

Spiritual Exercises

Prayer

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INTRODUCTION

This week's exercises are all designed to challenge our conceptions of prayer and to invite us into deeper, broader and more meaningful, two-way encounters with God as we pray. Prayer, it is said, is our response to God's initiative in our lives. Since God is always initiating, these exercises all aim to make us more active in our response to him. Don't let the size of this document fool you. You won't do everything in here, but our hope is that you'll try some of it.

After several initial exercises addressing our misconceptions about prayer, there are two general kinds of exercises suggested here. The first kind of exercise is to try different types of prayer, beyond simply asking God for things that we want/need (and hopefully thanking him when we receive them), probably the most common form of prayer that we employ. They challenge us to listen, to reflect on our day, to bring a more balanced "agenda" of prayer. One approach to this week of prayer is to experiment with a new kind of prayer every day of the week. Or experiment with one type of prayer for the whole week. Or mix and match. It doesn't matter.

The second category provides a second approach to this week of prayer. You will not likely do activities from section one and section two. Likely you will choose to do either one or the other. This second category suggests several week-long prayer exercises, in which we journey through a seven-day agenda for prayer, being deliberate to pray through various, different issues each day, to broaden the scope of the things we pray for. If you choose this path, you will choose to be on this path all week and not do much else, which can be extremely gratifying in its own right.

The point is to spend this week praying differently than you normally pray. Pray Scripture. Pray the written prayers of the Saints. Pray for things you've never prayed before. Just pray.

Prayer

PRAYER (MIS)CONCEPTIONS

Prayer can be a tremendously misunderstood spiritual practice. We get intimidated by it because we don't understand or feel like we can't do it "right." These exercises are designed to help begin to acknowledge, expose and address our misconceptions about prayer so that we are less intimidated to try it. Choose to interact with ONE of the following sets of examples of prayer and reflect on them using the questions at the end.

1. Take a few minutes on youtube.com. Click on some of the links below and watch how these different movies depict prayer:

- i. Talladega Nights:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VVJSEEOybIw&feature=related>
- ii. The Apostle:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BTVo9ymHBSc&feature=related>
- iii. Passion of the Christ:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BaLzDhOuzGY&feature=related>
- iv. The Gangs of New York:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=twW8gR5hcvQ>
- v. The Kite Runner:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zzZgvb3n1uo>

2. Explore some examples of prayer:

- i. The Lord's Prayer: Matthew 6:9-13
- ii. Mary's Prayer: Luke 1:46-55
- iii. Thomas Merton's Prayer:

MY LORD GOD, I have no idea where I am going.

I do not see the road ahead of me.

I cannot know for certain where it will end.

Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so.

But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you.

And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.

I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.

And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road though I may know nothing about it.

Therefore will I trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.

I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

iv. Renovare Bible Definition of prayer: Prayer is our response to God's initiative in our life.

3. Reflect on some common metaphors for prayer from the writings of Church leaders and from Scripture:

- i. Coming to rest after a long journey or vigorous activity
- ii. A stream with roots reaching deep (Jer 17)
- iii. A gushing spring bubbling up after a blockage has been removed
- iv. A breaking dam, letting loose open floods, torrents of water
- v. Labour and delivery, new life emerging, painfully, yet with deep joy
- vi. Waking up after deep sleep, coming to conscious awareness of something new
- vii. A surprise attack by an insider, being conquered by someone within who then rules
- viii. Searching and seeking (Jer 29:11-13)
- ix. Our minds settling, like silt in a shaken jar of water slowly settling at the bottom

4. After interacting with any of these conceptions of prayer, take some time to reflect on some of the following questions in prayer, in a journal, or in community with others:

- i. What reactions do you have to these ideas about prayer? What did you resonate with? What was foreign to you? Why?
- ii. What are some of the assumptions about prayer that motivate these ideas? What are some of your assumptions about prayer?
- iii. What aspects of prayer do these examples and ideas address that are new to you? How do they add to your understanding of prayer?
- iv. How would you write your own definition of prayer?
- v. What are other ways to pray this kind of prayer, aside from using words? How could you leverage art (paint, photography, music), nature, work or relationships to “pray”?
- vi. Where is God taking initiative in your life right now? How could you respond to him in prayer?

Experimenting with Prayer

EXPERIMENTING WITH PRAYER

Depending on your spiritual background or heritage (or lack thereof) you are probably accustomed to one “standard” form of prayer, one way that “everybody” prays. However, there are many (infinite?) forms of prayer with which to experiment. This exercise is intended to introduce us to different ways of praying, in hopes that each of us will discover powerful, new ways of “responding to God’s initiative.”

Consider trying out one or more of these different forms of prayer:

> TIMES OF PRAYER

There is no right or wrong time to pray. Part of the Jewish tradition of prayer involved two formal hours of prayer during each day. As you strive to incorporate prayer into your life this week, you may want to consider the time of day when you are best able to pray. Take advantage of an alarm clock, a PDA or your desktop calendar to help you weave prayer into your life. This exercise is about thinking about different options for hours of prayer.

Reflect on the following, as they pertain to the patterns of your life.

1. I am...

- i. A morning person
- ii. A night hawk
- iii. Most energized in the middle of the day
- iv. None of the above

2. I find it easiest to focus on God...

- i. When I first wake up
- ii. Just before I fall asleep
- iii. In the middle of a crisis
- iv. When everything is good
- v. Before a meal
- vi. None of the above

3. I pray...

- i. Daily
- ii. Multiple times each day
- iii. Weekly
- iv. No set pattern; it depends on my circumstances
- v. Rarely
- vi. Never
- vii. None of the above

4. Read the following verses and consider how each verse could contribute to establishing a pattern to your praying.

- i. Psalm 4
- ii. Psalm 5:1-3
- iii. Psalm 113:3
- iv. Daniel 6:10
- v. Acts 3:1; 10:9
- vi. I Thessalonians 5:17

> PRAYING THE “DAILY OFFICE”

The Daily Office is a set rhythm of reading the Scriptures, singing, and prayer. Sometimes called the Liturgy of the Hours, it originally developed when early Christians continued the Jewish practice of reciting prayers and songs at certain hours. Priests, monks, and followers of Jesus the world over observe the Daily Office, even today.

The Daily Office is often different from a devotional time, as the purpose of the Daily Office is to simply to spend time in the presence of God, nothing more. With the first prayers of the Office beginning at 3:45am, many people choose to participate in only certain parts of the Daily Office rather than its entirety. Each service could take as long as an hour or more.

Go to <http://www.missionstclare.com/english/index.html>.

Click on the “Click for Today’s Prayer Service” link and slowly work your way through the links on the left of the screen. Or click on “April’s Calendar” for daily devotions for families and individuals, which provide reading, and reflection opportunities based on your schedule and needs. You may select the morning prayer, which focuses on praise, noontime prayer, the evening prayer, which stresses thanksgiving, or the compline (nighttime) prayer, which invites reflection. Do not feel like you have to go through the entire service, but experiment and see what portions are meaningful to you. You can make this a part of your prayer routine one or several times a day.

> POSTURES OF PRAYER

Noun: a position of a person's body when standing or sitting

Verb: someone in a particular attitude or pose

We often don't think about the posture we assume when we pray, whether on our knees or our face, sitting or standing, eyes open or closed, but every aspect of our posture communicates something about what we think about talking with God. This reflection exercise is to help us consider our posture, and our attitude, in prayer.

1. Consider how body language is used as a form of communication.

- i. List or think about how different stances and body positions convey meaning either when you are speaking or being spoken to. How does your posture change based on the relational intimacy of the person you are communicating with?
- ii. What posture do you most often assume when you pray? How often do you consider your posture before/while praying?

2. Consider the following texts: 1Kings 8:22-23 and Mark 11:25.

- i. What two postures are identified in these texts? What do these postures communicate about the prayer?
- ii. How might you incorporate these postures into your own prayer life? Consider the place you would be, alone or in community. What type of prayer would be appropriate for each posture?
- iii. Would these particular postures be easy for you to assume? Why or why not?

3. Read the parable in Luke 18:9-14.

- i. What posture of prayer is identified in this text? What does this posture communicate about the content of these prayers?
- ii. What does this text say to you with respect to the posture of prayer?

4. Read as many of the following texts as you wish: Ezra 9:5, Psalm 95:6, Daniel 6:10, Luke 22:41, Acts 9:40, 20:36, 21:5 and Ephesians 3:14.

- i. What other postures are identified in these texts? What do they add to our understanding of how our posture coincides with our prayer?
- ii. Would you consider praying in one, or more, of these postures? What would make it easy or difficult for you to pray in one of these ways?
- iii. Consider praying in one or more of the postures you've discovered. Consider matching your posture to your attitude in prayer.

> THE PRAYER OF EXAMEN

The prayer of examen is a remembering exercise developed by Ignatius of Loyola. Through engaging in this prayer we hope to develop a deeper level of spiritual sensitivity to discern God's will and His active presence in our lives. It is a way of learning to pay attention so that we can see the patterns emerging in our lives. The prayer may take between 10 to 20 minutes. This prayer can be done alone, with a few friends or with your family.

1. To begin take a few minutes of quiet at the end of your day to remember or review the day (or week, month, or year).

2. Ask yourself the first question of reflection: For what moment today am I most grateful. You can also ask it in other ways:

- i. When did I feel most alive today?
- ii. When was I happiest today?
- iii. What is my consolation? i.e. What connected me with myself, with others and with God today?
- iv. What was the best part of my day?

3 . Ask yourself the second question of reflection: For what moment today am I least grateful. You can also ask it in other ways:

- i. When did I most feel life draining out of me?
- ii. When was I saddest today?
- iii. What is my desolation? i.e. What disconnected me from myself, from others, and from God today?
- iv. What was the worst part of my day?

4. Try incorporating asking these questions as a part of your evening meal time, or bedtime ritual with your kids. You will find that it will provide an opportunity to interact in each other lives in a significant way. Even very young children can grasp and participate in this type of prayer. Share your reflections with your family or friends, or write them in your journal.

> STRUCTURED PRAYERS

A well-balanced prayer is a prayer that is not entirely dominated by our own desires and wishes, by getting God to give us “stuff,” though that is a part of prayer. Try building your own prayers on either of the two models below, both designed to balance out our prayer lives and include more than simply asking God.

1. A.C.T.S.: Try following this simple acronym for prayer.

- i. Adoration – Pray about God, praising him for things about his character and nature that you find beautiful or that you have powerfully experienced recently. This could include his love, mercy, discipline, help, etc. Do not pray about what God has done, but who he is.
- ii. Confession – Having meditated on the beauty of God, reflect on the ways in which you do not live up to God’s beauty. Specifically confess actual, detailed sins. Apologize to God and ask for his help to leave these temptations behind.

- iii. Thanksgiving – Reflect on the ways in which God has already answered past prayers or on ways in which he has provided for you whatever you’ve needed, whether you’ve asked for them or not. Celebrate specific instances of his his goodness to you in your life.
- iv. Supplication (asking) – Now, ask God for the needs in your life. Remember that God cares about every last detail of your life, though he may not give you everything you ask for. Remember to pray like Jesus did: “Not my will but yours be done.”

2. The Lord’s Prayer: Try following the general model laid out by Jesus. (This could also be used as a weekly prayer exercise, one phrase per day.)

- i. “Our Father in Heaven...” - This part of the prayer is about focussing on God himself. Reflect on the ways in which he has been your “heavenly father,” suggesting both his power and God-ness and his love and intimacy. What does this metaphor suggest to you? How have you experienced God as “heavenly father”?
- ii. “Hallowed be your name...” - This request is about making God, and his will, the sole focus of our lives and in our world. If his name is “hallowed” (holy), then it is revered by people all over the world who love and serve him and have experienced his goodness, including us.
- iii. “Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” - In this part of the prayer, we pray for all the ways in which this world would be a different place if God were allowed to run it the way that we would want (for people to love God and each other will all of themselves).
- iv. “Give us this day our daily bread” - By now, we are ready to begin to pray modest (and grand) requests for all of the needs in our lives. These are the things that allow us to live in such a way as to be able to participate in God’s will being “done on earth as it is in heaven.”
- v. “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors” - It is here that we pray for God’s pardon for all of the ways in which we’ve offended him, in direct proportion to our willingness to forgive those who have hurt and offended us (pretty good motivation to pray for a forgiving spirit for ourselves).
- vi. “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one” - This request is about praying that God would help us avoid the sin today that we fell into yesterday, for protection from the Enemy’s schemes and attacks.

3. The “Prayer Sandwich”:

- i. The “bottom piece” - Praying prayers of thanksgiving, recognizing God’s activity in our lives, and in our world, including all his blessings
- ii. The “filling in the middle” - Speaking to God about our journey with him in life, including our bringing our requests about life to him
- iii. The “top piece” - Praising and worshiping God for whom he is

> A GAME WITH MINUTES

Frank Laubach, a missionary to the Philippines, tried to think about God for at least one second out of every minute, a practice he called “A Game with Minutes.” Laubach would even record his percentages of consciousness with God in his journal!

1. Read Acts 10:2 and 1 Thessalonians 5:17.
2. Take a given hour each day and try to see how many minutes during that hour you can be conscious, even for one second of the presence of God.
3. Alternatively, set an alarm to go off every hour and use that as a reminder to think of God and invite him into your day.
4. At the end of the day, journal about how successful you were. Did this experiment motivate you to think of God and his presence more often than usual?

> LISTENING PRAYER

Listening prayer is a prayer of relationship and an expression of waiting silence. This form of prayer opens us to a dialogue with God where we are prepared to let Him speak to us. Set aside 20-30 minutes to listen for God.

1. In preparation, choose a phrase that calls your heart and mind back to God when other thoughts intrude. So when your mind wanders, as it will, don't condemn yourself - just pray your phrase back to God.
2. Begin by opening yourself to God; tell Him that you want to be attentive. Our goal as we consider the caring of our souls is to be attentive to God waiting and listening, not rushing in and out of his presence.
3. Next, read a passage of Scripture for meditation. Try Psalm 65; 105:1-11; 116; or 118.
4. As you wait in expectation, record what God is saying to you. Write everything that comes to mind.

> PRAYERS FOR DIFFERENT SEASONS

Oftentimes, in the midst of our circumstances, we don't know what to pray. In these times, it is helpful to remember that there are many written prayers that put words to many of the situations that we may find ourselves in, expressing our emotions in many seasons of life (marriage, journey, birth...). Praying written prayers helps to widen our sense of prayer in revealing other ways to relate to God; it also helps feed our imagination. Search the following two websites for prayers that reflect your current season in life (not all are of equal value, so choose carefully). Select a prayer and read it through silently and, or out loud. Each prayer will take 10 to 15 minutes.

<http://www.catholic.org/prayers/>

<http://www.2heartsnetwork.org/prayers.htm>

> CAIM PRAYER

The Caim Prayer is from the Celtic Christianity tradition and caim means ‘encircling’. This prayer is used when words tend to get in the way or when it is difficult to focus. This prayer can be adapted for many different situations. The prayer will take 10-15 minutes.

1. To begin draw an invisible circle clockwise around yourself as you say the prayer; this symbolizes the encircling love of God. (Alternately, draw a circle around another person you are praying for in your mind’s eye as you pray.) Visualize yourself and others encircled and be aware that the living God surrounds and encloses with His love, care, and protection.
2. Pray these words, or compose your own to fit the situation. Insert me, him, her, or them instead of name if appropriate.

Circle (name), Lord.
Keep protection near
and danger afar.

Circle (name), Lord.
Keep hope within,
keep despair without.

Circle (name), Lord.
Keep light near
and darkness afar.

Circle (name), Lord.
Keep peace within
and anxiety without.

The eternal Father, Son and Holy Spirit
shield (name) on every side.
Amen.

(Adapted from the Northumbrian Communities book Celtic Daily Prayer)

24/7 PRAYER

According to their website, the 24-7 Prayer movement is a global, non-stop prayer meeting that began in 1999 amongst the young people of Revelation church in Chichester, England. It has spread into more than ninety nations and most Christian denominations, giving birth to mission and justice initiatives around the globe (<http://www.24-7prayer.com/about/what>) Communities of people in churches, on campuses and in homes around the world are committed to praying 24 hours a day for seven straight days. Consider one of these options for 24/7 prayer.

1. One day of 24/7 Prayer: As a life group or friendship group commit to cover one full day of prayer. Set up a location and then assign every hour of the 24 hour period to an individual to pray. Arrange everyone to be at the final hour, so you can celebrate and share your experiences.
2. A Partial day of 24.7 Prayer: If setting up a location and committing a full hour seems too daunting, arrange a partial day of prayer with your life group or friendship group. Select one day, and have individuals assigned for each hour of the 24 hour period. Each individual will then pray for the first 15 minutes of the hour, at whatever location they are at. Arrange a gathering afterward to share your experiences.

> MOUNT CARMEL RETREAT: I COME AWAY DAY

Dedicating a significant chunk of time to prayer can help lead us into a deeper experience of God. As we make room, time, and space in our life, the triune God will show up and love us and be there for us.

On the second Tuesday of every month the Mount Carmel Spiritual Centre offers a retreat day from 9:30 am to 3:30 pm. This is an invitation to take time away from our busy schedules for a day of unguided prayer and spiritual refreshing. Use the prayer exercises recommended in this guide to connect with God.

<http://www.carmelniagara.com/Default.aspx>

Week-Long Prayer Exercises

WEEK-LONG PRAYER EXCERSIS

Some of us have very narrow prayer lives, praying for such a limited, self-centred list of items. One reason for this is that we don't know what else to pray for or don't have time to pray for more than just one thing each day. These week-long prayer exercises are designed to help us get beyond our narrow prayers about ourselves and into a broader world of prayer with God. Choose one of these prayer exercises and make this your priority in prayer for this week.

> PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

A prayer of intercession is a prayer in which we learn to lift our lives before God, in submission to him, in anticipation of seeing his will being done in our lives and in our world. It's praying for "stuff." We all do it, yet when most of us pray for "stuff" we pray far too narrowly. Try using this weekly rhythm for prayers of intercession as a way of expanding the scope of our prayer. This exercise will take all week.

1. Sunday:

- i. Mighty God of mercy, we thank you for the resurrection dawn bringing the glory of our risen Lord who makes every day new. Especially we thank you for...

The beauty of your creation...

The new creation in Christ and all gifts of healing and forgiveness...

The sustaining love of family and friends...

The fellowship of faith in your church...

ii. Merciful God of might, renew this weary world, heal the hurts of all your children, and bring about your peace for all in Christ Jesus, the living Lord. Especially we pray for...

Those who govern nations of the world...
The people in countries ravaged by strife or warfare...
All who work for peace and international harmony...
All who strive to save the earth from destruction...
The church of Jesus Christ in every land...

2. Monday:

i. We praise you, God our creator, for your handiwork in shaping and sustaining your wondrous creation. Especially we thank you for...

The Miracle of life and the wonder of living...
Particular blessings coming to us in this day...
The resources of the earth...
Gifts of creative vision and skillful craft...
The treasure stored in every human life...

ii. We dare to pray for others, God our Saviour, claiming your love in Jesus Christ for the whole world, committing ourselves to care for those around us in his name. Especially we pray for...

Those who work for the benefit of others...
Those who cannot work today...
Those who teach and those who learn...
People who are poor...
The church in Europe...

3. Tuesday:

i. Eternal God, we rejoice this morning in the gift of life which we have received by your grace, and the new life you give in Jesus Christ. Especially we thank you for...

The love of our families...
The affection of our friends...
Strength and abilities to serve your purpose today...
This community in which we live...
Opportunities to give as we have received...

ii. God of grace, we offer our prayers for the needs of others and commit ourselves to serve them even as we have been served in Jesus Christ. Especially we pray for...

Those closest to us, families, friends, neighbours...
Refugees and homeless men, women and children...
The outcast and persecuted...
Those from whom we are estranged...
The church in Africa...

4) Wednesday:

i. God of all mercies, we praise you that you have brought us to this new day, brightening our lives with the dawn of promise and hope in Jesus Christ. Especially we thank you for...

The warmth of sunlight, the wetness of rain and snow, and all that nourishes the earth...
The presence and power of your Spirit...
The support and encouragement we receive from others...
Those who provide for public safety and well-being...
The mission of the church around the world...

ii. Merciful God, strengthen us in prayer that we may lift up the brokenness of this world for your healing, and share in the saving love of Jesus Christ. Especially we pray for...

Those in positions of authority over others...
The lonely and forgotten...
Children without families or homes...
Agents of caring and relief...
The church in Asia and the Middle East...

5) Thursday:

i. Loving God, as the rising sun chases away the night, so you have scattered the power of death in the rising of Jesus Christ, and you bring us all blessings in him. Especially we thank you for...

The community of faith in our church...
Those with whom we work or share common concerns...
The diversity of your children...
Indications of your love at work in the world...
Those who work for reconciliation...

ii. Mighty God, with the dawn of your love you reveal your victory over all that would destroy or harm, and you brighten the lives of all who need you. Especially we pray for...

Families suffering separation...
People different from ourselves...
Those isolated by sickness or sorrow...
The victims of violence and warfare...
The church in the Pacific region...

6. Friday:

i. Eternal God, we praise you for your mighty love given in Christ's sacrifice on the cross, and the new life we have received by his resurrection. Especially we thank you for...

The presence of Christ in our weakness and suffering...
The ministry of Word (preaching and study) and Sacrament
(baptism and communion)...
All who work to help and heal...
Sacrifices made for our benefit...
Opportunities for our generous giving...

ii. God of grace, let our concern for others reflect Christ's self-giving love, not only in our prayers, but also in our practice. Especially we pray for...

Those subjected to tyranny and oppression...
Wounded and injured people...
Those who face death...
Those who may be our enemies...
The church in Latin America...

7. Saturday:

i. Great and wonderful God, we praise and thank you for the gift of renewal in Jesus Christ. Especially we thank you for...

Opportunities for rest and recreation...
The regenerating gifts of the Holy Spirit...
Activities shared by young and old...
Fun and laughter...
Every service that proclaims your love...

ii. You make all things new, O God, and we offer our prayers for the renewal of the world and the healing of its wounds. Especially we pray for...

Those who have no leisure...
People enslaved by addictions...
Those who entertain and enlighten...
Those confronted with temptation...
The church in North America...

> PRAYING SCRIPTURE

This exercise primarily uses scripture as the content of your prayer. As you are reading the following verses, you may choose to read them silently, out loud or both, but they are meant to read as a prayer. Reflect on the words of one or more of these texts and pray them out to God.

1. Monday: Praying about God

- i. Exodus 34:5-7
- ii. Psalm 36
- iii. Psalm 145

2. Tuesday: Praying about our sin

- i. Psalm 119:23-24
- ii. Psalm 32:3-6
- iii. Proverbs 28:13
- iv. Romans 3:23
- v. Romans 6:12-23

3. Wednesday: Praying about the church

- i. John 17:20-23
- ii. Philippians 4:1
- iii. Ephesians 5:23b, 24a, 25b-27
- iv. 1 Peter 2:17

4. Thursday: Praying for the dispossessed

- i. 1 Kings 17:7-24
- ii. Psalm 82:3
- iii. Proverbs 21:3, 13
- iv. Jeremiah 22:16
- v. Matthew 25:34-36
- vi. James 1:27

5. Friday: Praying for the World

- i. Psalm 96:3
- ii. Malachi 1:11
- iii. Matthew 24:14
- iv. Use the newspaper, the television, radio or an online news tracker to guide you to pray about events that are happening locally, regionally, nationally or internationally today.

6. Saturday: Praying for yourself

- i. Galatians 6:18
- ii. In your own words, pray for yourself today.

> PRAYING THE PRAYERS OF SCRIPTURE

The Scriptures themselves can be a powerful resource in learning to pray, in that they record dozens of prayers of God's faithful people, prayers that can be examples to us or provide the very words we need in praying to God. Try a week of praying the prayers of Scripture listed below.

Set aside 45 minutes to an hour to read each of the prayers through once, pondering the heart and meaning in them. Next read them aloud, as if they are your own.

Journal your thoughts about what you have read, and then write out your own prayer. Read that prayer to the Lord.

- 1) Sunday: Pray the prayer of Daniel for the sins of his people (Daniel 9:4-19). Pray for your own life, and for the life of our church, for all the ways in which we do not reflect God's image to the world.
- 2) Monday: Pray the prayer of Abraham for the people of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18:23-32). Pray for God's mercy on a world that is not committed to living lives of love for him and for others.
- 3) Tuesday: Pray the prayer of Nehemiah (Nehemiah 1:5-11). Confess your sin to God and pray for success and his blessing in all the ways in which you will live out his image of love to the world today.
- 4) Wednesday: Pray the prayer of Jesus for his followers (John 17:1-26). Pray this prayer for our church, for the Church in the world (and all its denominations) and for the reputation of God's people in the world.
- 5) Thursday: Pray the prayer of Asaph for victory over his enemies (Psalm 83). Pray this prayer for God's victory over all is not part of his kingdom and all that prevents his kingdom from coming in this world.
- 6) Friday: Pray the prayer of Jeremiah for the people of Israel (Jeremiah 14:19-22). Pray it for our church and for our world.
- 7) Saturday: Choose one, or more, of the prayers of those gathered around God's throne in heaven (Revelation 4:8-11; 5:9-14; 7:10-12; 11:17-18; 15:3-4; 19:1-4,6-7; 22:20)

> PRAYING THE PRAYERS OF THE SAINTS

Sometimes we forget that we are NOT the first generation of people to want to follow Christ. The history of the church is a rich resource of others who have walked this path ahead of us and met God in significant ways. They can point the way to a richer experience with Christ.

Set aside 45 minutes to an hour to read each of the prayers through once, pondering the heart and meaning in them. Next read them aloud, as if they are your own. Journal your thoughts about what you have read, and then write out your own prayer. Read that prayer to the Lord.

1. Sunday: A Prayer of Anselm of Canterbury for his Enemies (Anselm was a philosopher and Benedictine monk who went on to become the archbishop of Canterbury in the eleventh century.)

Almighty and tender Lord Jesus Christ,
Just as I have asked you to love my friends
So I ask the same for my enemies.
You alone, Lord, are mighty.
You alone are merciful.

Whatever you make me desire for my enemies,
Give it to them.
And give the same back to me.
If I ever ask for them anything
Which is outside your perfect rule of love,
Whether through weakness, ignorance or malice,
Good Lord, do not give it to them
And do not give it back to me.

You who are the true light, lighten their darkness.
You who are the whole truth, correct their errors.
You who are the incarnate word, give life to their souls.
Tender Lord Jesus.

Let me not be a stumbling block to them
Nor a rock of offense.
My sin is sufficient to me, without harming others.
I, a slave to sin,
Beg your mercy on my fellow slaves.
Let them be reconciled with you,
And through you reconciled to me.

2. Monday: A Prayer of St. Patrick of Ireland (Yes, THAT St. Patrick, who was a missionary to Ireland whom God used to convert almost the entire nation from paganism to Christianity.)

I arise today
Through a mighty strength, the invocation of the Trinity,
Through a belief in the Threeness,
Through confession of the Oneness
Of the Creator of creation.

I arise today
Through God's strength to pilot me;
God's might to uphold me,
God's wisdom to guide me,
God's eye to look before me,
God's ear to hear me,
God's word to speak for me,
God's hand to guard me,
God's way to lie before me,
God's shield to protect me,
God's hosts to save me
From snares of the devil,
From temptations of vices,
From every one who desires me ill,
Afar and anear,
Alone or in a multitude.

I summon today all these powers between me and evil,
Against every cruel merciless power that opposes my body and soul,
Against incantations of false prophets,
Against black laws of pagandom,
Against false laws of heretics,
Against craft of idolatry,
Against spells of women and smiths and wizards,
Against every knowledge that corrupt's man's body and soul.
Christ shield me today
Against poison, against burning,
Against drowning, against wounding,
So that reward may come to me in abundance.

Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me,

Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ on my right, Christ on my left,
Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down,
Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of every man who speaks of me,
Christ in the eye that sees me,
Christ in the ear that hears me.

3. Tuesday: Two Prayers of St. Clement of Rome (Clement was one of the earliest converts to Christianity, and was a bishop in Rome in the first century.)

First Prayer

May God, who seeth all things, and who is the Ruler of all spirits and the Lord of all flesh--who chose our Lord Jesus Christ and us through Him to be a peculiar people--grant to every soul that calleth upon His glorious and holy Name, faith, fear, peace, patience, long-suffering, self-control, purity, and sobriety, to the well-pleasing of His Name, through our High Priest and Protector, Jesus Christ, by whom be to Him glory, and majesty, and power, and honor, both now and forevermore.

Amen.

Second Prayer

We beseech thee, Master, to be our helper and protector.
Save the afflicted among us; have mercy on the lowly;
raise up the fallen; appear to the needy; heal the ungodly;
restore the wanderers of thy people;
feed the hungry; ransom our prisoners;
raise up the sick; comfort the faint-hearted.

Amen.

4. Wednesday: A Prayer of St. Augustine of Hippo (Saint Augustine was a fourth-century church bishop and philosopher, who wrote his spiritual autobiography called, *Augustine's Confessions*.)

Watch Thou, dear Lord, with those who wake and
watch or weep tonight,
and give thine angels charge over those who sleep.
Tend Thy sick ones, O Lord Christ;
rest Thy weary ones;
bless Thy dying ones;
soothe Thy suffering ones;
shield Thy joyous ones,
and all for Thy Love's sake.

5. Thursday: A Prayer of Charles Wesley (Charles Wesley was a poet of the Methodist movement who spent most of his life ministering in England.)

Arm of the Lord, awake, awake!
Thine own immortal strength put on!
With terror clothed, hell's kingdom shake,
And cast Thy foes with fury down!

As in the ancient days appear!
The sacred annals speak Thy fame:
Be now omnipotently near,
To endless ages still the same.

Thy arm, Lord, is not shortened now,
It wants not now the power to save;
Still present with Thy people, Thou
Bear'st them through life's parted wave.

By death and hell pursued in vain
To Thee the ransomed seed shall come,
Shouting their heavenly Zion gain
And pass through death triumphant home.

The pain of life shall there be o'er,
The anguish and distracting care,
There sighing grief shall weep no more,
And sin shall never enter there.

Where pure, essential joy is found,
The Lord's redeemed their heads shall raise,
With everlasting gladness crowned,
And filled with love, and lost in praise.

**6. Friday: A Prayer of Christini Rossetti, "A Better Resurrection"
(Christina Rossetti, born in London in 1930, was a poet. Her deep
intimacy with Christ is reflected in her poems.)**

I have no wit, no words, no tears;
My heart within me like a stone
Is numb'd too much for hopes or fears;
Look right, look left, I dwell alone;
I lift mine eyes, but dimm'd with grief
No everlasting hills I see;
My life is in the falling leaf:
O Jesus, quicken me.

My life is like a faded leaf,
My harvest dwindles to a husk:
Truly my life is void and brief
And tedious in the barren dusk;
My life is like a frozen thing,
No bud nor greenness can I see:
Yet rise it shall--the sap of Spring;
O Jesus, rise in me.

My life is like a broken bowl,
A broken bowl that cannot hold
One drop of water for my soul
Or cordial in the searching cold;

Cast in the fire the perish'd thing;
Melt and remould it, till it be
A royal cup for Him, my King:
O Jesus, drink of me.

7. Saturday: A Prayer of the Missionaries of Charity (The Missionaries of Charity is the Catholic order begun by Mother Teresa--men and women who devote their lives to caring for the poorest of the poor.)

Dear Jesus, help us to spread your fragrance everywhere we go.
Flood our souls with your spirit and life.
Penetrate and possess our whole being,
so utterly,
that our lives may only be a radiance of yours.
Shine through us,
and be so in us,
that every soul we come in contact with
may feel your presence in our soul.
Let them look up and see no longer us
but only Jesus!
Stay with us,
and then we shall begin to shine as you shine;
so to shine as to be a light to others;
the light, O Jesus, will be all from you,
none of it will be ours;
it will be you, shining on other through us.
Let us thus praise you in the way you love best
by shining on those around us.
Let us preach you without preaching,
not by words but by our example,
by the catching force,
the sympathetic influence of what we do,
the evident fullness of the love our hearts bear
to you. Amen.

(Adapted from Tricia McCary Rhodes book 'Intimate Intersession')

End of Week Reflection

