

Praying Is Easy

A Guide to Prayer

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Formulas

Simple Ways to Pray

The following simple formulas are easy ways to organize a prayer. Select one and try it for seven days. Return to the formula for prayer as often as you can each day. Be sure to allow time to listen to God as well.

ACTS

- A - Adoration** - praise God for who God is
- C - Confession** - own up to our sins
- T - Thanksgiving** - thank God for all God has done
- S - Supplication** - make requests for ourselves and others

Five-Finger Prayer

- Thumb** - pray for those closest to me
- Pointing finger** - pray for those who guide us: teachers, doctors, clergy, counselors, social workers, mentors
- Middle finger** (tallest one) - pray for those who stand tall: government, civic, and business leaders, police and firefighters
- Ring finger** (your weakest finger) - pray for those who are weak: the poor, sick, infirm, infants, homeless, and the powerless
- Pinkie** (the smallest, the least) - pray for me and my needs

Take a TRIP with God

Ask the following questions:

- T - Thanks:** For what am I thankful?
- R - Regret:** What do I regret?
- I - Intercession:** Whom do I need to pray for?
- P - Purpose:** What is my purpose or plan? (this day, week, my life)

PARTS of Prayer

- P** - Praise
- A** - Ask
- R** - Repent
- T** - Thank
- S** - Share

Jump Starts

Jump Start Your Prayer Life

Many Christians believe in prayer, but need a jump start. Here are seven ways you can jump start your prayer life in order to grow a more intimate relationship between you and God. Select a couple of them to implement in your life starting this week.

1. *Set aside a time and place for daily prayer.* This is the single most important thing you can do. When we establish a regular routine for prayer, we will make sure that our prayer life is not just 'on the run', or when our backs are up against the wall, or when our buildings are being brought down by terrorists.

2. *Begin your prayer times by slowing down and quieting down.* When we come to prayer agitated and stressed, it is especially difficult to hear God's voice and to sense God's presence. Spending a quiet minute or two focusing and breathing deeply can help quiet our minds and spirits and make two-way prayer more probable. Allow for some silence in your life. This silence doesn't have to be long. It can be as short as 30 or 60 seconds to begin with and then gradually extend it to longer times as you get more comfortable with silence and waiting and listening for God.

3. *Have a prayer conversation with God.* Simply begin a conversation with God, like you might with a good friend. It could go something like this:

Good Morning, Lord. It's Glen.

This is my situation.

This is how I am feeling.

This is how I need your help.

What should I do?

(Silence.)

I am concerned about these people.... Because....

What should I do?

(Silence.)

Lord, guide me in...

Thanks, Lord for listening.

I am counting on you.

4. *Pray the Bible.* Take a few moments to read something from the Bible and direct attention toward God. Use a Bible passage you are already familiar with to help you get started praying. Focus on the contents of the Scripture passage and allow it to steer your time spent in prayer. Slowly read a single verse or short passage two or three times. Pause for some silence in between each reading to allow God's word to sink deeply into your heart and mind. Record some of your favorite Bible verses in a notebook and pray with one or more of them when the need arises. All of Scripture does not speak equally to us. Pick out those verses that mean the most to you. Put yourself in the Biblical story

and ask God what God might be saying to you about yourself, your life, your priorities, your relationships, your time, your money management -- you.

5. Write out your prayers. Name what is going on in your life. Sometimes simply by naming and articulating what we are thinking, feeling or experiencing - such as "I'm thinking about changing careers" or "I feel lonely" or "I feel hopeless about..." or "I am overwhelmed" can help us gain focus and reclaim a portion of the power our life experiences have drained from us. Writing it down, composing a short prayer and giving it to God can be an empowering ritual. Many people find keeping a prayer journal to be a helpful discipline.

6. Recall how God has helped you in the past. God told Israel over and over to "Remember how the Lord God brought you out of bondage in Egypt." It is as we remember the past saving acts of God that we gain greater trust in God's power and love. And so Jesus says "Eat the bread in memory of me." When we are caught up in our stress, pain or suffering, it is easy to forget how God has helped us in the past. The trials of life can cause us to lose perspective and weaken our sense of trust in God's caring presence. But as we remember how God has helped us in the past we can be filled with hope for today and tomorrow. "O God our help in ages past, our hope for years to come."

7. Develop a Prayer Rolodex. Put together a rolodex with names on them. Use either 7 or 30 cards. On each card put together a short list of people and then take one card each day and pray for the people on the list. A short list allows you to go deeper into prayer for each person and yet keeps several people in your prayers every day. If you use seven cards, you have one for each day of the week. If you use 30, you have one for each day of the month.

Are these 7 ways the only ways to pray? Of course not! They are simply some tools you can use to jump start or beef up your prayer life. Pick a couple of them to implement in your life starting this week. How you pray isn't important. What is important is that each of us prays every day.

-- Written by Glen VanderKloot

Igniters

Ideas to Stimulate Prayer

Reminders to Pray:

"Watch and Pray:" place a small colored sticker on the face of your watch to remind you to pray (at a certain time or whenever you glance at your watch).

Computer Reminders: put "Remember to Pray Today" on your computer screen saver at home or at work.

Another Techy Reminder: use some derivation of the word "pray" (praytoday) as the password for your computer at work as you log on.

A Memory Prayer Jogger: 3 x 5 prayer reminder cards. Put your most urgent prayer requests on a recipe card and put it where you will see it (bathroom mirror, refrigerator, car visor). If you make new cards at least weekly, you will continue to use this card to prompt you to pray.

Other Prayer Reminders: there are many variations of prayer reminders that you can place in your pocket. There is the 'cross in my pocket', or a simple stone to remind us that Jesus is our rock and fortress, or a nail which reminds us of the cross, as we bring other peoples' concerns to the cross in prayer.

Praying with Children:

Alphabet Prayers: This would be fun on occasion with a group or with your children to give thanks to God by encouraging everyone to add an alphabetical thanks when it is their turn (God, we give you thanks today for aunts and uncles; my brother, clothing, dreams).

This style of praying can also be done by praying for people by name (Andy, the Benson's, Connie, the Darby's). A prayer group or church council could use it to pray for cities and the churches in the area or community. (IE. Northeastern Ohio Synod (Akron, Bethany Church; Beach City-First Church Canton-Martin Luther Church).

Acronym Prayers: (where the letters of the word each represent another word) 1) ACTS: Adoration; Confession; Thanksgiving; Supplication 2) PRAY: Praise, Repent, Ask, and Yield 2) TRIP: Thanksgiving; Regrets; Intercession; and Purpose (what God desires from us?)

Hand Prayers: (trace the child's hand on a piece of paper) On the thumb write "praise and worship," (Psalm 147:1). On the pointer finger, examine your life, writing "confess our sins," (1 John 1:8-9). Knowing the promises of God that in Jesus Christ we are forgiven, this makes us thankful. On the tallest finger write "thanking God," (Philippians 4:6; Psalm 136:1).

The weakest of our fingers reminds us of our need to pray for those who are in need. Write "needs of others" on the ring finger, (1 Timothy 2:1-4). Finally, the pinky is the least of our fingers yet the most essential for having a strong grip. Write "our needs" on the pinky finger, (1 John 3:22). Another option would be to put a nail mark in the center of the hands palm. Write "in Jesus' name." This will help children remember that we can all upon God in prayer because of Jesus death for our sins. So we pray "in Jesus' name."

Rainbow Prayers: Keeping in mind the five areas of the hand prayer taught above, another way to reinforce those five aspects of prayer is to help your child make a prayer chain. If your child is old enough to print or write, help them to write a word or phrase on a strip of colored paper (2-3 inches wide by 6 inches long).

- Write down the Bible reference used for praise and worship on a white strip of paper.
- Because Jesus shed his blood on the cross to forgive our sins, have your child write down a list of recent sins he or she wants to confess to God on a red strip of paper.
- Because of God's son, Jesus, there is assurance that God hears and answers prayer. To remember God's son/sun help your child write what they are thankful for on yellow strips of paper.
- On green paper, write names of people that need their prayers, as green is a symbol of life.
- Finally, in praying for themselves, encourage them to write down their needs on blue paper, as a reminder of their baptism and that they belong to Christ who loves them.

These strips of paper can be pasted into loops forming a "prayer chain" to be kept near their bed as a reminder to pray their chain each night. New links can be easily added. As needs chain and prayers are answered, those links can be removed!

(Keep answered prayers for a year as an encouragement that God does answer prayer.)

If your child cannot write yet, they can draw pictures of what they want to pray about and for whom they want to pray.

Praying with Our Bodies:

(Activities that help reinforce that there is more to prayer than saying "right words." Prayer can direct our energies and be enjoyable.)

1) Sign of the Cross Prayer.

Make the sign of the cross either of your forehead or from your forehead to your tummy to your two shoulders (Eastern Christians touch the right shoulder first, then the left. Western Christians start with the left and move to the right shoulder. There is no right or wrong way to cross yourself). The Cross Prayer + "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," reminds us

that we are claimed by God through our baptism. Another variation is to repeat Galatians 2:19-20, "I am crucified with Christ, therefore I no longer live. Jesus Christ now lives in me."

2) Pray standing up. 1 Kings 8:22ff; Mark 11:25.

3) Pray on your knees. 2 Chronicles 6:13ff., Acts 9:40ff; Philippians 2:9-11.

4) Pray with your head bowed. Genesis 24:26.

5) Pray with your face and body laid out before God (prostrate). Joshua 5:14; Mt. 26:39.

Praying Out Loud:

Responsive Readings as a Model of Prayer. Read prayerfully Psalm 86:1-13. Ask a volunteer to slowly read the odd numbered verses. The family or group will read the even numbered verses as a prayer.

Echo Prayer: Pray a short prayer phrase out loud. Pause for the family or group to repeat out loud your word of thanks, or confession, or praise, or petition. This continues to reinforce that people can pray out loud.

Complete the Sentence Prayer: Ask a member of your family or of the group to volunteer to think about one of the five aspects of prayer. Start the prayer and the volunteer for each type of prayer will finishes the sentence. For example: "Lord, you are... (praise and worship); "Lord, forgive me for...(confession of sin); "Lord, thank you for...(thanking God); "Lord, please help...(praying for others needs); "Lord, I need...(pray for your needs).

Babbling Brook Prayer: (assure those in your family, small group or congregation that God is able to hear prayers, even if we all pray at the same time). The larger the group, the more this style of praying is effective. It is powerful to be praying in the midst of a rushing stream of prayers. Invite people to all risk and pray for whatever or whomever they choose. The group will determine when the prayer time is over based on the naturally diminishing prayers.

Praying the Scriptures: One of the ancient styles of prayer within Christianity is "Lectio Divina" or using the Word of God for prayer. Such meditation is both ancient and of great value to gain understanding from the scriptures. It can be done while walking, cooking, sitting in a waiting room, silently or in a group like the babbling brook prayer.

Select one of your favorite verses of the Bible, memorize it or put it on a 3 x 5 card and repeat it until it begins to take root in your heart. Praying the scriptures back to God is like praying the very heart of God. This builds confidence in our prayer life and oftentimes stretches us beyond our normal thoughts and prayers. ("For my thoughts

are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts," Isaiah 55:8-9).

Adapt the pronouns and insert the names of those for whom you are praying.

An example of prayer is: Lord, in your word it says that "unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain (Psalm 127: 1). Lord, unless you build the house of my life, I will labor in vain. I'm tired of laboring in vain, Lord. Help me to get out of the way! I yield my life to you. Help me to build the house of my life, Lord. This I pray in Jesus' name.

Prayers for Families and Small Groups:

Prayer Labyrinth: Another historic example of prayer is triggered from the "stations of the Cross." A prayer labyrinth is a path or maze with created sacred spaces along the way for prayer. Myriads of possibilities exist in creating a temporary or permanent prayer journey. Each corner of a room in your apartment can be created by the thematic pieces of art you employ in that space. (For example, corner 1 could have an icon or picture of Jesus praying in the garden of Gethsemane.

Below the picture set a small stand which holds a candle or incense. Corner 2 could have a crucifix and a small vial of scented olive oil to anoint oneself and reflect on Jesus who died and whose body was anointed for our sake. Corner 3 may have a small table on which is laid some white material to remember his resurrection; a candle, because he is the light of the world, and a small dish of water, to make the sign of the cross and recall one's own baptism. Corner 4 could include an icon of the ascension, and the words of the Great Commission.

A map of the 10 x 40 window (countries falling between the 10' S. and 40' N - the primary area of non-Christian peoples) could stimulate prayers for needed mission work in select nations of the world. Prayer Labyrinths can be located in or out of doors, contained in a fellowship hall or in various rooms in the church building, and may be set up for a special time of prayer or established as a permanent sacred space.

The idea is to stimulate a sense of prayerfulness by providing both space and creative themes for reflection and prayer. (For more information on a prayer labyrinth, check out the November 1999 edition of The Lutheran magazine. You can read about it online at www.thelutheran.org.)

Robert's Rule Prayer: (not its official name) A Five Staged Prayer.

- Name it. (List the prayer requests from the family or group. Select a recorder).
- Propose it. (Read the list and seek volunteers to pray for it).
- Second it. (A commitment is made to pray for that request for the next week).
- Adopt it. (The one who volunteered to pray for this request now does so in group)
- Check it. (Check out how the situation for each prior request. Answered? Completed? Or in need of additional prayer?).

Circle Prayer: There is definite power in being connected via holding hands in a circle. This prayer can begin and end with the same person. After opening in prayer, the leader lightly squeezes the hand of the person next to them indicating that he/she is finished praying. That person can choose to pray or else lightly squeeze the hand their neighbor. This continues until everyone has had an opportunity to pray, at which time the leader will end the prayer time.

Popcorn Prayer: This metaphor for prayer is that of the random popping of popcorn. Anyone is encouraged to jump in with a brief prayer of thanksgiving or request. Again, a leader can open this time of prayer and after a healthy silence, close the prayer time. A word or phrase is all that is encouraged to keep this prayer style moving. It is a good introduction to group prayer. A theme of what people are thankful for could be used throughout this prayer.

Prayer Partners: Team up in two's or threes and briefly share for what or whom you desire prayer. This can be a good exercise for a church council or committee meeting at its outset. Each person is encouraged to share one or two requests and then pray for each other. Some councils will keep their partnerships for the whole year. It is wise for males to pray with males and females with females. This prevents problems in getting together weekly (face to face, or on the phone, or via email). Once people have experienced this level of support, most value it.

Prayer Ideas for Teenagers:

Prayer Map: As our postmodern teens have been raised in the virtual world of the internet and video games, many of them are visual and tactile learners. It is wise to play off that reality and download maps and information about life for teenagers around this ever shrinking world. Jesus modeled for us that there is value and power in using your hands to make physical contact by touch while praying for them.

Read about the needs of people from a particular congregation or country. Encourage touching the map while you look at the country and pray. This prayer idea has many positives as it increases our global awareness, sensitivity to others, and reinforces the power of prayer. Global information can be found at www.elca.org/dgm/link.html.

Classics

Classic Prayers

You are invited to include the following prayers in your devotional life. These prayers have blessed many people over the years. May each prayer be a blessing to you as well. The first prayer is one Jesus taught his disciples when they asked him to teach them to pray.

The Lord's Prayer (Luke 11:1-4; Matthew 6:9-15)

(Traditional)

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 this day 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,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen

(Contemporary)

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread,
Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom,
the power, and the glory are yours
now and forever. Amen

The Serenity Prayer *(attributed to Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr)*

Lord, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
The courage to change the things that I can,
And the wisdom to know the difference. Amen.

Peace Prayer *(attributed to St. Francis of Assisi)*

Lord, make us instruments of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let us sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is discord, union;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.
Grant that we may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and
it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Morning Prayer *(Written by Dr. Martin Luther)*

We give thanks to you, heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ your dear Son, that you have protected us through the night from all danger and harm. We ask you to preserve and keep us, this day also, from all sin and evil, that in all our thoughts, words, and deeds we may serve and please you. Into your hands we commend our bodies and souls and all that is ours. Let your holy angels have charge of us, that the wicked one have no power over us.
Amen

Evening Prayer *(Written by Dr. Martin Luther)*

We give thanks to you, heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ your dear Son, that you have this day so graciously protected us. We beg you to forgive us all our sins and the wrong which we have done. By your great mercy defend us from all the perils and dangers of this night. Into your hands we commend our bodies and souls, and all that is ours. Let your holy angels have charge of us, that the wicked one have no power over us.

Discipleship

Prayers for Witnessing

This collection of prayers may be used in personal and planning team devotions, during congregational worship, or as prayer support for your congregation's witnessing and discipleship.

A Prayer for Commitment to the ELCA-wide Call to Witnessing and Discipleship:

Gracious God,
Jesus is calling me to a new beginning; to a fresh call to discipleship. You are asking me to deny myself, take up my cross and follow you. It was at my baptism that you claimed me as your child. Today, I affirm that I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. I surrender my will, my desires and my life to you, O God. I commit myself to your call to discipleship: to pray, study your Word, worship you, invite other people to a life of discipleship, encourage Christians in their life of faith, serve those in need, and give joyfully of the gifts that You first gave me. This I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Prayer For Boldness:

Good and Gracious God, you sent your Son to call all people to become his disciples. Inspire us to grow as followers of Christ. Send us to boldly reach out, invite and grow into Jesus and the community that bears his name. In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.

Prayer To Be Stirred Up:

Gracious God,
You know how my time keeps being chewed up.
Trouble me... Distract me ... Focus me ...
so that I make time to reach out in some intentional way to the unchurched each day.
In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Prayer for the Weary Leader:

Dear God,
You know how tired I am. You know how discouraged I can become.
Breathe deep into me ...
Fill me with your love.
Fill me with your hope.
Fill me with your confidence.
Send me to invite others and equip them to join me in reaching out.
In Jesus' name. Amen.

Prayer For the Holy Spirit's Guidance:

Gracious God,
Send your Holy Spirit to deepen our worship life.
Open our hearts to the gifts and cultures which surround our church.
Open our hearts to the people who are different from us.
In Jesus' name. Amen.

Prayer for Synodical Leaders:

Dear God,
Guide our bishop and the leadership of our synod
to encourage congregations and leaders
to more boldly reach out to all people --
left wing ... right wing
blue collar ... white collar
long-time residents ... immigrants
-- all people, just as we follow our Lord who reached out to all.
In Jesus' name. Amen.

Prayer for Reformation:

Dear God,
We are a church of the Reformation. So why is it so difficult to reform and change?
Bless us so that we might reform our leadership so that our congregation can grow.
Heal our grief about the changes in our community and congregation, so that we
might see, use, and celebrate your created gifts in our life, world and church. Inspire
even more small groups to be born in our church. Deepen our commitment to follow
Jesus in our life together.
In Jesus' name. Amen.

*– Written by Bishop Jon V. Anderson of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod and
member of the Evangelism Strategy Task Force*

Peace

Prayers in a Time of War

Time of Conflict, Crisis, Disaster:

We pray to you, almighty God, in this time of crisis. You are our refuge and our strength, a very present help in time of trouble. Do not let us fail in the face of these events. Uphold us with your love, and give us the strength we need. Help us in our confusion, and guide our actions. Heal the hurt, console the bereaved and afflicted, protect the innocent and helpless, and deliver any who are still in peril; for the sake of your great mercy in Jesus Christ our Lord.

("Occasional Services," Augsburg Fortress, 1982, p. 293)

Peace Among the Nations:

Almighty God, heavenly Father, guide the nations of the world into ways of justice and truth, and establish among them that peace which is the fruit of righteousness, that they may become the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

(Lutheran Book of Worship, p. 42)

Our Enemies:

O God, the Lord of all, your Son commanded us to love our enemies and to pray for them. Lead us from prejudice to truth; deliver us from hatred, cruelty, and revenge; and enable us to stand before you, reconciled through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

(Lutheran Book of Worship, p. 44)

For Faith to Overcome Trials:

O Father and God of all comfort, through your word and Holy Spirit grant us a firm, glad and grateful faith. By it may we easily overcome this and every other trial, and at length realize that what your dear Son Jesus Christ himself says is true: "But take courage; I have conquered the world" (John 16: 33). Amen.

(Martin Luther)

Prayer of Bishop Stamm:

In this moment of united prayer, we ask Thee, our Heavenly Father, to make us all aware of Thy abiding presence. Help us to know that Thou art not far from any one of us. Give strength to the weak; wisdom to the perplexed; comfort to the lonely; help to the needy; healing to the sick and grace to the dying. Thou hast been our help in ages past; Thou art our hope for years to come. In this confidence we commit ourselves to Thee anew through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(by Bishop John S. Stamm, from "A Minute of Prayer," Blue Ribbon Books: Garden City, NY, 1943)

Prayer of Dr. William H. Anderson:

Almighty God, humbly we pray that Thou will give wisdom and guidance to the leaders of this nation during these trying days. May the bitter experience through which we are passing bring us all to a fuller acknowledgment of Christ as Lord and Savior. Remember in pity those who are destitute and suffering in war-torn countries both friend and foe. Grant that soon again the world may live in peace. In His name we pray.
(Ibid.)

O God, your compassion is for all and your love is over all. Help those who are fleeing from the bombing and bloodshed -- help them find refuge, give them food, give them comfort. Move us to compassion so that we are partners with you to provide that food and shelter. O God, our Great Protector, as clouds of war and destruction cling to the lands of the Middle East, watch over our military personnel in the midst of the bombs and the bloodshed and the bitterness. Be with the families who have loved ones serving on our behalf, give them comfort knowing that you are with them.
(Submitted by N.L. Striegel)

O LORD, the Protector of all who put their trust in you, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy: Increase and multiply upon us your mercy; that you being our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our LORD. Amen
(Parish School Hymnal, ULCA Board of Publication, 1926, p. 8. Submitted by H. Lee Brumback II)

Loving Father, creator of all people, who loves each person and each nation without qualification: May we see the face of Jesus Christ in all of your children, including those defined as enemies. May your grace touch each of us with a full measure of love, and may our lives and voices be a witness to your divine Presence. Amen.

(adapted from http://www.cofchrist.org/prayerpeace/ddpfiles/middle_east/lebanon.asp)

O Lord, grant that we may be one in your love. Send emissaries of your peace to this troubled world. Help us recognize and repent of the terror we invoke, even as we ask for your protection. Still the hands of those who seek to do violence, support and protect those who seek understanding, grant us the mercy of forgiveness. Help us to break down the walls of division, to talk and argue and negotiate rather than fight, and to recognize in one another your image. Reconcile all warring groups to you, in one body through the cross, and put to death the hostility which too often rules our hearts and actions. For you are our peace, from now until the end of this age. Amen.

(Paul Bellan-Boyer)

ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson's Prayer for Peace for Use on Easter:

Gracious God, Father of our Resurrected Lord Jesus Christ, Today we celebrate Christ's victory over death, and your promise that because Jesus lives, we too have new and eternal life with you. Yet, in the midst of our celebration, we lift our hearts to you on behalf of this broken world, in which hatred, violence and death continue to hold sway. We are especially mindful of the growing violence in Iraq and in Israel and Palestine. By your Holy Spirit, make us bold to live out our baptismal callings as disciples of Jesus. Make us peacemakers and reconcilers. Give us ears to hear the cries of our sisters and brothers at home and around the world who live without security or other necessities of life. Give wisdom and compassion to the leaders of this nation and all nations that they may lead us in the ways of peace and justice. Protect those who serve in the armed forces. Teach us to use our might for the greater good of all humanity and of this fragile planet.

The Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy;
O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
Amen.

Time of Conflict, Crisis, Disaster:

Lord Jesus, you have overcome the world, and all power and authority is yours. When evil seems to triumph, give us courage and faith, and help us never to forget that you are with us to the end of time. To you be glory now and forever.

(Occasional Services, p. 294)

For Those in Authority:

Dear Lord and God, guide the hearts of our leaders to your praise and glory, and to the welfare of the land. Enlighten all who are in authority and move them to do what is right. Preserve your people, your judgment, your righteousness, and all administration of justice in this nation and throughout the world. Then good order will prevail. May peace in the world not be troubled by rebellion and treason. May proper discipline and respect not be disregarded or violated by unfaithfulness and other evil. Amen.

(Martin Luther)

O God of Every Nation
O God of every nation,
Of every trade and land,
Redeem your whole creation
With your almighty hand;
Where hate and fear divide us
And bitter threats are hurled,
In love and mercy guide us
And heal our strife-torn world.

(William W. Reid Jr., Lutheran Book of Worship, 416)

For Those in Our Country's Service in Time of War:

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, let [your] protection be upon all those who are in the service of our country; guard them from all harm and danger of body and soul; sustain and comfort those at home, especially in their hours of loneliness, anxiety and sorrow; prepare the dying for death and the living for [your] service; give success to our arms on land and sea and in the air; and grant unto us and all nations a speedy, just and lasting peace, to the glory of [your] Name and the coming of [your] kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

(Service Book and Hymnal, p. 225)

General Intercession:

Watch, dear Lord, with those who wake or watch or weep, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, rest the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous. In your love, give us all this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

(Lutheran Book of Worship p. 50)

Come Now, O Prince of Peace

Come now, O Prince of peace, make us one body.

Come, O Lord Jesus, reconcile your people.

Come, Hope of unity, make us one body. Come, O Lord Jesus, reconcile all nations.

(Evangelical Lutheran Worship, #158 - Text: Geon-Yong Lee, b. 1947, tr. Marion Pope)

Popular

Prayers, Poems, and Quotes

Thank you, Lord, for always answering prayer, but not indulging my every petty, private "give-me". Thank you winnowing and refining, vetoing and delaying, refusing and revising. Thank you for being God and never less, for freeing me for wide horizons, for protecting me from my limited vision and wayward will. Thank you for foiling my every effort to unseat you and make myself king. Thank you for keeping it safe for me to pray.

--Gerhard E. Frost

From *Seasons of a Lifetime: A Treasury of Meditations* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1989, p. 118)

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.

--Henri J.M. Nouwen

From *With Open Hands* (Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Marie Press, 1972, p.154)

Holy God – in this precious hour, we pause and gather to hear your word– to do so, we break from our work responsibilities and from our play fantasies; we move from our fears that overwhelm and from our ambitions that are too strong, Free us in these moments from every distraction, that we may focus to listen, that we may hear, that we may change. Amen.

--Walter Brueggemann

From *Awed to Heaven, Rooted in Earth: Prayers of Walter Brueggemann* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003 p. 61)

O Lord our God, grant us grace to desire you with a whole heart, so that desiring you we may seek you with a whole heart, so that desiring you we may seek and find you; and so finding you, may love you; and loving you, may hate those sins which separate us from you, for the sake of Jesus Christ.

--St. Anselm, 1033-1109

From *The Doubleday Prayer Collection*, compiled by Mary Batchelor (New York: Doubleday, 1996, p. 11)

Our Father, you called us and saved us in order to make us like your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Change us, day by day, by the work of your Holy Spirit so that we may grow more like him in all that we think and say and do, to his glory. Amen.

-- Soren Kirkegaard, 1813-1855

From The Doubleday Prayer Collection, compiled by Mary Batchelor (New York: Doubleday, 1996, p. 11)

I am only a spark, Make me a fire. I am only a string, Make me a lyre. I am only a drop, Make me a fountain. I am only an ant hill, Make me a mountain. I am only a feather, Make me a wing. I am only a rag, Make me a king!

--prayer from Mexico

From The Doubleday Prayer Collection, compiled by Mary Batchelor (New York: Doubleday, 1996, p. 12)

You who are over us, You who are one of us, You who are also within us, May all see you in me also, May I prepare the way for you, May I thank you for all that shall fall to my lot, May I also not forget the needs of others... Give me a pure heart - that I may see you, A humble heart - that I may hear you, A heart of love - that I may serve you, A heart of faith - that I may abide in you.

--Dag Hammarskjold, 1905-1961

From The Doubleday Prayer Collection, compiled by Mary Batchelor (New York: Doubleday, 1996, p. 13)

God of your goodness, give me yourself, For you are sufficient for me... If I were to ask anything less I should always be in want, For in you alone do I have all.

--Julian of Norwich, 1342-1413

From The Doubleday Prayer Collection, compiled by Mary Batchelor (New York: Doubleday, 1996, p. 14)

Lord, if You have to break me to remake me, let Your will be done.

--Marian Wright Edelman

From Guide My Feet by Marion Wright Edelman (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995. p. 62)

Give us, O Lord, a steadfast heart, which no unworthy affection may drag downwards; give us an unconquered heart, which no tribulation can wear out; give us an upright heart, which no unworthy purpose may tempt aside. Bestow upon us also, O Lord our God, understanding to know you, diligence to seek you, wisdom to find you and a faithfulness that may finally embrace you; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

--Thomas Aquinas, 1225-1274

From The Doubleday Prayer Collection, compiled by Mary Batchelor (New York: Doubleday, 1996, p. 12)

Father, behold thy child; Creator, behold thy creature; Master, behold thy disciple; Savior, behold thy redeemed one; Spirit, behold thy cleansed one; Comforter, behold one whom thou dost uphold; So I come to thee, O infinite and unimaginable, to worship thee.

--Margaret Cropper, 1886-1980

From The Oxford Book of Prayer, Geo Appleton, general editor (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985, p. 137)

Lord by thy grace, let the poor see me be drawn to Christ and invite him to enter their homes and their lives. Let the sick and the suffering find in me a real angel of comfort and consolation. Let the little ones of the streets cling to me because I remind them of him, the friend of all little ones.

--Mother Teresa, 1910-1996

From The Harper Collins Book of Prayers, compiled by Robert Van de Weyer (New York: Harper San Francisco, 1993, p. 352)

A Prayer to a Listening God

O God, we labor in the heat of the day,
and so often the labor feels hopeless, unproductive, useless

And yet, you hear our silent cries.
You give us one another
to speak that which we in our pain cannot speak.
You give us your Word
that utters those things we cannot find the words to say.

And not only do you give us the words to speak,
but you also turn your ear to us and hear us,
even when all we have strength to whisper is,
"Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer."

For you have promised to hear us.
You have promised to turn your face to shine upon us.
You have promised to be our shade
when the heat of the day saps our strength
and the well of hope runs dry.

And you have promised,
even in the silence,
to give us the *sweet sound of peace*.

--John McCullough Bade

From "A Prayer to a Listening God," in *Will I Sing Again? Listening for the Melody of Grace in the Silence of Illness and Loss* by John McCullough Bade (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2003, p. 46).