lord’s house. She’s desperate to have a baby of her own, and has no support around her. So, in prayer, she gives her grief to God.

Once when they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh, Hannah stood up. Now Eli the priest was sitting on his chair by the doorpost of the LORD’s house. In her deep anguish Hannah prayed to the LORD, weeping bitterly. And she made a vow, saying, ‘LORD Almighty, if you will only look on your servant’s misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the LORD for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used

on his head.'

1 Samuel 1:9-11 (NIV UK)

In God's presence, Hannah is able to walk all the way into her sadness, bitterness and desperation.

'As strange as it may sound, desperation is a really good thing in the spiritual life,' says author Ruth Haley Barton. 'Desperation causes us to be open to radical solutions, willing to take all manner of risk in order to find what we are looking for. Desperate ones seek with an all-consuming intensity, for they know that their life depends on it.*

*Ruth Haley Barton, *Invitation to Solitude and Silence: Experiencing God's Transforming Presence* IVP, USA. Kindle Edition, Kindle Locations 193-194.

Ask

Do I face unsolvable problems in my heart or my life?

*God You know my struggle, my sadness, my unmet longings. Today I bring them before You. I don't know what to do, but my eyes are on You.***

*** 2 Chronicles 20:12.*

Pause and pray

God, I pray for someone I know who is facing a seemingly unsolvable problem. Maybe their marriage is falling apart. Maybe they are unemployed or chronically ill. God would You help them bring their desperation to You, and would You meet them there?

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.

Once when they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh, Hannah stood up. Now Eli the priest was sitting on his chair by the doorpost of the LORD's house. In her deep anguish Hannah prayed to the LORD, weeping bitterly. And she made a vow, saying, 'LORD Almighty, if you will only look on your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the LORD for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head.'

1 Samuel 1:9-11 (NIV UK)

Hannah's prayers are honest and raw. She grapples with God, bargains with Him. God will You look at me? Will You remember me? Will You hear and respond to my plea?

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

God, today I acknowledge the hard realities of my life, and I hold before You my griefs and grievances. I trust that You are good enough, You are safe enough, to meet me in that place. Today I yield to Your tenderness and I give You my brokenness.

Yielding Promise

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

*The LORD is close to the broken-hearted
and saves those who are crushed in spirit.*

Psalm 34:18 (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.

June 08 2022 (click for audio)

Foe or Friend?

Today is Wednesday the 8th of June, and this week we are reflecting on 1 Samuel and considering how Hannah's life was shaped by prayer.

Pause

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

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

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

Rejoice and Reflect

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

*I will be glad and rejoice in your unfailing love,
for you have seen my troubles,
and you care about the anguish of my soul.
You have not handed me over to my enemies
but have set me in a safe place.*

Psalm 31:7-8 (NLT)

Pause and pray

Hannah is pouring out her heart before the Lord with prayers of desperation.

As she kept on praying to the LORD, Eli observed her mouth. Hannah was praying in her heart, and her lips were moving but her voice was not heard. Eli thought she was drunk and said to her, 'How long are you going to stay drunk? Put away your wine.'

'Not so, my lord,' Hannah replied, 'I am a woman who is deeply troubled. I have not been drinking wine or beer; I was pouring out my soul to the LORD. Do not take your servant for a wicked woman; I have been praying here out of my great anguish and grief.'

Eli answered, 'Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him.'

1 Samuel 1:12-17 (NIV UK)

Hannah's posture and prayer are initially misunderstood by her religious leader. Instead of taking offense, fleeing, or trying to hide her grief, she courageously takes the time to explain to him, inviting him to enter into her story.

Ask

Have I ever been misunderstood by a mentor or religious leader? What do I need to help me respond with courage and vulnerability?

God, when I'm feeling misunderstood, when I'm tempted to back off and armor up, would You help me advocate for myself, even if it feels risky and messy.

Pause and pray

God, I pray for pastors and spiritual leaders today. Would You give them discernment, sensitivity and humility. May they be good listeners and ready learners. In the quiet, I pray for my pastor Now.

Pause and pray

Yield

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

As she kept on praying to the LORD, Eli observed her mouth. Hannah was praying in her heart, and her lips were moving but her voice was not heard. Eli thought she was drunk and said to her, 'How long are you going to stay drunk? Put away your wine.'

'Not so, my lord,' Hannah replied, 'I am a woman who is deeply troubled. I have not been drinking wine or beer; I was pouring out my soul to the LORD. Do not take your servant for a wicked woman; I have been praying here out of my great anguish and grief.'

Eli answered, 'Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him.'
1 Samuel 1:12-17 (NIV UK)

As Hannah invites Eli into her story, he becomes a champion and advocate for her, joining her in her prayers. She's not alone in her struggle anymore.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

God, I give You my fear and impulse to retreat, and I receive Your courage. May I be slow to be offended and quick to build bridges of understanding. I look forward to seeing who You might bring to me to join me in my battles.

Yielding Promise

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

Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven.

Matthew 18:19 (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.

June 09 2022 (click for audio)

God Has Heard

Today is Thursday the 9th of June, and this week we are in the book of 1 Samuel, considering how Hannah's life was shaped by prayer.

Pause

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

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

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

Rejoice and Reflect

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

*The LORD is like a father to his children,
tender and compassionate to those who fear him.
For he knows how weak we are;
he remembers we are only dust.
Our days on earth are like grass;
like wildflowers, we bloom and die.*

Psalm 103:13-15 (NLT)

Pause and pray

Having poured herself out to God with a storm of tears, Hannah begins to feel better.

*She said, 'May your servant find favor in your eyes.' Then she went her way and ate something, and her face was no longer downcast.
Early the next morning they arose and worshiped before the LORD and then went back to their home at Ramah. Elkanah made love to his wife Hannah, and the LORD remembered her. So in the course of time Hannah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, saying, 'Because I asked the LORD for him.'*

1 Samuel 1:18-20 (NIV UK)

Somehow, laying her situation before God and finding someone to stand in solidarity with her gave Hannah some relief, and she was able to worship.

If I'm honest, sometimes when I worship, I sing songs because I wholeheartedly believe them and have encountered God in the way the songwriter describes. Other times, I worship because I'm

struggling with doubt and I just need to declare things aloud, regardless of whether they feel true to me or not.

Ask

God, even if I don't see the answers to my prayers yet, I take time to worship and to thank You today. I don't know the outcomes of it all, but I declare in faith that You are good, and that You love me.

Pause and pray

I take a minute to picture in my mind's eye my current faith community. I imagine them worshiping before You and, one by one, I hold each person before You.

God, would You heal them where they are hurting, give them strength where they are weak, and give them faith where they are doubting.

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.

She said, 'May your servant find favor in your eyes.' Then she went her way and ate something, and her face was no longer downcast.

Early the next morning they arose and worshiped before the LORD and then went back to their home at Ramah. Elkanah made love to his wife Hannah, and the LORD remembered her. So in the course of time Hannah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, saying, 'Because I asked the LORD for him.'

1 Samuel 1:18-20 (NIV UK)

Hannah prays. God remembers and responds. She and her husband try again to conceive, and she gives birth to a son. If I'm honest, when God answers my prayers I often just toss up a quick 'thank you' and then immediately forget. Hannah names her child Samuel, which means 'God has heard'; a continual reminder of God's goodness and mercy towards her.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

God I give You my doubt, my unbelief and my worship. You are merciful, kind, compassionate, great and generous. I thank You for all the ways You have already heard and helped me, and I thank You in advance for all You will do in the future.

Yielding Promise

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

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.
Philippians 4:5b-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.

June 10 2022 (click for audio)

Let It Go

Today is Friday the 10th of June, and this week I am reading the story of Hannah, and considering how her life was shaped by prayer.

Pause

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

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

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

Rejoice and Reflect

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

*For he will conceal me there when troubles come;
he will hide me in his sanctuary.
He will place me out of reach on a high rock.
Then I will hold my head high
above my enemies who surround me.
At his sanctuary I will offer sacrifices with shouts of joy,
singing and praising the LORD with music.
Hear me as I pray, O LORD.
Be merciful and answer me!*

Psalm 27:5-7 (NLT)

Pause and pray

Today I am continuing to reflect on Hannah's story.

After he was weaned, she took the boy with her, young as he was, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour and a skin of wine, and brought him to the house of the LORD at Shiloh. When the bull had been sacrificed, they brought the boy to Eli, and she said to him, 'Pardon me, my lord. As surely as you live, I am the woman who stood here beside you praying to the LORD. I prayed for this child, and the LORD has granted me what I asked of him. So now I give him to the LORD. For his whole life he shall be given over to the LORD.' And he worshiped the LORD there.

1 Samuel 1:24-28 (NIV UK)

God finally gives Hannah a child. And what does she do? She gives him right back to God. Anyone who has ever been a parent knows how astonishing a choice this is and how heart-breaking it would have been.

Ask

God, is there anything I'm holding onto that I need to give back to You? I clench my fists tightly, imagining I am grasping that thing.

Then I open my hands. It all belongs to You, Jesus. Your will, not mine, be done. I trust You.

Pause and pray

God, I pray for parents today. Please help them to continually bring their children to You, entrusting them to Your protection and Care.

Pause and pray

Yield

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

After he was weaned, she took the boy with her, young as he was, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour and a skin of wine, and brought him to the house of the LORD at Shiloh. When the bull had been sacrificed, they brought the boy to Eli, and she said to him, 'Pardon me, my lord. As surely as you live, I am the woman who stood here beside you praying to the LORD. I prayed for this child, and the LORD has granted me what I asked of him. So now I give him to the LORD. For his whole life he shall be given over to the LORD.' And he worshiped the LORD there.

1 Samuel 1:24-28 (NIV UK)

Richard Foster, in his book, Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home, writes:

'The Prayer of Relinquishment is a bona fide letting go, but it is a release with hope. We have no fatalist resignation. We are buoyed up by a confident trust in the character of God... God is inviting us deeper in and higher up. There is training in righteousness, transforming power, new joys, deeper intimacy.'*

*Richard Foster, Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home. (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1992. p. 52.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

I yield to God today with this prayer of relinquishment from Richard Foster:

*'Today, O Lord, I yield myself to You.
May Your will be my delight today.
May You have perfect sway in me.*

*May your love be the pattern of my living.
I surrender to You my hopes, my dreams, my ambitions.
Do with them what You will, when You will, as You will.
I place into Your loving care my family, my friends, my future.
Care for them with a care that I can never give.
I release into Your hands my need to control, my craving for status, my fear of obscurity.
Eradicate the evil, purify the good, and establish Your Kingdom on earth.
For Jesus' sake, Amen.'***

**Richard Foster, Prayers From the Heart (Harper One, 1994)

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 19:

*And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life.
Matthew 19:29 (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.

June 11 2022 (click for audio)

The Gift of God Himself

Today is Saturday the 11th of June, and we are wrapping up our week with Hannah, considering how her life was shaped by prayer.

Pause

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

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

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

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's kindness today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 113...

*He stoops to look down
on heaven and on earth.
He lifts the poor from the dust
and the needy from the garbage dump.
He sets them among princes,
even the princes of his own people!
Psalm 113:6-8 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Hannah's story concludes with a song of praise and victory.

*Then Hannah prayed and said
'My heart rejoices in the LORD;
in the LORD my horn is lifted high.
My mouth boasts over my enemies,
for I delight in your deliverance.
'There is no one holy like the LORD;
there is no one besides you;
there is no Rock like our God...
'He raises the poor from the dust
and lifts the needy from the ash heap;
he seats them with princes
and makes them inherit a throne of honor.*

*'For the foundations of the earth are the LORD's;
on them he has set the world.
He will guard the feet of his faithful servants.
1 Samuel 2:1-2,8-9a (NIV UK)*

Hannah's reward is not merely the answer to her prayers. As she has given to God what was most precious to her, she has received a great gift in return – a deeper understanding of God Himself.

Ask

How has God revealed Himself to me lately? How am I getting to know Him better, both through prayer and my life circumstances?

In the quiet, I praise God for His name and His nature.

Pause and pray

Today I pray for my friends, using Paul's prayer in his letter to the Ephesians:

'I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give [them] the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that [they] may know Him better'
Ephesians 1:17 (NIV UK)

Pause and pray

Yield

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

*Then Hannah prayed and said
'My heart rejoices in the LORD;
in the LORD my horn is lifted high.
My mouth boasts over my enemies,
for I delight in your deliverance.
'There is no one holy like the LORD;
there is no one besides you;
there is no Rock like our God...
'He raises the poor from the dust
and lifts the needy from the ash heap;
he seats them with princes
and makes them inherit a throne of honor.
'For the foundations of the earth are the LORD's;
on them he has set the world.
He will guard the feet of his faithful servants.
1 Samuel 2:1-2,8-9a (NIV UK)*

In prayer, Hannah gave God her need and her grief. She relinquished to God that which was precious to her. Through it all, she came to know God better. The Hannah at the beginning of the story is a very different woman from the Hannah at the end. Her life has been shaped by prayer.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

God as I spend time with You in prayer, would You continue to reveal Yourself to me? Today I place myself in Your hands again. Would you shape and form me in Your presence, for my good, and for Your glory?

Yielding Promise

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

'Can I not do with you, Israel, as this potter does?' declares the LORD. 'Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, Israel.'

Jeremiah 18:6b (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.

June 12 2022 (click for audio)

A Sabbath Prayer

Today is Sunday the 12th of June and like every Sunday we take a break from our usual rhythm of Pausing, Rejoicing and Reflecting, Asking and Yielding to pray the Bible and embrace a day of rest.

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

*Eugene Peterson, *Tell it Slant* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), p.82.

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

Pause and pray

A prayer of contentment from Psalm 131:

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

Psalm 131 (NIV UK)

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

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

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

Pause and pray

I dedicate the coming week to Jesus:

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

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

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

Sabbath Blessing

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

June 13 2022 (click for audio)

The Boy Who Would Be King

Today is Monday the 13th of June, and this month we are exploring how we can shape our lives around the six practices of the heart of Lectio 365. Each week we are reflecting on a biblical character who embodied either prayer, mission, justice, creativity, hospitality or learning, and exploring how we can follow their example. This week we are praying through the story of David, a man who embodied the practice of creativity.

Pause

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

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

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

Rejoice and Reflect

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

O LORD my God, you have performed many wonders for us.

Your plans for us are too numerous to list.

You have no equal.

If I tried to recite all your wonderful deeds,

I would never come to the end of them.

Psalm 40:5 (NLT)

Pause and pray

Today I reflect on the beginning of David's story. God has sent the prophet Samuel to choose a new king for Israel from among Jesse's family. But God has rejected the seven, rather impressive, sons Samuel has been introduced to...

So [Samuel] asked Jesse, 'Are these all the sons you have?'

'There is still the youngest,' Jesse answered. 'He is tending the sheep.'

Samuel said, 'Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives.'

So he sent for him and had him brought in. He was glowing with health and had a fine appearance and handsome features.

Then the LORD said, 'Rise and anoint him; this is the one.'

So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that

day on the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon David.

1 Samuel 16:11-13 (NIV UK)

Why wasn't David brought to Samuel in the first place? Were his elder brothers so impressive that he seemed irrelevant? Did his father think that David had already found his place in life and reached his limit? Whatever the reason for his exclusion, it's clear that his Heavenly Father had a greater imagination for this young man's life. He saw something in him and for him that others did not.

Ask

God, what do You imagine for my life? What purpose have You planned for me?

Pause and pray

God chose David for the highest political office in his nation. I think of someone I know with a passion for politics, whether they are active in campaigning or aspire to govern...

God, I ask You to anoint them with Your Holy Spirit and shape them into a leader who serves Your Kingdom.

Pause and pray

Yield

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

So [Samuel] asked Jesse, 'Are these all the sons you have?'

'There is still the youngest,' Jesse answered. 'He is tending the sheep.'

Samuel said, 'Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives.'

So he sent for him and had him brought in. He was glowing with health and had a fine appearance and handsome features.

Then the LORD said, 'Rise and anoint him; this is the one.'

So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon David.

1 Samuel 16:11-13 (NIV UK)

Though David was anointed by Samuel, it would be many years before he could take the throne of Israel. David had to return to his sheep, wait patiently, and trust that his Creator God would take his humble life and craft something spectacular.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

God, You are the potter shaping my life (Isa.64:8). Most of the time I feel closer to a shapeless lump of clay than a finished pot, but today I surrender (again) to the work of Your hands. I trust in Your imagination for my life.

Yielding Promise

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

I know what I'm doing. I have it all planned out—plans to take care of you, not abandon you, plans to give you the future you hope for.
Jeremiah 29:11 (MSG)

Closing Prayer

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

June 14 2022 (click for audio)

Finding Relief

Today is Tuesday the 14th of June, and this week we are exploring the story of David and how his life was shaped by the practice of creativity.

Each day we will pray (**P.R.A.Y.**) – ‘P’: **PAUSING** to be still. ‘R’: **REJOICING** with a Psalm and **REFLECTING** on the story and songs of David. ‘A’: **ASKING** God to help us and others and ‘Y’: **YIELDING** to His will in our lives.

Pause

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

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

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

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God’s mercy and care today, joining with the ancient praise of all God’s people in the words of Psalm 23...

*The Lord is my shepherd;
I have all that I need.
He lets me rest in green meadows;
he leads me beside peaceful streams.
He renews my strength.
Psalm 23:1-3a (NLT)*

Pause and pray

David has been anointed as Israel’s future king, but before he takes the throne, he is sent to serve the current monarch. King Saul has rejected God’s ways and as a result God’s Spirit has left him (1 Sam. 16:14)...

David came to Saul and stood before him. Saul liked him immediately and made him his right-hand man.

Saul sent word back to Jesse: “Thank you. David will stay here. He’s just the one I was looking for. I’m very impressed by him.”

After that, whenever the bad depression from God tormented Saul, David got out his harp and played. That would calm Saul down, and he would feel better as the moodiness lifted.

1 Samuel 16:21-23 (MSG)

Saul had no idea that he was mentoring his replacement. When David entered royal service, it was the perfect opportunity to learn the demands and dynamics of national leadership. He must have felt vastly under qualified as a shepherd and a musician, but David brought the creative gifts he had to offer, and served where God had placed him.

Ask

Is there someone who excels at a skill, or has an opportunity or position that I want? Someone I admire or maybe envy?

God, help me lay aside any feelings of competitiveness so I can learn from that person. How can I creatively serve or bless them today?

Pause and pray

David used his musical gift to bring comfort to Saul. Do I know someone who, for whatever reason, needs comfort or is perhaps struggling with depression?

God, I ask You to draw near to them today; bring them hope and strength. Is there a creative way that I, like David, can use my gifts to be part of Your answer to this prayer?

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I imagine myself in the story. Am I an onlooker in the royal court? Am I apprehensive like David about to meet his monarch? Or, like Saul, am I the one feeling tormented and far from God?

David came to Saul and stood before him. Saul liked him immediately and made him his right-hand man.

Saul sent word back to Jesse: "Thank you. David will stay here. He's just the one I was looking for. I'm very impressed by him."

After that, whenever the bad depression from God tormented Saul, David got out his harp and played. That would calm Saul down, and he would feel better as the moodiness lifted.

1 Samuel 16:21-23 (MSG)

I find it easier to put myself in the place of David than to examine my thoughts and actions from the perspective of Saul. God's Spirit was no longer with Saul but he remained as king for many years, growing paranoid and protective. I can sometimes grip a little too tightly to the responsibilities and influence I have, just as Saul did. I find my identity in my status or skill instead of fully in the love of God.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

God, teach me to be generous. Bring to mind now someone I can mentor and make room for in my life; help me choose to celebrate other people's success.

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:

'Listen carefully: Unless a grain of wheat is buried in the ground, dead to the world, it is never any more than a grain of wheat. But if it is buried, it sprouts and reproduces itself many times over. In the same way, anyone who holds on to life just as it is destroys that life. But if you let it go, reckless in your love, you'll have it forever, real and eternal.'

John 12:24-25 (MSG)

Closing Prayer

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

being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,

being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost,

proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.

Amen.

[June 15 2022 \(click for audio\)](#)

Tried And Tested Truths

Today is Wednesday the 15th of June, and this week we are exploring the story of David, and how he embodied the practice of creativity.

Pause

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

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

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

Rejoice and Reflect

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

*This I declare about the LORD:
He alone is my refuge, my place of safety;
 he is my God, and I trust him.
For he will rescue you from every trap
 and protect you from deadly disease.
He will cover you with his feathers.
 He will shelter you with his wings.
His faithful promises are your armor and protection.*

Psalm 91:2-4 (NLT)

Pause and pray

David is God's choice to be king of Israel. But he's running for his life. As David looks back on King Saul's attempts to kill him (1 Sam. 19), his relief and gratitude pour out in poetry and prayer...

I love you, LORD, my strength.

*The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer;
 my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge,
 my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.
I called to the LORD, who is worthy of praise,
 and I have been saved from my enemies.
The cords of death entangled me;
 the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me.
The cords of the grave coiled around me;*

*the snares of death confronted me.
In my distress I called to the LORD;
I cried to my God for help.
From his temple he heard my voice;
my cry came before him, into his ears.
Psalm 18:1-6 (NIV UK)*

David remembered. He did not forget how God protected him despite Saul's best efforts to kill him. His experience shaped his understanding of God and his growing love and knowledge spilled over into song. David used his creativity to express what he knew about God. This psalm isn't an empty platitude. It's full of tried and tested truths, learned the hard way.

Ask

What can I declare about God from my lived experience: is He my strength, my peace, my source of wisdom, or something else? How can I use my creative gifts to express and remember what I've discovered today?

Pause and pray

I pray for someone I know who is coming to terms with a life-limiting or life-threatening illness or situation. I hold them in my mind as I speak David's words over them now...

*The LORD is your rock, your fortress and your deliverer;
your God is your rock, in whom you take refuge,
your shield and the horn of your salvation, your stronghold.*

Psalm 18: 2

Pause and pray

Yield

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

I love you, LORD, my strength.

*The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer;
my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge,
my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.*

*I called to the LORD, who is worthy of praise,
and I have been saved from my enemies.*

*The cords of death entangled me;
the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me.
The cords of the grave coiled around me;
the snares of death confronted me.*

*In my distress I called to the LORD;
I cried to my God for help.*

*From his temple he heard my voice;
my cry came before him, into his ears.
Psalm 18:1-6 (NIV UK)*

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

I am struck by the line, 'he heard my voice'. Whatever situation David faced, he spoke to God through the creative language that came most naturally to him – through song. I may be more comfortable speaking, writing, painting, walking, or expressing myself in another way. But, like David, I am confident that however I cry out to God, He hears my voice.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

God, I yield to You by repeating to myself the opening line of David's song. Whatever I am facing at present, this remains true...

*I love you, Lord, my strength.
I love you, Lord, my strength.
I love you, Lord, my strength.
(Ps.18:1)*

Yielding Promise

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

*'Because he loves me,' says the LORD...
He will call on me, and I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble,
I will deliver him and honor him.
Psalm 91:14-15 (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.

[June 16 2022 \(click for audio\)](#)

Have Mercy...

Today is Thursday the 16th of June, and this week we are exploring the story and songs of David, and how his life displays the practice of creativity...

...For today's Lectio you will find it helpful to have a notes app on your phone or a piece of paper and a pen to hand.

Pause

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

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

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

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's sovereignty today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 47...

God has ascended with a mighty shout.

The LORD has ascended with trumpets blaring.

Sing praises to God, sing praises;

sing praises to our King, sing praises!

For God is the King over all the earth.

Psalm 47:5-7a (NLT)

Pause and pray

King David wrote all kinds of prayer songs throughout his life. Songs of relief, songs of victory, songs of trust and songs of desperation. Today I reflect on a song that is credited to David and was likely written after he made one of the worst mistakes of his life...

Have mercy on me, O God,

according to your unfailing love;

according to your great compassion

blot out my transgressions.

Wash away all my iniquity

and cleanse me from my sin.

For I know my transgressions,

and my sin is always before me.

*Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight;
so you are right in your verdict
and justified when you judge.*

Psalm 51:1-4 (NIV UK)

Though David was one of Israel's greatest kings, he was far from perfect. The book of 2 Samuel tells me that David abused his royal power to sleep with a married woman and even arranged for the murder of her husband (2 Sam. 11-12). When God sent the prophet Nathan to challenge him, David faced up to his mistakes. Humbled, he crafted today's psalm to express his regret to God.

Ask

I may not be David, with a ruler's power and the temptations that come with it, but I am hardly without sin. Holy Spirit, remind me of the things I have done wrong. I join in with David's song and say...

*Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion
blot out my transgressions.*

(Ps. 51:1)

Pause and pray

David's actions ended a marriage. Lord, I think about the married couples I know well. I pray for Your protection over them. Draw them closer to each other. Help them to build trust, expand their communication and deepen their love.

Pause and pray

Yield

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

*Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion
blot out my transgressions.*

*Wash away all my iniquity
and cleanse me from my sin.*

*For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is always before me.
Against you, you only, have I sinned*

*and done what is evil in your sight;
so you are right in your verdict
and justified when you judge.
Psalm 51:1-4 (NIV UK)*

For David the best way to express his repentance was through song. It was the language of prayer that came most naturally and sincerely to him. I think about what I most need to say to God today and I pause now to type or write my prayer in the form of lyrics, poetry or a heartfelt letter.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord, I yield to You with another part of David's psalm...

*Purify me from my sins, and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow....
Create in me a clean heart, O God.
Renew a loyal spirit within me.
(Ps. 51:7, 10)*

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 I, yes I, am the one
who takes care of your sins—that's what I do.
I don't keep a list of your sins.
Isaiah 43:25 (MSG)*

Closing Prayer

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

June 17 2022 (click for audio)

Worry Or Worship?

Today is Friday the 17th of June, and this week we are praying through the story of David, a life shaped by the practice of creativity.

Pause

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

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

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

Rejoice and Reflect

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

*Those who live in the shelter of the Most High
will find rest in the shadow of the Almighty.
This I declare about the LORD:
He alone is my refuge, my place of safety;
he is my God, and I trust him.
Psalm 91:1-2 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today I reflect on another psalm credited to King David. David's son, Absalom, is trying to steal his throne. In the face of his betrayal, and running for his life, David turns to God...

*LORD, how many are my foes!
How many rise up against me!
Many are saying of me,
'God will not deliver him.'
But you, LORD, are a shield around me,
my glory, the One who lifts my head high.
I call out to the LORD,
and he answers me from his holy mountain.
I lie down and sleep;
I wake again, because the LORD sustains me.
I will not fear though tens of thousands*

assail me on every side.

Psalm 3:1-6 (NIV UK)

I notice the journey this passage takes me on. First David focuses on his problems. Then he remembers how God has heard him and protected him before. Finally, with the weight of his worries put into context by God's goodness, David finds peace by placing his trust in God.

Ask

I think of a difficult situation I am facing at present. Am I worrying over the problem? How has God acted in a similar situation in my past?

Pause and pray

David's family dynamic was complicated! I think of a family I know who are struggling with relational breakdown – maybe it's my own family.

Father God, I lift this family to You. Give them the compassion to listen, patience to persevere and strength to forgive.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I listen for a particular line that God is highlighting to me today...

LORD, how many are my foes!

How many rise up against me!

Many are saying of me,

'God will not deliver him.'

But you, LORD, are a shield around me,

my glory, the One who lifts my head high.

I call out to the LORD,

and he answers me from his holy mountain.

I lie down and sleep;

I wake again, because the LORD sustains me.

I will not fear though tens of thousands

assail me on every side.

Psalm 3:1-6 (NIV UK)

What line jumped out at me from David's song?

How can I meditate on it today? Can I set it to a melody and sing it to myself? Can I write it out in beautiful calligraphy, turn it into wallpaper for my phone, or could I paint it and place it somewhere I'll see it?

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Father, thank you for listening to me, help me pay attention to You. I receive the words of this psalm today as Your word to me. Teach me to pay more attention to these words than the problems I face.

Yielding Promise

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

*Do not fear, for I am with you;
do not be dismayed, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you and help you;
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*

Isaiah 41:10 (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.

June 18 2022 (click for audio)

Feeling Thirsty?

Today is Saturday the 18th of June, and this week we have been exploring the story and songs of David, and how he embodied the practice of creativity...

For today's morning prayer we need a glass of water to help us pray.

Pause

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

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

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

Rejoice and Reflect

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

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

You guard all that is mine.

The land you have given me is a pleasant land.

What a wonderful inheritance!

Psalm 16:5-6 (NLT)

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on another psalm credited to King David. So far this week I have seen how David used his creative gifts to express himself to God when he felt grateful, afraid and sorry. Today I meditate on how David prayed when God's presence seemed distant...

*You, God, are my God,
earnestly I seek you;
I thirst for you,
my whole being longs for you,
in a dry and parched land
where there is no water.*

*I have seen you in the sanctuary
and beheld your power and your glory.
Because your love is better than life,
my lips will glorify you.*

*I will praise you as long as I live,
and in your name I will lift up my hands.
I will be satisfied as with the richest of foods;
with singing lips my mouth will praise you.
Psalm 63:1-5 (NIV UK)*

In this psalm David looks around, he looks back and he looks forward. He looks around at the landscape of his life – both literal (he is in the desert of Judah) but also spiritual (he feels dry). He looks back remembering another time when he experienced the presence and love of God. Lastly, as David looks forward, he makes a choice - he doesn't let his present feelings dampen his persistence or praise.

Ask

What does the landscape of my relationship with God look like right now? Do I feel as if I am in a dry desert, a green and pleasant land, or somewhere else?

Pause and pray

David uses thirst as a metaphor, but millions are literally thirsty around the world today. The charity, Water Aid reports that, '771 million people don't have clean water close to home.'*

*<https://www.wateraid.org/facts-and-statistics> (WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme 2021)

God, I pray for governments, NGOs and Christian groups who are working to bring clean water to every community. Equip them with the resources they need to quench the thirst of millions.

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...

*You, God, are my God,
earnestly I seek you;
I thirst for you,
my whole being longs for you,
in a dry and parched land
where there is no water.*

*I have seen you in the sanctuary
and beheld your power and your glory.
Because your love is better than life,
my lips will glorify you.
I will praise you as long as I live,
and in your name I will lift up my hands.*

*I will be satisfied as with the richest of foods;
with singing lips my mouth will praise you.
Psalm 63:1-5 (NIV UK)*

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

I am struck by the phrase 'I thirst for you'. Taking my glass of water, I drink deeply right now. I invite You, Holy Spirit, to quench my thirst for Your presence today.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Now, I yield to God as I slowly repeat a line from today's Psalm:

*Your love is better than life.
Your love is better than life.
Your love is better than life.
(Ps. 63:3a)*

Yielding Promise

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

*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.
Philippians 4:6-7 (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.

June 19 2022 (click for audio)

Father's Day Prayer

It's Sunday the 19th of Juen and for many nations around the world, today is Father's Day. On this Sabbath day of rest, we take this opportunity to interrupt our usual P.R.A.Y rhythm to pray for the fathers we know.

I start by making the words of Pete Greig's Father's Day Prayer my own...

We pray today for dads:

New dads, granddads, stepdads, adoptive dads & solo dads.

Baldy ones, beardy ones, skinny ones & cuddly ones.

Dads who tell bad jokes & dads who dance to YMCA.

Dads who know how to fix things, & dads who just pretend.

Father to the fatherless, we pray for those for whom this day is sadder than it is happy:

Those who feel they have failed

Those who are grieving children they never had

Those missing their dads, or their children, even more than usual.

Father God, in a world where some dads are distant, absent or even abusive, we lean into your ever-present love. You are faithful, especially to those of us orphaned, abandoned & hurt. 'Even if my father abandons me, the Lord will hold me close' (Ps. 27:10).

Father of Comfort, heal our wounds. Restore the dignity, integrity and centrality of fatherhood in our nation...

And finally, Lord, for all those poor souls everywhere who forgot that today is Father's Day, we ask you to bless them, in your abundant grace and manifold mercy, with the discovery of chocolate and a half-decent card in surprisingly well-stocked convenience stores.

Amen*

*Pete Greig, A Prayer for Father's Day, www.petegreig.info

Pause and pray

Thinking now of one person known to me for whom this day may be particularly hard or uncomfortable, 'I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name...' (Eph. 3:14-15) and I pray over them these ancient words from the Apostle Paul:

I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Ephesians 3:17b-19 (NIV UK)

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 life to come.**

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

June 20 2022 (click for audio)

Esther, The Refugee

Today is Monday the 20th of June. It's World Refugee Day. This week we are exploring what it means to live a life shaped by a passion for God's justice in the story of a young Jewish refugee who becomes queen to the Emperor of Persia.

Pause

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

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

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

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice today in God's amazing way of turning disaster into blessing, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 126...

*When the LORD brought back his exiles to Jerusalem,
it was like a dream!
We were filled with laughter,
and we sang for joy.
And the other nations said,
"What amazing things the LORD has done for them."
Yes, the LORD has done amazing things for us!
What joy!
Psalm 126:1-3 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on the remarkable lives of a middle Eastern refugee family 25 centuries ago. They were in the heart of the Persian Empire, during a turbulent time.

Now there was in the citadel of Susa a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin, named Mordecai son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, who had been carried into exile from Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, among those taken captive with Jehoiachin king of Judah. Mordecai had a cousin named Hadassah, whom he had brought up because she had neither father nor mother. This young woman, who was also known as Esther, had a lovely figure and was beautiful. Mordecai had taken her as his own daughter when her father and mother died. When the king's order and edict had been proclaimed, many young women were brought to the citadel of Susa and put under the care of Hegai. Esther also was taken to the king's palace

and entrusted to Hegai, who had charge of the harem. She pleased him and won his favor. Immediately he provided her with her beauty treatments and special food. He assigned to her seven female attendants selected from the king's palace and moved her and her attendants into the best place in the harem.

Esther had not revealed her nationality and family background, because Mordecai had forbidden her to do so. Every day he walked to and fro near the courtyard of the harem to find out how Esther was and what was happening to her.

Esther 2:5-11 (NIV UK)

King Xerxes has publicly denounced and divorced his wife and is looking for a new queen. With her identity hidden, she was placed under Hegai's care with the other women at the palace. She had little choice in her actions, but she did have a choice in her attitude.

Ask

Am I in a situation not of my choosing? Or do I feel out of place - uncertain or reluctant to be fully myself?

Lord, when my scope of action is limited and I feel out of control, may I trust in You and always look to You for Your favor.

Pause and pray

*Father, on this World Refugee Day, * I pray for all those who have been forced to flee their home country to escape conflict or persecution. May they be treated with dignity. May they be welcomed, regardless of the way they have traveled to seek safety. May they be protected, whatever the threat, whether it be war, violence, or persecution. And may they find unexpected favor. in their places of refuge.*

<https://www.unhcr.org/world-refugee-day.html>

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...

Now there was in the citadel of Susa a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin, named Mordecai son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, who had been carried into exile from Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, among those taken captive with Jehoiachin king of Judah. Mordecai had a cousin named Hadassah, whom he had brought up because she had neither father nor mother. This young woman, who was also known as Esther, had a lovely figure and was beautiful. Mordecai had taken her as his own daughter when her father and mother died. When the king's order and edict had been proclaimed, many young women were brought to the citadel of Susa and put under the care of Hegai. Esther also was taken to the king's palace and entrusted to Hegai, who had charge of the harem. She pleased him and won his favor.

Immediately he provided her with her beauty treatments and special food. He assigned to her seven female attendants selected from the king's palace and moved her and her attendants into the best place in the harem.

Esther had not revealed her nationality and family background, because Mordecai had forbidden her to do so. Every day he walked to and fro near the courtyard of the harem to find out how Esther was and what was happening to her.

Esther 2:5-11 (NIV UK)

I notice the part Mordecai plays as he keeps an eye out for Esther, who is probably in her early teens. Every day he goes out of his way to find out how she is getting on and just what is going on.

Is there someone I am looking out for who knows they can depend on me to be there for them every day?

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord, I yield myself today to the unknown in my every step with You. May I always show kindness, even when I find myself in places and circumstances I would normally choose to avoid.

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:

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

Matthew 28:20 (NIV UK)

Closing Prayer

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

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

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

Amen.

[June 21 2022 \(click for audio\)](#)

Telling The Truth

Today is Tuesday the 21st of June, and this week we are exploring what it means to live a life shaped by God's justice as we follow the story of Queen Esther.

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

Pause

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

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

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

Rejoice and Reflect

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

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

Pause and pray

King Xerxes chooses Esther as his new queen and suddenly she's thrust into a world of secrets and conspiracies.

Esther had kept secret her family background and nationality just as Mordecai had told her to do, for she continued to follow Mordecai's instructions as she had done when he was bringing her up.

During the time Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate, Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's officers who guarded the doorway, became angry and conspired to assassinate King Xerxes.

But Mordecai found out about the plot and told Queen Esther, who in turn reported it to the king, giving credit to Mordecai. And when the report was investigated and found to be true, the two officials were impaled on poles. All this was recorded in the book of the annals in the presence

of the king.

Esther 2:20-23 (NIV UK)

Esther doesn't have great power, but she does have the ear of the king. She is an influencer, and that gives her great responsibility.

Ask

Lord, help me to take my responsibilities and my work seriously, no matter the power or position I have. Help me to glorify You.

Pause and pray

I think of someone who is influential in my world, perhaps someone I know, or admire, someone with a voice, who has something to say. May they speak truth to power and truth to the powerless.*

**This idea is from the caption to a 2007 drawing by Leonard Cohen, published posthumously in *The Flame* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2018) p. 129.*

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.

Esther had kept secret her family background and nationality just as Mordecai had told her to do, for she continued to follow Mordecai's instructions as she had done when he was bringing her up.

During the time Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate, Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's officers who guarded the doorway, became angry and conspired to assassinate King Xerxes.

But *Mordecai found out about the plot and told Queen Esther, who in turn reported it to the king, giving credit to Mordecai. And when the report was investigated and found to be true, the two officials were impaled on poles. All this was recorded in the book of the annals in the presence of the king.*

Esther 2:20-23 (NIV UK)

Establishing justice is a serious business. Esther's word to the king means that his life is saved, but it results in the gruesome death of two conspirators.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord, I yield myself to Your serious call to the work of justice in the world. May my discomfort not hold me back from doing all that I can. 'In your majesty ride forth victoriously in the cause of truth, humility and justice; let your right hand achieve awesome deeds.' (Psalm 45:4, NIVUK)

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 12:

*A bruised reed he will not break,
and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out,
till he has brought justice through to victory.*

Matthew 12:20 (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.

June 22 2022 (click for audio)

Dealing With Discrimination

Today is Wednesday the 22nd of June, and this week we are exploring what it means to live a life shaped by God's justice as we follow the story of Queen Esther.

Pause

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

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

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

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's protection today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 62...

*Let all that I am wait quietly before God,
for my hope is in him.
He alone is my rock and my salvation,
my fortress where I will not be shaken.
My victory and honor come from God alone.
He is my refuge, a rock where no enemy can reach me.
Psalm 62:5-7 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today I join the book of Esther during a private conversation between Haman, a high palace official, and King Xerxes...

*Haman said to King Xerxes, 'There is a certain people dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom who keep themselves separate. Their customs are different from those of all other people, and they do not obey the king's laws; it is not in the king's best interest to tolerate them. If it pleases the king, let a decree be issued to destroy them, and I will give ten thousand talents of silver to the king's administrators for the royal treasury.'
So the king took his signet ring from his finger and gave it to Haman son of Hamedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews. 'Keep the money,' the king said to Haman, 'and do with the people as you please.'
Esther 3:8-11 (NIV UK)*

King Xerxes has just faced one assassination threat. Haman is now playing on his fears. What is terrifying is the relentless logic of Haman's argument as he presents the king with his proposal: 'let a

decree be issued to destroy them.' In every situation, there's always someone looking for a scapegoat - there's always someone who knows someone 'other' to take the blame.

Ask

Have I allowed some prejudice or discrimination to darken my heart? Do I hold bitterness or blame against certain kinds of people which I try to justify?

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

Pause and pray

Lord, I pray for people I know who experience discrimination, blame, and even violence against them and their communities. Lord, would You guard their bodies that they remain physically safe; their minds, that they might not be scarred by unkind words; and their hearts, that they might not become bitter.

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.

Haman said to King Xerxes, 'There is a certain people dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom who keep themselves separate. Their customs are different from those of all other people, and they do not obey the king's laws; it is not in the king's best interest to tolerate them. If it pleases the king, let a decree be issued to destroy them, and I will give ten thousand talents of silver to the king's administrators for the royal treasury.'
So the king took his signet ring from his finger and gave it to Haman son of Hamedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews. 'Keep the money,' the king said to Haman, 'and do with the people as you please.'
Esther 3:8-11 (NIV UK)

Back in the Soviet era of the 1970s, Russian author, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, wrote,

*'If only it were all so simple! If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being. And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart?'**

*Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago 1918–1956*

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord, as I yield my heart to You, I pray with the psalmist once again:

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

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 13:

'I will never leave you or forsake you.'
Hebrews 13:5 (NRSVA)

Closing Prayer

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

June 23 2022 (click for audio)

Standing Up For Others

Today is Thursday the 23rd of June, and this week we are exploring what it means to live a life shaped by God's justice as we follow the story of Queen Esther.

Pause

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

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

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

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's rescue from trouble today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 3...

*I lay down and slept,
yet I woke up in safety,
for the Lord was watching over me.
I am not afraid of ten thousand enemies
who surround me on every side.
Arise, O LORD!
Rescue me, my God!
Psalm 3:5-7a (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on the build-up to what would be the defining moment of Esther's life.

Hathak went back and reported to Esther what Mordecai had said. Then she instructed him to say to Mordecai, 'All the king's officials and the people of the royal provinces know that for any man or woman who approaches the king in the inner court without being summoned the king has but one law: that they be put to death unless the king extends the gold scepter to them and spares their lives. But thirty days have passed since I was called to go to the king.'

When Esther's words were reported to Mordecai, he sent back this answer: 'Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will escape. For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?'

Esther 4:9-14 (NIV UK)

In the early part of the story, Mordecai has all the wisdom which his young cousin needs. Now, as Esther learns the ways of the imperial court, she is caught between two worlds. This is a game which only she can play. It is not just her life at stake, but the fate of all her people.

Ask

Do I underestimate the difference it could make if I brought my petitions to another, greater King - one who welcomes me without protocol?

Lord, I 'approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that [I] may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.' (Hebrews 4:16, NRSVA)

Pause and pray

Lord, I pray for someone whose life is in trouble right now. Would You bring deliverance to 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...

Hathak went back and reported to Esther what Mordecai had said. Then she instructed him to say to Mordecai, 'All the king's officials and the people of the royal provinces know that for any man or woman who approaches the king in the inner court without being summoned the king has but one law: that they be put to death unless the king extends the gold scepter to them and spares their lives. But thirty days have passed since I was called to go to the king.'

When Esther's words were reported to Mordecai, he sent back this answer: 'Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will escape. For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?'

Esther 4:9-14 (NIV UK)

I am struck by the uncertainty of Mordecai's answer to Esther. He is at the limit of his wisdom. All he can say to her is, 'who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?' Esther's place in the kingdom was never about privilege, it was always about a bigger purpose.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord, I yield myself to Your purpose. May I never seek my own advantage for the sake of personal privilege; may I use whatever position I have to serve others well.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in 2 Peter 3:

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise ... he is patient ... not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

2 Peter 3:9 (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.

June 24 2022 (click for audio)

Fasting For Justice

Today is Friday the 24th of June, and this week we are exploring what it means to live a life shaped by God's justice as we follow the story of one of the most remarkable women in the Bible, Queen Esther.

Pause

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

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

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

Rejoice and Reflect

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

I trust in your unfailing love.

I will rejoice because you have rescued me.

I will sing to the LORD

because he is good to me.

Psalm 13:5-6 (NLT)

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on the beginning of a great reversal of fortune for the Jews exiled throughout the ancient Persian Empire.

Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: 'Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my attendants will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish.'

So Mordecai went away and carried out all of Esther's instructions.

Esther 4:15-17 (NIV UK)

Amongst the books in the Bible, Esther is unusual in that God is never named in the story. Only here, Esther calls the Jews to gather and to fast on her behalf. Although not mentioned, prayer is almost certainly implied.

Today, fasting is almost forgotten as a spiritual discipline. For Israel and the early church, it was part of the rhythm of everyday life.

Ask

I wonder if the Lord is inviting me to add fasting to my existing spiritual practice, whether that means giving up meals or something else.*

*For more information on fasting, check out our prayer guide:

https://www.24-7prayer.com/prayer_guide/try-fasting/.

Lord Jesus, teach me to pray... and to fast sometimes as well.

Pause and pray

What situation of injustice might God be inviting me to pray and fast for?

I invite God to show me now.

Pause and pray

Yield

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

Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: 'Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my attendants will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish.'

So Mordecai went away and carried out all of Esther's instructions.

Esther 4:15-17 (NIV UK)

I am reminded of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's famous line, 'When Christ calls a [person] he bids [them] come and die.'** This is the moment in which Esther proves her mettle. All hesitation has gone. Up to this point she has followed all of Mordecai's instructions. Now she is the leader, and he knows it.

**Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Macmillan, 1963) p. 99.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord, I yield to Your invitation to bring justice and grace to Your broken world. And even if it costs me, so be it, for Lord, I am Yours.

Yielding Promise

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

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

Joshua 1:9 (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.

June 25 2022 (click for audio)

Esther's Request

Today is Saturday the 25th of June, and this week we are exploring what it means to live a life shaped by God's justice as we follow the story of Queen Esther.

Pause

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

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

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

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's favor today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 30...

Sing to the LORD, all you godly ones!

Praise his holy name.

For his anger lasts only a moment,

but his favor lasts a lifetime!

Weeping may last through the night,

but joy comes with the morning.

Psalm 30:4-5 (NLT)

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on Esther's moment of triumph, when she knew her prayers had been answered.

So the king and Haman went to Queen Esther's banquet, and as they were drinking wine on the second day, the king again asked, 'Queen Esther, what is your petition? It will be given you. What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be granted.'

Then Queen Esther answered, 'If I have found favor with you, Your Majesty, and if it pleases you, grant me my life – this is my petition. And spare my people – this is my request. For I and my people have been sold to be destroyed, killed and annihilated. If we had merely been sold as male and female slaves, I would have kept quiet, because no such distress would justify disturbing the king.'

King Xerxes asked Queen Esther, 'Who is he? Where is he – the man who has dared to do such a thing?'

Esther said, 'An adversary and enemy! This vile Haman!'

Then Haman was terrified before the king and queen.

Esther 7:1-6 (NIV UK)

Esther has learned how to play the game of Persian court life with great skill. She has kept her enemy close and has won the favor of the king. Now with devastating precision she springs her trap.

Ask

God, have I learned any unusual skills which might be of value for the kingdom, particularly in bringing about justice? Perhaps I have dismissed them as unspiritual or irrelevant, but maybe they hold an exciting key for the future.

Pause and pray

Lord, I pray for people now who are suffering great injustice - because of natural disasters, or famine, or war.

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...

So the king and Haman went to Queen Esther's banquet, and as they were drinking wine on the second day, the king again asked, 'Queen Esther, what is your petition? It will be given you.

What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be granted.'

Then Queen Esther answered, 'If I have found favor with you, Your Majesty, and if it pleases you, grant me my life – this is my petition. And spare my people – this is my request. For I and my people have been sold to be destroyed, killed and annihilated. If we had merely been sold as male and female slaves, I would have kept quiet, because no such distress would justify disturbing the king.'

King Xerxes asked Queen Esther, 'Who is he? Where is he – the man who has dared to do such a thing?'

Esther said, 'An adversary and enemy! This vile Haman!'

Then Haman was terrified before the king and queen.

Esther 7:1-6 (NIV UK)

I notice the last line. 'Haman was terrified before the king and queen.' This was not an instant result. It has taken a long time, but it is now no longer just the king who holds power; Esther has come into her own. Haman had picked the wrong fight.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

*I yield myself to the slow work of God, for I am impatient and would like to reach the end without delay. Lord, help me to accept that change may take longer than I think.**

**From a prayer of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, S.J. (1881-1955).<https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/prayer-of-theilhard-de-chardin/>*

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 57:

*He sends from heaven and saves me,
rebuking those who hotly pursue me—
God sends forth his love and his faithfulness.*

Psalm 57:3 (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.

June 26 2022 (click for audio)

A Sabbath Prayer For Justice

Today is Sunday the 26th of June, a day of rest on which we interrupt our usual daily pattern with a shorter, simpler time of prayer.

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

'Come, all you who are thirsty,' He says, 'come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat!' (Isaiah 55:1, (NIV UK)

Pause and pray

'Are you tired?' [asks Jesus,] 'Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly.' (Matthew 11:28-30, (MSG)

Pause and pray

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

*Walter Brueggemann, Sabbath as Resistance,(Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014), p. 6.

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

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

Pause and pray

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

Spirit of the Sovereign Lord, anoint me again this week to proclaim good news to the poor. Send me out again this week to bind up the broken-hearted. Help me again this week to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners. Amen.

Pause and pray

Sabbath blessing

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

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

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

May I know grace to embrace my own finite smallness in the arms of God's infinite greatness.
May God's Word feed me and his Spirit lead me into the week and into the life to come.**

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

June 27 2022 (click for audio)

Jesus The Host

Today is Monday the 27th of June, and this month we are exploring how we can shape our lives around the six practices at the heart of Lectio 365. Each week we are reflecting on a biblical character who embodied either prayer, mission, justice, creativity, hospitality or learning, and exploring how we can follow their example today. This week we are praying through the story of Mary and Martha, whose lives embodied the practice of hospitality.

Pause

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

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

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

Rejoice and Reflect

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

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

Pause and pray

Mary and Martha, and their brother, Lazarus, were Jesus' friends. Today I'm reflecting on what happened on one of the occasions when Jesus went to their house.

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.

Luke 10:38-39 (NIV UK)

Throughout the Gospel stories, Jesus received hospitality from others. On one occasion, Zacchaeus, the tax collector, unexpectedly found himself welcoming Jesus into his home. On the road to Emmaus, the two disciples asked Jesus to stay and eat with them, even though they didn't realize that it was Him at the time. And here were Jesus' friends, Martha and Mary, welcoming him into their home. On every occasion, having received hospitality from others, Jesus somehow became the host.

'This intermingling of guest and host roles in the person of Jesus is part of what makes the story of

hospitality so compelling for Christians,' writes Christine Pohl. 'Jesus needs welcome, and Jesus welcomes.'*

* Christine Pohl, *Making Room*, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1999), p. 17.

Ask

Lord Jesus, how can I offer hospitality to those who come to my home this week, to my place of work, to my school or college, to wherever I am? Help me to recognize that I am receiving You as I receive others.

Pause and pray

Earlier in Luke's Gospel, Jesus says that He 'doesn't have a place to call his own' (Luke 9:58 CEV). As I reflect on home and hospitality today, I remember that many people do not have a home, a place where they feel welcome and safe.

Lord Jesus, I ask You to protect and strengthen those who have no home of their own. Help them find somewhere to stay, somewhere hospitable. What could I, and my church community, do to help those who are homeless in my Area?

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 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.

Luke 10:38-39 (NIV UK)

The Gospel writers describe Mary at the feet of Jesus on three occasions. Here, she sits at His feet listening to Him and learning from Him. In John 11, Mary's brother Lazarus has just died, and she falls at Jesus' feet, overwhelmed with grief (John 11:32). And then a little later, she anoints Jesus' feet with expensive perfume and wipes them with her hair (John 12:3). I learn from Mary that, whatever I am experiencing, the best place to be is at the feet of Jesus.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord Jesus, just like Mary, I kneel at Your feet, and I yield myself and my circumstances to You... You are my Teacher, my Hope, my Saviour, my God, my All.

Yielding Promise

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

'Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in...'
Revelation 3:20 (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.

June 28 2022 (click for audio)

One Thing

Today is Tuesday the 28th of June, and this week we are exploring the story of Mary and Martha whose lives were shaped by the practice of hospitality.

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

Pause

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

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

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

Rejoice and Reflect

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

My choice is you, GOD, first and only.

And now I find I’m your choice!

Psalm 16:5 (MSG)

Pause and pray

Today, we’re continuing to reflect on Jesus’ visit to Mary and Martha’s house. Mary had chosen to go and sit at Jesus’ feet, while Martha was busy in the kitchen.

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 10:40-42 (NIV UK)

When Jesus arrived at Martha and Mary’s house, Martha was keen to celebrate and so she ‘rushed and fussed and cooked’*. But what Jesus really wanted, maybe needed, was the peace and quiet of time with friends.

* William Barclay, The Daily Study Bible: The Gospel of Luke(Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press, 1975), p. 142.

Ask

Sometimes, in my effort to be kind to someone, I'm kind in my own way, instead of considering the kind of kindness that they really need. I take a moment to think of all the different people that I am going to be with over the next 24 hours.

Lord Jesus, show me how I can be kind to them in ways that they will really receive kindness. Help me to be hospitable in this way.

Pause and pray

Jesus said that Martha was 'worried and upset about many things'. Who do I know that feels like this at the moment?

Lord Jesus, I ask You to comfort them and strengthen them. May they realize that they are not alone, that You are with them. Is there something that I could do to offer hospitality by helping or encouraging them Today?

Pause and pray

Yield

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

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 10:40-42 (NIV UK)

'Hospitality is not optional for Christians,' writes Christine Pohl, 'nor is it limited to those who are specially gifted for it. It is, instead, a necessary practice in the community of faith.'**

** Christine Pohl, Making Room,(Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1999), p. 31.

The practice of hospitality isn't simply about offering the best meals or about inviting people to stay in our best rooms - as wonderful as these things are. As Mary demonstrates, hospitality often means giving who we are - giving our time, our undistracted attention, our presence.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord Jesus, help me to be a little more like Mary today – giving You my full attention. I know that this is the ‘one thing’ that is important. I offer You all the things that are worrying and upsetting me, and I kneel at Your feet instead.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Psalm 16 that:

‘...in [His] presence there is fullness of joy.’

Psalm 16:11 (ESV)

Closing Prayer

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

June 29 2022 (click for audio)

Broken Hearts

Today is Wednesday the 29th of June, and this week we are exploring the story of Mary and Martha whose lives were shaped by the practice of hospitality.

Pause

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

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

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

Rejoice and Reflect

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

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

He rescues them from all their troubles.

The LORD is close to the brokenhearted;

he rescues those whose spirits are crushed.

The righteous person faces many troubles,

but the LORD comes to the rescue each time.

Psalm 34:17-19 (NLT)

Pause and pray

Today, we're reflecting on another time when Jesus visited Mary and Martha's house. However, on this occasion, he went to see them because their brother, Lazarus, had just died.

When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.

'Lord,' Martha said to Jesus, 'if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.'

Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.'

John 11:20-23 (NIV UK)

Jesus had a plan. He'd already told the disciples, 'Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but now I will go and wake him up' (John 11:11). However, when Jesus was taken to where Lazarus had been buried, John writes that, 'Jesus wept' (John 11:35). It's the shortest verse in the whole Bible, but it says a lot about Jesus.

Jesus wept because Mary and Martha were his friends, and He cared that they were broken-hearted. They'd welcomed Him into their home, and Jesus had welcomed them into his heart.

Ask

Over the last couple of years, lots of people have been sick with Covid-19, and other illnesses too, and some have lost loved ones. Maybe I know someone who has suffered in this way. Perhaps it's me.

Lord Jesus, as I bring to mind those I know who have been suffering with grief or sickness, I remember that You care. I ask You to give comfort and strength to those who need it right now.

Pause and pray

I also think about the people who offer hospitality in their job by caring for those who are sick and dying – doctors and nurses, home-carers and hospice staff, and many others. In the quiet, I name those that I know personally.

Loving Father, I ask You to give them comfort and strength too, especially when they feel Overwhelmed.

Pause and pray

Yield

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

When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.

'Lord,' Martha said to Jesus, 'if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.'

Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.'

John 11:20-23 (NIV UK)

When Jesus visits their home in Luke 10, Martha is distracted by all that needs doing, while Mary chooses to sit at Jesus' feet. Here, however, it is Martha who goes out to meet Jesus as soon as she hears that He is on His way.

How quick am I to get up and go to meet with Jesus when crisis calls?

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord Jesus, I tend to hold and hide everything inside when I'm suffering – when I feel sad or hurt – but I want to be more like Martha. I choose to get up and go to meet with You now, trusting that You care deeply for me and what's going on in my life.

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 5 that I can:

Cast all [my] anxiety on him because he cares for [me].

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.

June 30 2022 (click for audio)

Extravagance

Today is Thursday the 30th of June, and this week we are exploring the story of Mary and Martha whose lives were shaped by the practice of hospitality.

Pause

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

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

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

Rejoice and Reflect

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

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

Pause and pray

Shortly before he was tried and killed, Jesus went back to Mary and Martha's house. Today, we're reflecting on the extraordinary way that Jesus was welcomed on that occasion.

Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. Then Mary took about half a liter of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

John 12:1-3 (NIV UK)

Versions of this story appear in all four of the Gospels. There are slight differences in the details, and it's possible that Jesus was anointed with perfume more than once, but the fact that Jesus being anointed appears in all four Gospel accounts suggests how important it is. And one thing that is clear in every account is just how costly the perfume was – John says it was worth an entire year's salary (John 12:5)!

When Jesus arrived, Mary welcomed Him in the most extraordinary, extravagant way – she gave the best that she possibly could.

Ask

What would it mean for me, today, to give the best that I possibly can to Jesus?

Pause and pray

Maybe I could express my love and gratitude to Jesus by giving generously to someone else today? I take a few moments in silence now to listen for direction from the Holy Spirit.

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...

Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. Then Mary took about half a liter of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

John 12:1-3 (NIV UK)

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

As I read that final line, 'And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume,' I found myself wondering what fragrance fills my own house? Is it the fragrance of gratitude and worship, generosity and hospitality... or something completely different?

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

I use a prayer-poem credited to Cardinal John Henry Newman as my own today:

*Dear Jesus, help me to spread Your fragrance everywhere I go.
Flood my soul with Your spirit and life.
Penetrate and possess my whole being so utterly,
That my life may only be a radiance of Yours.*

Yielding Promise

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

[God] uses [me] to spread the knowledge of Christ everywhere, like a sweet perfume. [My life is] a Christ-like fragrance rising up to God.

2 Corinthians 2:14-15 (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.