

'Lord teach us to pray'

A set of prayer resources for the Beacon Parishes Mission Community



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To pray means to open your hands before God.

It means slowly relaxing the tension which squeezes your hands together and accepting your existence with an increasing readiness, not as a possession to defend, but as a gift to receive.

Above all prayer is a way of life which allows you to find stillness in the midst of the world where you open your hands to God's promises and find hope for yourself and your neighbour, and your world.

In prayer, you encounter God not only in the small voice and the soft breeze, but also in the midst of the turmoil of the world, in the distress and joy of your neighbour and in the loneliness of your own heart.

From 'With Open Hands' by Henri Nouwen

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1 Praying on behalf of others

As a church and as individual Christians we commit ourselves to say prayers on behalf of others. These are known as intercessions. In our intercessions we bring our lives and the lives of those around us, neighbours both near and far, to God for his love and care.



1.1 General weekly cycle of intercessions

Sunday

We pray for... The universal church, that she proclaim the living Lord... The natural world, that we might use creation sustainably... The needy, that they might know new life...

Monday

We pray for... The people of God, for inspiration by the spirit... Traditional and digital media, for healthy communication... Those who travel, for safety and protection...

Tuesday

We pray for... The persecuted church, for protection and faithfulness... The criminal justice system, for wisdom and fairness... The world's displaced people, for freedom and security...

Wednesday

We pray for... All who follow Christ, for growth in discipleship... All in the medical profession ... All who have no one to pray for them...

Thursday

We pray for... Ministers of the gospel... Those who work for reconciliation... Those in hospital...

Friday

We pray for... The local church, for courage to take up the cross of Christ... Those in authority, for the right use of power... Victims and perpetrators of violence, for healing and repentance...

Saturday

We pray... That Christians may live as citizens of heaven... That the nations of the world will live in harmony... That the dying will know the joy of the resurrection...

1.2 Local weekly cycle of intercessions



We are set in a particular time and place and so we bring our local communities and relationships to God.

Sunday

Our Bishops and those in leadership... Prisoners and staff... Our own friends, family and neighbours... Our Beacon Parishes that we may grow in... Prayer... Discipleship... and Service...

Monday

We pray for... The church community and villagers of Torbryan... Our schools... Those in hospital and the housebound...

Tuesday

We pray for... The church community and villagers of Woodland... Our pubs and restaurants... Carers and those medical professionals...

Wednesday

We pray for... The church community and villages of Denbury... Our residential and care homes... Those who care for children and young people...

Thursday

We pray for... The church community and villagers of Ipplepen... Our local shops and post offices... Our Parish Councils...

Friday

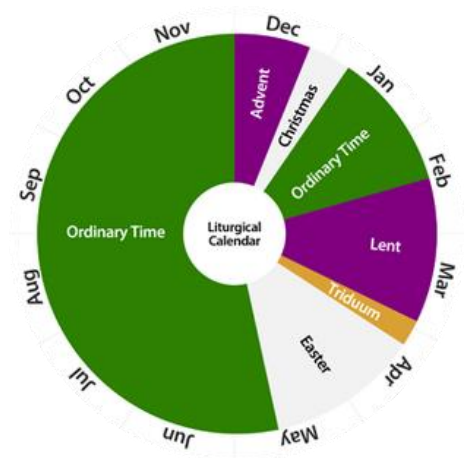
We pray for... The church community and villagers of Broadhempston... Local Farms... Local clubs and societies...

Saturday

We pray for... Our brothers and sisters of other denominations and none... Local Businesses...

2 Seasonal Intercessions

In each season of the church year we reflect on a different part of our Christian faith and the story of Jesus' life. Each season provides a particular focus for our intercessions.



Advent

We pray... That the Church will be ready for the coming of God... That the nations will be subject to the rule of God... That the broken will find healing from God...

Christmastide

We pray for... The Church, especially in places of conflict... Rulers, especially in the Holy Land... Children, especially refugees and the vulnerable...

Epiphanytide

We pray for... The unity of the church... The peace of the world... The healing of the sick...

Lent

We pray for... Those preparing for baptism and confirmation... Those serving through leadership... Those looking for forgiveness...

Passiontide

We pray for... The suffering church... The oppressed people of the world...
The persecuted and falsely accused...

Easter

We pray... That the people of God might proclaim the risen Lord... That humankind will care for creation...
That those in fear of death will find faith through the resurrection...

Friday after Ascension Day to the Day of Pentecost

That God's royal priesthood will be empowered by the Spirit... That the world's rulers will work for Justice...
That those who wait on God will find renewal...

Saints' Days and from All Saints to Advent

We pray... That the Church may bear the fruit of the Spirit... That the world may hear the word of God ... That the saints on earth may be inspired by the saints in glory...

3 Prayerfully reading the bible

Below is a simple method for prayerfully reading the bible. The invitation is to spend 15 - 20 minutes during the week with the Sunday gospel reading (either using the method below or your own way of reading and praying with the bible).



Listening for Christ the Word

Reading: read the passage slowly noting the word or phrase that attracts you

Silence: for two minutes reflect on the word or phrase that has attracted you

Pray: speak to God about what you have heard

How Christ the Word Speaks to me

Second Reading: read the passage slowly again

Silence: for two minutes reflect on how does the content of the passage touch my life today?

Pray: speak to God about what you see or hear in the passage

What Christ the Word is inviting me to do

Third Reading: read the passage slowly again

Silence: for two minutes reflect on 'I believe God wants me to.....today'

Pray: speak to God about your answer to the above

You may wish to keep a journal of your prayers and reflections.

Reading and sharing with others

The above method can easily be adapted if a few people want to read and share together - you could arrange to connect on Zoom or equivalent. In this case the 'pray' section can be replaced with a 'Share' section where each person is given the opportunity to say briefly what has struck them in their silent reflection or pass if they do not wish to share. In a group setting it is possible for the passage to be read aloud by different people. Praying silently for each other can act as a conclusion to the time together.

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4 Prayer in action - two ways to prayerfully reflect on our lived experiences

The whole of our lives are to be lived as a prayer and God comes to us as we live out our lives each day. It is therefore important to learn how to reflect prayerful on our lived experiences, in doing so our lives can become living prayers. What follows are two ways we might explore doing this.



4.1 Reflecting prayerfully on a specific experience or event

Naming the Experience

Choose an event, a moment, a conversation or a situation. As you recall the event, ask yourself... What happened?... Who was involved?... What did you do or say?...

Exploring the Experience

To explore another layer in this event, ask yourself...How did you feel?... What challenged, stimulated, or disturbed you?... What was happening for others in the situation?...

Digging Deeper

To discover another layer of reflection, ask yourself...What do you think about the situation?... What core values emerge as you think about this event?... What values are different from yours?... What social issues, power issues, or economic issues are at work?...

Making Faith Connections

To make faith connections, ask yourself...Where is God present for you in this situation?... Where is God present for others?... Does this event remind you of a Scripture passage, a hymn, or other resources from your faith tradition?... What theological issues or themes are present?... What traditions of church speak to this situation?... Are you affirmed or challenged in your present actions or beliefs?...

Learning

To draw out what you have learned, ask yourself... What questions still linger?... Were you challenged to change present actions or beliefs?... What have you learned about yourself?... What have you learned about God?... What do you need?... What will you do now?...

Praying

To conclude your reflection, write a prayer emerging from reflection on this event

(Adapted from: Reflecting with God. Connecting Faith and Daily Life in Small Groups Abigail Johnson Alban Institute (2004)

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4.2 The Examen

The Examen is one of the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius, the 16th century saint. Ignatius taught that the key to a healthy spirituality was twofold: Finding God in all things and constantly working to gain freedom to cooperate with God's will. The Examen is a way of connecting with the presence of God in our lives and discerning the direction in which we should go. The simplest form of the Examen consists in asking two questions:

....For what moment today am I most grateful?... For what moment today am I least grateful?...

These questions help us identify moments of consolation – that for which we are most grateful – and desolation – that for which we are least grateful. Ignatius expected that God would speak to us through these moments of deepest feelings and yearnings. He said we should aim to do more of what brings us consolation, and to listen to and respond to what brings us desolation.

Considering the last 24 hours

Give thanks for the gifts you've received. Simple things – smell of fresh coffee; a good night's sleep; a smile from a friend. Ask God to help you in this Examen, to be present with you as you reflect.

Think back over how you have spent the last 24 hours – where you have been, who you have interacted with, what you have done - notice the details, the context of what happened and how you acted. Notice especially your feelings and motivations, those things that cause you to act in freedom, or with less than perfect freedom.

First question of Examen:

In what moment did you feel most connection with God, with yourself, with others?

Stay with that moment, giving thanks for it, recognising God's presence with you.... What was it that made it so special?... What might God be saying to you through that moment?... How can you make space for more of this in your life?... What opportunity does this moment give you to grow in faith, in love and in hope?...

Second question of the Examen:

In what moment did you feel most disharmony or least connection to God, to yourself, to others?

Stay with that moment, although it may not be comfortable. Recognise God's presence with you in that moment... What was it that made it difficult?... What might God be saying to you through that moment?... How do you need to respond to that moment?... What opportunity does this moment give you to grow in faith, in love and in hope?...

Final step to reconcile and resolve

Talk to God about what you have just received and ask him to help you in responding.

(Adapted from a meditation by Jonny Baker

http://jonnybaker.blogs.com/jonnybaker/2007/05/worship_trick_2_1.html

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5 Praying through the day - the canticles of the daily offices

The daily prayer of the church is guided by canticles taken from the early chapters of St. Luke. These from the high points of the churches offices and what follows is a suggested way of praying with these canticles taken from the introduction to Celebrating Common Prayer, The Society of St. Francis.



Morning

Benedictus (Luke 1:68-79) the Song of Zechariah, who looks forward to the birth of John the Baptist, the herald of God's Kingdom. As we pray *Benedictus* we are tuned into expecting God to act in the day that lies ahead.

Daytime

Reciting the *Angelic Salutation* (Luke 1:28) even if we only do it once a day, is a reminder to say yes to God, as Mary did when the world's salvation hung on her response to Gabriel. As we step through the day we are to be alert to the angel tapping us on the shoulder inviting us to participate in bringing God's will into being.



Evening

At the end of the working day, as we look back on its achievements and failures, we pray the *Magnificat* (Luke 1:46-55), the song of Mary. Praising God for turning the world upside down brings the challenge back to us personally: have I taken my part in casting down the mighty from their thrones or filling the hungry with good things?

Night

Only as we go to bed can we set aside the burdens of the day as, with Old Simeon we pray *Nunc dimittis* (Luke 2:29-32), Now, Lord, you let your servant go in peace. At night prayer we hail Christ as the light of the world, and hand the world back to God, knowing that somewhere else the dawn is bringing on another day and that the voice of prayer is never silent.



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Benedictus

Luke 1:68-79 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

⁶⁸ "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,
for he has looked favourably on his people and redeemed them.
⁶⁹ He has raised up a mighty saviour^[a] for us
in the house of his servant David,
⁷⁰ as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,
⁷¹ that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us.
⁷² Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors,
and has remembered his holy covenant,
⁷³ the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham,
to grant us ⁷⁴ that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies,
might serve him without fear, ⁷⁵ in holiness and righteousness
before him all our days.
⁷⁶ And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,
⁷⁷ to give knowledge of salvation to his people
by the forgiveness of their sins.
⁷⁸ By the tender mercy of our God,
the dawn from on high will break upon^[b] us,
⁷⁹ to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace."

Angelic Salutation

Luke 1:28 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

²⁸ And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you."

Magnificat

Luke 1:46-55 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

⁴⁶ And Mary^[a] said,
"My soul magnifies the Lord,
⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,
⁴⁸ for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant.
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.
⁵⁰ His mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.
⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.
⁵² He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;
⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.
⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
⁵⁵ according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

Nunc dimittis

Luke 2:29-32 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

²⁹ "Master, now you are dismissing your servant^[a] in peace,
according to your word;
³⁰ for my eyes have seen your salvation,
³¹ which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles
and for glory to your people Israel."

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6 Various Prayers

For Travellers



Your hand shall lead me, your hand shall hold me fast
Merciful God, giver of life and health, guide, we pray with your wisdom
all who are striving to protect travellers from injury and harm;
grant to those who travel consideration for others,
and to those who walk and play a thoughtful caution and care;
so that without fear or misfortune we may all come safely to our journeys end,
by your mercy, who care for each of us; through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen

Praying Farewell



Go in peace for God goes with you
God of our beginnings and endings, we celebrate all we have shared with
and ask your blessing as they continue on their journey.
May the love that is in our hearts be a bond that unites us forever, wherever we may be.
May the power of your presence bless our leave-taking;
for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Amen

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At the time of death



Lord Jesus remember me when you come into your kingdom

O God, who brought us to birth and in whose arms we die:
in our grief and shock contain and comfort us, embrace us with your love,
give us hope in our confusion and grace to let go into new life;
through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Heavenly Father

Into whose hands Jesus Christ commended his spirit at the last hour:
Into those same hands we now commend your servant
that death may be the gate to life
and to eternal fellowship with you:
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

The sign of the cross

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen

..or..



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Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass, against us.

And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen

Gloria Patri

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever. Amen

The Jesus Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
Son of the living God,
have mercy on me a sinner.