

A Prayer Guide *for* Daily Prayer

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6-7

Dear Portico Church Family —

For many of you, this current moment is understandably unsettling. The question we are each asking is, "who is in charge here?" That is the question we ask when we are afraid, and in many ways is the question we ask when we are cynical though maybe in a different tone. We know that the Christian faith has declared over and over again that it is God who is control. God's authority and care are at the heart of the Psalmist's honest prayer in Psalm 121 and the Apostle Paul's encouragement to the Church in Rome in Romans 8:35–39.

And while we may not have the answer, one of the most common practices in our faith to get that truth into our bones is the practice of prayer. During this unprecedented season, we are renewing our call to our church family to be a praying church.

What I hope to do in this prayer guide is to invite us as a church family to slow down for prayer. To schedule our days around prayer rather than scheduling our prayer around our days.

As we, the people of God, step faithfully into the circumstances and reality that overwhelm us, and as we sit amid fear that grips us, it will be vital for us to take every step in honest lament and prayerful trust. My invitation for us this day and in the days moving forward is that we would be a people who are marked by hope, by wisdom, by love, and by prayer. And that these things would mark us not as a way of calming our anxiety, but that these things would mark us for the sake of others.

To that end, one of the great gifts we have received from the Christian Tradition is the practice of following unique and set rhythms of daily prayer. This practice was called "officium divinum" in Latin, which translates "divine office." It is most commonly known as the Daily Office now. This practice has its origin in the Jewish tradition and became widely practiced in the Church as early as the second and third centuries. Some have divided the day into seven sections, but the most common division of the day around prayer is around three offices: Morning Prayer, Noonday Prayer, and Evening Prayer. Today many families (including our own) have found that the rhythm of praying morning and evening prayer together helps add a structure of turning our eyes to Christ daily, especially during this unprecedented season.

The following sections have been adapted from several sources and can serve as a simple pattern for prayer and Scripture reading. These rhythms are simple and accessible enough to be used by yourself, with others online, or even with children. If you are using these with your children, do as much or as little as suits you.

There is nothing magical about the prayers in this book. These are prayers that help us encounter God, obey God, and experience His grace. As you come to them, go to them in faith. God is, as St. Augustine said, closer and more intimate to you than you are with yourself. What glorious news as we wait! So take up and read, pray, and practice. You won't always feel like it, but there is life abundant (John 10:10) waiting for those who press on together in company with the incarnate Christ.

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

- Jesus (Matthew 11:28-30 MSG)

Blessed be God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. And blessed be God's kingdom, now and for ever! Amen

- Pastor Bliss Spillar †

MORNING PRAYER

These rhythms are from the Field Guide for Family Prayer by Winfield and Kay Bevins. Please consider purchasing a physical copy if you find them beneficial.

Join Pastor Bliss on the Portico Facebook Page every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 8 AM for Morning Prayer.

Moment of Silence

Let us begin with a moment of silence to be still (Psalm 46) and aware of God's presence. Then let's open with the following prayer:

Opening Prayer

Dear Lord, You have brought us in safety to this new day; grant us patience to do what we need to do today; let our confidence not rest in our own understanding but in Your guiding hand; let our desires not be for our own comfort, but for the joy of Your kingdom now and forever. Amen.

Opening Verses

Read one of the following scriptures to prepare your heart for morning prayer

- Sunday:** I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD." (Ps. 122:1)
- Monday:** May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer. (Ps. 19:14)
- Tuesday:** Send me your light and your faithful care, let them lead me; let them bring me to your holy mountain, to the place where you dwell. (Ps. 43:3)
- Wednesday:** The Lord is in his holy temple;
let all the earth be silent before him. (Hab. 2:20)
- Thursday:** Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. (John 4:23)
- Friday:** For this is what the high and exalted One says—he who lives forever, whose name is holy: "I live in a high and holy place, but also with the one who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite." (Isa. 57:15)

Saturday: Give praise to the LORD, proclaim his name; make Known among the nations what he has done. (Ps. 105:1)

The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13)

—
Our Father 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 Thine is the kingdom, and the power
and the glory forever. Amen.

Pray for Special Needs

—
Take some time to pray for the needs of your family, friends, neighbors, local community, nation, and the world. Let the Spirit lead you and guide you as you pray.

The Reading

—
At this time, you may read one or more additional scriptures from the Old Testament, Psalms, New Testament, or the Gospels.

Closing Prayer:

—
Close with the following prayer.

Heavenly Father, in You we live and move and have our being:
We humbly pray You so to guide and govern us by Your Holy Spirit,
that in all the cares and occupations of our life we may not forget You,
but may remember that we are ever walking in Your sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

MIDDAY PRAYER

This structure is adapted from the Book of Common Prayer.

Moment of Silence

—

Let us begin with a moment of silence to be still (Psalm 46) and aware of God's presence. Then let's open with the following prayer:

Opening Prayer

—

O God, make speed to save us.

O Lord, make haste to help us.

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

Opening Psalms

—

Read one of the following Psalms.

Psalm 121 | My Help Comes from the LORD

- [1] I lift up my eyes to the hills.
From where does my help come?
- [2] My help comes from the LORD,
who made heaven and earth.
- [3] He will not let your foot be moved;
he who keeps you will not slumber.
- [4] Behold, he who keeps Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.
- [5] The LORD is your keeper;
the LORD is your shade on your right hand.
- [6] The sun shall not strike you by day,
nor the moon by night.
- [7] The LORD will keep you from all evil;
he will keep your life.
- [8] The LORD will keep
your going out and your coming in
from this time forth and forevermore. (ESV)

Psalm 126 | Restore Our Fortunes, O LORD

- [1] When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion,
we were like those who dream.

[2] Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
and our tongue with shouts of joy;
then they said among the nations,
“The LORD has done great things for them.”
[3] The LORD has done great things for us;
we are glad.
[4] Restore our fortunes, O LORD,
like streams in the Negeb!
[5] Those who sow in tears
shall reap with shouts of joy!
[6] He who goes out weeping,
bearing the seed for sowing,
shall come home with shouts of joy,
bringing his sheaves with him. (ESV)

The Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13)

Our Father 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 Thine is the kingdom, and the power
and the glory forever. Amen.

Pray for Special Needs

Take some time to pray for the needs of your family, friends, neighbors, local community, nation, and the world. Let the Spirit lead you and guide you as you pray.

The Closing Prayer

Close with the following prayer.

O God of peace, who hast taught us that in returning and rest we shall be saved, in quietness and in confidence shall be our strength; By the might of thy Spirit lift us, we pray thee, to thy presence, where may be still and know that thou art God; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

EVENING PRAYER

These rhythms are from the Field Guide for Family Prayer by Winfield and Kay Bevins. Please consider purchasing a physical copy if you find them beneficial.

Moment of Silence

Let us begin with a moment of silence to be still (Psalm 46) and aware of God's presence. Then let's open with the following prayer:

Opening Prayer

O gracious light, pure brightness of the ever-living Father in heaven,
O Jesus Christ, holy and blessed!
Now as we come to the setting of the sun,
and our eyes behold the vesper light, we sing Your praises,
O God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
You are worthy at all times to be praised by happy voices,
O Son of God, O Giver of Life,
and to be glorified through all the worlds.

Opening Verses

Read one of the following scriptures to prepare your heart for morning prayer

Sunday: May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice. (Ps. 141:2)

Monday: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (Phil. 1:2)

Tuesday Worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness; tremble before him, all the earth. (Ps. 96:9)

Wednesday: The day is yours, and yours also the night; you established the sun and moon. It was you who set all the boundaries of the earth; you made both summer and winter. (Ps. 74:16-17)

Thursday: I will praise the LORD, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me. I keep my eyes always on the LORD. With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken. (Ps. 16:7-8)

Friday: He who made the Pleiades and Orion, who turns midnight into dawn and darkens day into night, who calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out over the face of the land—the LORD is his name. (Amos 5:8)

Saturday: If I say, "Surely the darkness's will hide me and the light become night around me," even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is a light to you. (Ps. 139.11-12)

The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13)

Our Father 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 Thine is the kingdom, and the power
and the glory forever. Amen.

Pray for Special Needs

Take some time to pray for the needs of your family, friends, neighbors, local community, nation, and the world. Let the Spirit lead you and guide you as you pray.

The Reading

At this time, you may read one or more additional scriptures from the Old Testament, Psalms, New Testament, or the Gospels.

The Closing Prayer

Close with the following prayer.

Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch,
or weep this night, and give Your angels charge over those who sleep.
Tend the sick, Lord Christ:
give rest to the weary, bless the dying,
soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous
and all for Your love's sake. Amen.

SPECIAL PRAYERS

for a TIME OF FEAR

These prayers are from the Book of Common Prayer and were compiled by the wonderful crew over at <https://thehomelyhours.com>.

In Time of Great Sickness

O most mighty and merciful God, to whom alone belong the issues of life and death; In this time of grievous sickness we flee unto thee for relief. Deliver us, we beseech thee, from our peril give strength and skill to thy ministers of healing; bless the means of cure; and grant, that, perceiving how frail is our earthly life, we may apply our hearts unto that heavenly wisdom which leadeth to eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lord have mercy upon us...

For those who are sick
For those who are dying
For those who are healthcare providers
For those who are fearful
For those who are leaders in government and culture
For those churches in major outbreak areas
For all Christians everywhere to be unified in prayer and love

For Trustfulness

O most loving Father, who willest us to give thanks for all things, to dread nothing but the loss of thee, and to cast all our care on thee, who carest for us; Preserve us from faithless fears and worldly anxieties, and grant that no clouds of this mortal life may hide from us the light of that love which is immortal, and which thou hast manifested unto us in thy Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For Those We Love

Almighty God, we entrust all who are dear to us to thy never-failing care and love, for this life and the life to come; knowing that thou art doing for them better things than we can desire or pray for; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

In Times of Common Sickness

O Almighty God, who in thy wrath didst send a plague upon thine own people in the wilderness, for their obstinate rebellion against Moses and Aaron; and also, in the time of

king David, didst slay with the plague of pestilence threescore and ten thousand, and yet remembering thy mercy didst save the rest: Have pity upon us miserable sinners, who now are visited with great sickness and mortality; that like as thou didst then accept of an atonement, and didst command the destroying Angel to cease from punishing, so it may now please thee to withdraw from us this plague and grievous sickness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For Quiet Confidence

O God of peace, who hast taught us that in returning and rest we shall be saved, in quietness and in confidence shall be our strength; By the might of thy Spirit lift us, we pray thee, to thy presence, where may be still and know that thou art God; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A Prayer for Future Protection

Almighty God, by whose will we were created, by whose providence we have been sustained, and by whose mercy we have been called to the knowledge of eternal life; Vouchsafe unto us evermore thy preserving and protecting grace. Unto thee, the support of our infancy, the help of our youth, and the guide of our advancing years, do we commit our lives for the time to come. In all our ways we acknowledge thee; and wilt thou direct our paths. In our prosperity, give us grace to use with moderation our several enjoyments, and a compassionate spirit for the wants of others. Save us from those temptations which might occasion our fall; and in our adversity, impart unto us patience and strength. These blessings we ask in the Name of our our only Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

a LITURGY FOR MEDICAL PROVIDERS

We invite you to join us in praying for our communities, those in medical professions, and those ill with sickness and fear. This liturgy was made available to the public by Rabbit Room Press and is from Every Moment Holy by Doug McKelvey. They have updated the downloads section of the Every Moment Holy website to include liturgies like this one with special relevance to the coronavirus pandemic. You can find them at <https://www.everymomentholly.com/liturgies>

Christ Our Healer,

There is no end to malady, sickness,
injury, and disease in this broken world,
so there is no end to the line of hurting
people who daily need my tending.

Therefore give me grace, O God,
that I might be generous with my kindness,
and that in this healing and care-taking vocation
my hands might become an extension of your
hands, and my service a conduit for your mercy.

For it is often not an easy place to be—
so near to suffering, to injury, to pain,
to emergency and fear and confusion,
and sometimes even to dying and
death and grief—
but I believe it is exactly the sort of place
you would be, O Lord, amongst those
who hurt. So let my practice of medicine be
centered in an understanding of your heart.

Let me practice medicine
because you are a healing God
who feels compassion and extends mercy.

Let me practice medicine
because you are near to those who are in need,
to those who face grief and loss.

Let me practice medicine
as a willing servant of your redemption,
pushing back—by means of my vocation—
the effects of the fall.

Let my presence in this place lend a human face
to your compassion.

Even when my schedule is crammed with appointments, rounds, or duties, let me never view my patients as mere tasks on a to-do list.

Give me grace instead to be always—even in our brief encounters—attentive and responsive to the hearts of human beings made in your image.

Let me extend kindness and mercy even to those who are too angry, frightened, bitter, or in pain to respond with anything but venom. Let me especially love them, for they suffer—even more than from physical ailment—from a lack of understanding or experience of your overwhelming grace and mercy and love. Let their time with me be to them a taste that might awaken a hopeful hunger in their hearts.

I can do none of these things on my own. Apart from your grace, I have no grace to give. So give me your grace in greater measure, O Lord.

Let me find also, in the midst of such constant need, a rhythm of service and rest that will enable my own soul to be tended and nourished—that in the time I spend with patients I will have a deeper repository of patience and kindness to share with them.

Teach me how better to balance my duties and my days, so that this work would not make me absent from the lives of my family and friends and church. Let me be well-woven into those communities and relationships, enjoying ample time with them, being available to them, and caring for their needs even as I allow them to care for mine. Let me never be so consumed by my vocation that those closest to me suffer negligence.

I would not just be a doctor or a nurse or a medical provider, O God.

I would be a minister of your healing and compassion at work in your world. I would be a living witness of your love expressed in a practical care of people. I would be your disciple in this place, at this time, among these people.

So give grace, Lord Christ. Give me grace this day and all days, that I might serve you well by loving and serving others in this healing trade, ever laboring in view of that day when your kingdom will be fully realized, at the great mending of the world, at the great ending of all ills. Let me play a small part in that great work, today.

Amen.

Breath Prayer

Breath prayer is an ancient practice in which we pray matching our breathing in and out. It has been used by many who wrestle with anxiety both as a way to experience calm, but also, and more importantly as a way to slow down and experience the loving presence of God: "I have made my home in them and they have made their home in Me" (John 17). It reminds us that just as we can't live on one breath of air we can't live on one breath of God. God is the very oxygen of our soul, and we need to breathe Him in all day long for it is in him we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:28).

To begin, simply choose one or two lines to meditate on and inhale and then exhale through them. Examples of breathe prayer to be repeated as often as needed are listed below. Choose one and then take a few moments to still yourself before God remembering His presence with you. Breathe in, filling your lungs with air while praying the opening line. Exhale slowly while praying the next line. Repeat this ten times or as many times as needed.

Breathe in slowly - **"Abba.."**
Breathe out slowly - **"... I belong to you."**

Breathe in slowly - **"Jesus Christ Son of God.."**
Breathe out slowly - **"... have mercy on me a sinner."**

Breathe in slowly - **"Be still and know..."**
Breathe out slowly - **"... that I am God."**

Breathe in slowly - **"I know that the Lord secure justice for the poor..."**
Breathe out slowly - **"... and upholds the cause of the needy."**
Breathe in slowly - **"Surely the righteous will praise Your name..."**
Breathe out slowly - **"... and the upright will live in your presence."**

Breathe in slowly - **"I lift up my eyes to the hills."**
Breathe out slowly - **"From where does my help come?"**
Breathe in slowly - **"My help comes from the LORD,"**
Breathe out slowly - **"who made heaven and earth."**