



MIDDAY PRAYERS FOR EVERY DAY

A Simple Structure to Help You Pray

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Summary: Life with God is impossible without prayer. Prayer, simply stated, is the act of opening ourselves up to God's presence and love, through verbal and non-verbal communication.

Throughout the course of this pandemic, I led midday prayers on social media every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, for 4 months. The structure that I led others with is one I use regularly. It's comprised of four simple movements: **Silence, Scripture, Self-Examination, and Supplication**. In this resource, I will briefly explain the importance of each movement, and provide tips to growing comfortable with this structure. Finally, I will offer 5 daily prayers using this structure to get you started. Each time of prayer can be as short as 10 minutes, or as long as an hour.

SILENCE

Purpose: In the practice of silent prayer, we are prioritizing prayer as "being with God." Prayer is often seen in transactional ways (we pray, and God provides something). While this kind of prayer is warranted, being with God, for the sake of being with God, is an important first step.

Tips: When we are silent, our minds will get distracted. That's okay. Before beginning your time in silence, take a deep breath, and use the name "Jesus" or a phrase like, "here I am" whenever you find yourself thinking about something else. The goal of this kind of prayer is to be present to the presence of God, not seeking anything. Finally, after reading a passage of scripture, take a few seconds to be silent.

SCRIPTURE

Purpose: Prayerfully reading Holy Scripture is an important part in learning to pray. Whether we are praying the Psalms, or reading a Gospel narrative, God's word as found in scripture immerses us in God's life and action. Slowly reading through a portion of scripture during a time of prayer helps to renew our minds (Romans 12:2).

Tips: People often have a hard time deciding what to read from the Bible. Start with the book of Psalms and one of the gospels. Slowly read a Psalm and/or a section from one of the gospels. As you read, underline or highlight a word or phrase that speaks to you.

SELF-EXAMINATION

Purpose: In self-examination, we are asking God to help us see things within ourselves that need correction, healing, or greater insight. It's often the case that we can use God to run from ourselves. In the simple opening of ourselves to God in this way, we come into contact with areas within that are blocking the flow of love from our lives.

Tips: After reading a scripture passage, ask yourself, "what resonated within me from this reading?" Another question to ask during this time of prayer is, "What is impacting me most today?" Spend time with a journal writing down a few words to God.

During this portion of prayer, you might want to have a devotional reading to contemplate. I recommend books from Henri Nouwen, Thomas Merton, Howard Thurman, and Joan Chittister to name a few.

SUPPLICATION

Purpose: In supplication, we are offering the particular requests on our heart to God. In this act, we are recognizing our limitations as well as God's provision. This is a time to move beyond "functional atheism" to a concrete dependence upon God.

Tips: Ask yourself, what do I need grace for today? Name the challenge before you, and ask God to help. Another question to ask is, "who do I know that needs God's grace in their lives. Offer words of prayer to God on their behalf.

DAILY PRAYER #1

Silence – 2 minutes

Reading from the Psalms (Psalm 77:1-12)

- ¹ I cried out to God for help;
I cried out to God to hear me.
- ² When I was in distress, I sought the Lord;
at night I stretched out untiring hands,
and I would not be comforted.
- ³ **I remembered you, God, and I groaned;**
I meditated, and my spirit grew faint.^[a]
- ⁴ You kept my eyes from closing;
I was too troubled to speak.
- ⁵ I thought about the former days,
the years of long ago;
- ⁶ **I remembered my songs in the night.**
My heart meditated and my spirit asked:
- ⁷ “Will the Lord reject forever?
Will he never show his favor again?
- ⁸ Has his unfailing love vanished forever?
Has his promise failed for all time?
- ⁹ Has God forgotten to be merciful?
Has he in anger withheld his compassion?”
- ¹⁰ Then I thought, “To this I will appeal:
the years when the Most High stretched out his right hand.
- ¹¹ I will remember the deeds of the Lord;
yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago.
- ¹² I will consider all your works
and meditate on all your mighty deeds.”

Silence – 30 Seconds

New Testament Reading (Matthew 9:18-22)

¹⁸ While he was saying this, a synagogue leader came and knelt before him and said, "My daughter has just died. But come and put your hand on her, and she will live." ¹⁹ Jesus got up and went with him, and so did his disciples.

²⁰ Just then a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak. ²¹ She said to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed."

²² Jesus turned and saw her. "Take heart, daughter," he said, "your faith has healed you." And the woman was healed at that moment.

Silence – 30 Seconds

Devotional

We must be ready to allow ourselves to be interrupted by God... It is a strange fact that Christians and even ministers frequently consider their work so important and urgent that they will allow nothing to disturb them. They think they are doing God a service in this but actually they are disdainful of God's "crooked but straight path". It is part of the discipline of humility that we must not spare our hand where it can perform service and **that we do not assume that our schedule is our own to manage, but allow it to be arranged by God.**

-Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*

Self-examination: Are you allowing God to "arrange" your schedule through interruptions? What does it mean to "allow God to disturb your schedule?"

Supplication

The Our Father: Our Father which 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 the evil one. For yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever, Amen.

DAILY PRAYER #2

Silence – 2 minutes

Reading from the Psalms (Psalm 16:1-11)

- ¹ Keep me safe, my God,
for in you I take refuge.
- ² I say to the Lord, “You are my Lord;
apart from you I have no good thing.”
- ³ I say of the holy people who are in the land,
“They are the noble ones in whom is all my delight.”
- ⁴ Those who run after other gods will suffer more and more.
I will not pour out libations of blood to such gods
or take up their names on my lips.
- ⁵ Lord, you alone are my portion and my cup;
you make my lot secure.
- ⁶ The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;
surely I have a delightful inheritance.
- ⁷ I will praise the Lord, who counsels me;
even at night my heart instructs me.
- ⁸ I keep my eyes always on the Lord.
With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken.
- ⁹ Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;
my body also will rest secure,
- ¹⁰ because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead,
nor will you let your faithful^[b] one see decay.
- ¹¹ You make known to me the path of life;
you will fill me with joy in your presence,
with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

Silence – 30 Seconds

New Testament Reading (John 14:15-18)

¹⁵ “If you love me, keep my commands. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, **and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever**— ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be^[c] in you. ¹⁸ I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

Silence – 30 Seconds

Devotional

When we are at our wits' end for an answer, then the Holy Spirit can give us an answer. But how can He give us an answer when we are still well supplied with all sorts of answers of our own?

- Karl Barth

Self-examination: The Holy Spirit was sent by the Father and the Son to help us. But we need to be open to the Spirit's help. Where do you need to lay down your "answers" to open yourself to the Spirit's help?

Supplication

The Our Father: Our Father which 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 the evil one. For yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever, Amen.

DAILY PRAYER #3

Silence – 2 minutes

Reading from the Psalms (Psalm 37)

- ¹ Do not fret because of those who are evil
or be envious of those who do wrong;
- ² for like the grass they will soon wither,
like green plants they will soon die away.
- ³ Trust in the Lord and do good;
dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.
- ⁴ Take delight in the Lord,
and he will give you the desires of your heart.
- ⁵ Commit your way to the Lord;
trust in him and he will do this:
- ⁶ He will make your righteous reward shine like the dawn,
your vindication like the noonday sun.

⁷ Be still before the Lord
and wait patiently for him;
do not fret when people succeed in their ways,
when they carry out their wicked schemes.

⁸ Refrain from anger and turn from wrath;
do not fret—it leads only to evil.

⁹ For those who are evil will be destroyed,
but those who hope in the Lord will inherit the land.

Silence – 30 Seconds

Gospel Reading (Mark 6:30-32)

³⁰ The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. ³¹ Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.”

³² So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place.

Silence – 30 Seconds

Devotional

The number one enemy of Christian spiritual formation is exhaustion. As a result, one of the primary activities (or anti-activities) of human life is **being neglected: sleep**. The average person needs approximately eight hours of sleep in order to maintain health. This tells me that God has designed humanity to spend nearly one-third of our lives sleeping. This is a stunning thought. **We were made to spend a large portion of our existence essentially doing nothing**. Sleep is a perfect example of the combination of discipline and grace. You cannot make yourself sleep. You cannot force your body to sleep. Sleep is an act of surrender. It is admitting that we are not God (who never sleeps), and that is good news.

- James Bryan Smith in *The Good and Beautiful God*

Self-Examination: In what way is the Coronavirus environment forming you? What do you sense is God’s invitation to you to be formed by him?

Supplication

The Our Father: Our Father which 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 the evil one. For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever, Amen.

DAILY PRAYER #4

Silence – 2 minutes

Reading from the Psalms (Psalm 84)

- ¹ How lovely is your dwelling place,
Lord Almighty!
- ² My soul yearns, even faints,
for the courts of the Lord;
my heart and my flesh cry out
for the living God.
- ³ Even the sparrow has found a home,
and the swallow a nest for herself,
where she may have her young—
a place near your altar,
Lord Almighty, my King and my God.
- ⁴ Blessed are those who dwell in your house;
they are ever praising you.^[c]
- ⁵ Blessed are those whose strength is in you,
whose hearts are set on pilgrimage.
- ⁶ As they pass through the Valley of Baka,
they make it a place of springs;
the autumn rains also cover it with pools.^[c]
- ⁷ They go from strength to strength,
till each appears before God in Zion.
- ⁸ Hear my prayer, Lord God Almighty;
listen to me, God of Jacob.
- ⁹ Look on our shield,^[e] O God;
look with favor on your anointed one.
- ¹⁰ Better is one day in your courts
than a thousand elsewhere;
I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God
than dwell in the tents of the wicked.
- ¹¹ For the Lord God is a sun and shield;
the Lord bestows favor and honor;

no good thing does he withhold
from those whose walk is blameless.

Silence – 30 Seconds

New Testament Reading (Romans 8:26-28, The Message Translation)

Meanwhile, the moment we get tired in the waiting, God's Spirit is right alongside helping us along. If we don't know how or what to pray, it doesn't matter. He does our praying in and for us, making prayer out of our wordless sighs, our aching groans. He knows us far better than we know ourselves, knows our pregnant condition, and keeps us present before God. That's why we can be so sure that every detail in our lives of love for God is worked into something good.

Silence – 30 Seconds

Devotional

The spiritual life has to do with how God relates to us and how we in turn relate to God. Prayer is the essential expression of this relationship. Like the spiritual life itself, **prayer is initiated by God**. No matter what we think about the origin of our prayers, they are all a response to the hidden workings of the Spirit within. God's desire for us ignites the spark of our desire for God. God's guiding heart nudges forth our prayers to be led. The apostle Paul assured us that the Spirit "helps us in our weakness" and "intercedes with sighs too deep for words" (Rom. 8:26). Have you considered what an astonishing promise it is that the Spirit prays in us, and does so "according to the will of God"? **Perhaps our real task in prayer is to attune ourselves to the conversation already going on deep in our hearts.** Then we may align our conscious intentions with the desire of God being expressed at our core.

- Marjorie Thompson

Self-Examination: If the Spirit is already at work in our lives, in what ways is God calling you to attune yourself to the conversations already going on within?

Supplication

The Our Father: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. ¹⁰Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as *it is* in heaven. ¹¹Give us this day our daily bread.¹² And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive those who trespass against us.¹³ And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen

DAILY PRAYER #5

Silence: 2 minutes

Reading from the Psalms (Psalm 85:1-7)

- ¹ You, Lord, showed favor to your land;
you restored the fortunes of Jacob.
- ² You forgave the iniquity of your people
and covered all their sins.^[b]
- ³ You set aside all your wrath
and turned from your fierce anger.
- ⁴ Restore us again, God our Savior,
and put away your displeasure toward us.
- ⁵ Will you be angry with us forever?
Will you prolong your anger through all generations?
- ⁶ Will you not revive us again,
that your people may rejoice in you?
- ⁷ Show us your unfailing love, Lord,
and grant us your salvation.

Silence – 30 Seconds

New Testament Reading (Colossians 3:12-14)

¹² Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³ Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴ And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Silence – 30 Seconds

Devotional

"Forgiveness flounders because I exclude the enemy from the community of humans even as I exclude myself from the community of sinners. But no one can be in the presence of the God of the crucified Messiah for long without overcoming this double exclusion — without transposing the enemy from the sphere of the monstrous... into the sphere of shared humanity and herself from the sphere of proud innocence into the sphere of common sinfulness.

- Miroslav Volf (*Exclusion and Embrace*)

Self-Examination: How does this quote impact you? By God's grace who do you need to forgive?

Supplication

The Our Father: Our Father which 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 the evil one. For yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever, Amen.

PRAYER NOTES: