
FIELD GUIDE FOR DAILY PRAYER

Winfield Bevins



Seedbed

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Printed in the United States of America
ISBN: 978-1-62824-221-8

Cover and page design by Strange Last Name

SEEDBED PUBLISHING
Franklin, Tennessee
seedbed.com

INTRODUCTION

“Read and pray daily. It is for your life. There is no other way.”

—JOHN WESLEY

Prayer is as essential to the spiritual life as air is to the lungs or water is to the body. There is nothing more universal than the practice of prayer. If you think about it, prayer is one of the practices that Christians share in common around the world. There are people praying on every continent and in every nation. One day in the not so distant future, the Bible tells us that every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord (see Romans 14:11).

In every age, men and women have talked with God in prayer. Prayer is God’s way of communicating with his people. It is the primary way that we build a relationship with God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Prayer brings us into direct communion with the Lord.

Some people think prayer is something they have to do just like checking something off a to-do list. But that isn’t really prayer at all. We should think of prayer in intimate terms, like a conversation between close friends. What are some words that you think of when you think of a treasured friendship? You probably think of words like *loving*, *caring*, *warm*, *sincere*, *personal*, and *intimate*. These are words that should be used to

describe our prayer time with the Lord. Prayer should not be dry or stuffy; it should be warm and intimate.

Prayer doesn't change God—prayer changes us. Through prayer we are transformed into the image and likeness of Jesus Christ. To pray means that we must be open and willing to change. We are transformed as we gain a greater awareness of Christ and learn what his will is for our lives.

I am a firm believer that prayer is not something that can be taught in a classroom; it must be learned through practice, repetition, and trial and error. Like an artist who spends years learning their craft, so a believer must commit themselves to a life-long pursuit of learning how to pray. Just as a baby learns how to walk with tiny steps, or a child learns how to ride a bicycle with training wheels, we learn to pray by praying. There is no magic to it; we just pray.

There are times when we simply don't have the words to express ourselves in prayer. When we don't know how to pray or when we need encouragement to pray, we look to the church. The prayers of fellow Christians can inspire and encourage us whenever we find ourselves at a loss for words or when our desire to pray is not there. Many prayers and thanksgivings have been recorded and passed down since the days of the Bible to be used by others for mutual encouragement. Throughout the ages, Christians have continued to write down prayers to be used at different times and for different occasions so that others may share them as well.

There is a great prayer tradition that goes back to Moses, David, Jesus, and Paul. The Psalms, in particular, have been the prayer book of God's people for thousands of years. One such

prayer is found in Psalm 39:4: “LORD, let me know my end, and what is the measure of my days; let me know how fleeting my life is!” These prayers are literary masterpieces that are bold, daring, poetic, and rich in meaning.

The great prayer tradition did not stop with the Bible. When we open the treasure chest of church history, we find that it is full of wonderful awe-inspiring prayers that have been recorded and passed on to future generations. The prayers of great men such as St. Augustine, Martin Luther, Thomas Cranmer, John Wesley, and others have laid the foundation for the devotional language of Western civilization. Their prayers can help us recover the power and meaning of the spoken word in our daily prayer lives.

The saints have given the church and the world a rich heritage by leaving us their prayers. They remind us how the Lord can do extraordinary things through ordinary people who pray. Their prayers belong to the church; they belong to you and to me. The prayers of the saints are our prayers.

The *Field Guide for Daily Prayer* is a collection of prayers that will inspire your heart toward a deeper love for God and his Word. The guide can be used in a variety of ways: for individual private devotion, for small groups, or for church gatherings. The first section offers a simplified form of morning and evening prayers that can be used by small groups or individuals. You can use these prayers at your own pace. As you pray daily, allow yourself to slowly get into the rhythm of praying in the morning and evening.

The second section contains a variety of written prayers and thanksgivings that can be used for various occasions. You will find

that this collection of prayers, both ancient and contemporary, will enrich and deepen your personal prayer life. There are also prayers from various historic saints. These ancient prayers are timeless. They will inspire you to emulate the faith of those who have gone before and help you grow deeper in your walk with Christ. The final section contains a 30-Day Psalter that can be used during your time of morning and evening prayer.

I invite you to explore what millions of Christians around the world have come to know and love in the regular practice of daily prayer!

1. DAILY PRAYER

We are creatures of habit. We all have rhythms, routines, and rituals that make up our daily lives. Most of us wake up in the morning and drink a cup of coffee, brush our teeth, and read the newspaper. Or maybe we start the day off with a simple prayer and Bible reading. Routines and rituals are not a bad thing. They keep us on track and remind us of what matters most. In a spiritual sense, I believe that we need to have rhythms and routines to grow in our daily walk with Christ.

Over the centuries, Christians have followed unique corporate rhythms of prayer. One such practice is called the Daily Office, which originated from the Jewish practice of daily prayer in the Old Testament. God commanded the Israelite priests to offer sacrifices of animals in the morning and evening (see Exodus 29:38–39). As time went on, the Jewish people began to follow with Torah readings, psalms, and hymns at fixed hours of the day. By the time of the Roman Empire, bells began the work day at 6:00 in the morning, sounded mid-morning break at 9:00, the noon meal and siesta or break at 12:00, the recommencing of trade at 3:00, and the close of business at 6:00. Christians began to order their prayer life around these times of the day.

By the second and third centuries, early church fathers such as Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and Origen wrote

of the practice of the Daily Office. The prayers were prayed both individually and in group settings, as in monasteries. Monasteries followed the fixed hours of prayer individually and corporately. As monasteries continued to grow and spread throughout the Ancient Near East and into Europe, the monks took the practice with them.

The most influential monastic rule was established by St. Benedict of Nursia in the sixth century for the community of monks at Monte Cassino. St. Benedict established a “little rule for beginners” that brought together a balance of work and prayer. Pope Gregory the Great learned of Benedict’s simple rule of prayer and adopted it for the larger Roman church. These hours of prayer continued through the Middle Ages and into the Reformation. Thomas Cranmer condensed the Daily Office into Morning and Evening Prayer, which many Christians still observe today.

Many people find that praying the Daily Office helps add a sense of regularity and balance to their prayer life. It can help center you in the morning before you begin your busy day, and it can help calm you as you prepare for the hours of the night. Praying through the Daily Office is an enriching way that millions of Christians around the world practice daily devotions.

Following is an abbreviated Daily Office with Morning and Evening Prayer. There is also a simple step-by-step outline to guide you. Remember, as you begin, don’t rush. Reflect on the words and take your time. Meditate on what you’re praying and saying to the Lord. Whenever you pray plural pronouns like “we” or “our” remember that you are joining your voice with other Christians who are also praying the Daily Office.

2. MORNING PRAYER

OPENING VERSES

Read one of the following sentences of Scripture to prepare your heart for morning prayer.

Sunday: I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go to the house of the LORD!” —*Psalm 122:1*

Monday: Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer. —*Psalm 19:14*

Tuesday: Oh send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead me, let them bring me to thy holy hill and to thy dwelling! —*Psalm 43:3*

Wednesday: But the LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him. —*Habakkuk 2:20*

Thursday: But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for such the Father seeks to worship him. —*John 4:23*

Friday: For thus says the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: “I dwell in the high and holy

place, and also with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite.” —*Isaiah 57:15*

Saturday: O give thanks to the LORD, call on his name, make known his deeds among the peoples! —*Psalms 105:1*

CONFESSION OF SIN

Take a few moments to pray to confess your sins and acknowledge your need for God's grace and forgiveness.

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your name. *Amen.*

End by acknowledging God's mercy and realizing that He has forgiven your sins in Christ Jesus.

May Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, through Jesus Christ our Lord, and strengthen us to live in the power of the Holy Spirit, all our days. *Amen.*

THE INVITATORY

Move to a time of praise by praying the Invitatory and then the Gloria.

Lord, open our lips and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Glory 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.*

THE PSALM

Read one of the psalms from the 30-Day Psalter on page 31.

THE READING

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

THE APOSTLES' CREED

Read the Apostles' Creed. As you recite these words you are acknowledging the universal truths of the Christian faith.

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth; I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. *Amen.*

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Pray The Lord's Prayer, taking your time and meditating on each line as you pray.

Our Father in heaven,
holy is your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For yours is the kingdom, the power,
and the glory, forever. *Amen.*

THE INTERCESSION

Use the following intercessory prayer to help you focus on specific concerns.

Show us your mercy, O Lord; And grant us your salvation. Clothe your ministers with righteousness; Let your people sing with joy. Give peace, O Lord, in all the world; For only in you can we live in safety. Lord, keep this nation under your care; And guide us in the way of justice and truth. Let your way be known upon earth; Your saving health among all nations. Let not the

needy, O Lord, be forgotten; Nor the hope of the poor be taken away. Create in us clean hearts, O God; And sustain us with your Holy Spirit.

*Take some time to pray for yourself and others.
Let the Spirit lead you and guide you as you pray.*

THE COLLECT

Pray the following collect.

A Collect for Grace

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us in safety to this new day: Preserve us with your mighty power, that we may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all we do, direct us to the fulfilling of your purpose; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

BENEDICTION

Conclude with the following benediction.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. *Amen.*

(2 Corinthians 13:14)

3. EVENING PRAYER

OPENING VERSES

Read one of the following sentences of Scripture to prepare your heart for evening prayer.

Sunday: Let my prayer be counted as incense before thee, and the lifting up of my hands as an evening sacrifice!
—*Psalm 141:2*

Monday: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. —*Philippians 1:2*

Tuesday: Worship the LORD in holy array; tremble before him, all the earth! —*Psalm 96:9*

Wednesday: Thine is the day, thine also the night; thou hast established the luminaries and the sun. Thou hast fixed all the bounds of the earth; thou hast made summer and winter.
—*Psalm 74:16-17*

Thursday: I bless the LORD who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me. I keep the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.
—*Psalm 16:7-8*

Friday: He who made the Pleiades and Orion, and turns deep darkness into the morning, and darkens the day into night, who

calls for the waters of the sea, and pours them out upon the surface of the earth, the LORD is his name. —*Amos 5:8*

Saturday: If I say, “Let only darkness cover me, and the light about me be night,” even the darkness is not dark to thee, the night is bright as the day; for darkness is as light with thee. —*Psalm 139:11-12*

CONFESSION OF SIN

Take a few moments to pray, to confess your sins, and acknowledge your need for God's grace and forgiveness.

Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from your ways like lost sheep, we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts, we have offended against your holy laws, we have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done. But you, O Lord, have mercy upon us, spare those who confess their faults, restore those who are repentant, according to your promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord; and grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake, that we may here after live a godly, righteous, and sober life, to the glory of your holy name. *Amen.*

End by acknowledging God's mercy and realizing that he has forgiven your sins in Christ Jesus.

May Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, through Jesus Christ our Lord, and strengthen us to live in the power of the Holy Spirit, all our days. *Amen.*

THE INVITATORY

Move to a time of praise by praying the Invitatory and then the Gloria.

O God, make speed to save us. O Lord, make haste to help us. Glory 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.*

THE PSALM

Read one of the psalms from the 30-Day Psalter on page 31.

AN EVENING 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.

A READING

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

THE APOSTLES' CREED

Read the Apostles' Creed. As you recite these words you are acknowledging the universal truths of the Christian faith.

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth; I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was

conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. *Amen.*

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Pray The Lord's Prayer, taking your time and meditating on each line as you pray.

Our Father in heaven,
holy is your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For yours is the kingdom, the power,
and the glory, forever. *Amen.*

THE INTERCESSION

Use the following intercessory prayer to help you focus on specific concerns.

Make your ways known upon earth, Lord God, your saving power among all peoples. Renew your Church in holiness and help us to serve you with joy. Guide the leaders of all nations, that justice may prevail throughout the world. Let not the needy be forgotten, nor the hope of the poor be taken away. Make us instruments of your peace and let your glory be over all the earth. *Amen.*

*Take some time to pray for yourself and others.
Let the Spirit lead you and guide you as you pray.*

THE COLLECT

Pray the following collect.

A Collect for the Presence of Christ

Lord Jesus, stay with us, for evening is at hand and the day is past; be our companion in the way, kindle our hearts, and awaken hope, that we may know you as you are revealed in Scripture and the breaking of bread. Grant this for the sake of your love. *Amen.*

BENEDICTION

Conclude with the following benediction.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope. *Amen.* (Romans 15:13)

4. VARIOUS PRAYERS

This section contains a collection of ancient and contemporary prayers and thanksgivings for various occasions. Prayer helps us celebrate life—from birth to death. These prayers have been drawn from different sources and are written in our contemporary English language. In the following pages, you will find a prayer for just about any need. You will find yourself falling in love with these beautiful prayers and returning to them throughout the day.

TOPICAL

FOR CONFESSION OF SIN

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your name.
Amen.

FOR THE GIFT OF A CHILD

Heavenly Father, you sent your own Son into this world. We thank you for the life of this child, entrusted to our care. Help us to remember that we are all your children, and so to love and nurture him, that he may attain to that full stature intended for him in your eternal kingdom; for the sake of your dear Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

FOR GOD'S HEALING

O God, the source of all health: So fill my heart with faith in your love, that with calm expectancy I may make room for your power to possess me, and gracefully accept your healing; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

FOR GRACE AT MEALS

Blessed are you, O Lord God, for you give us food to sustain our lives and make our hearts glad. Give us grateful hearts for all your blessings, and make us mindful of the needs of others; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

FOR GUIDANCE

Direct us, O Lord, in all our doings with your most gracious favor, and further us with your continual help; that in all our works begun, continued, and ended in you, we may glorify your holy name, and finally, by your mercy, obtain everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

FOR PEACE

O God, the author of peace and lover of concord, to know you is eternal life and to serve you is perfect freedom: Defend us, your humble servants, in all assaults of our enemies; that we, surely trusting in your defense, may not fear the power of any adversaries; through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

FOR PURITY

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

FOR QUIET CONFIDENCE

O God of peace, who has taught us that in returning and rest we shall be saved, in quietness and confidence shall be our strength: By the might of your Spirit lift us, we pray, to your presence, where we may be still and know that you are God; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

FOR A LOCAL CHURCH

Almighty and everliving God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth, hear our prayers for this church family. Strengthen the faithful, arouse the careless, and restore the brokenhearted. Grant us all things necessary for our common life, and bring us all to be of one heart and mind within your holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

FOR THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

Everliving God, whose will it is that all should come to you through your Son Jesus Christ: Inspire our witness to him, that all may know the power of his forgiveness and the hope of his resurrection; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

FOR THE RENEWAL OF LIFE

O God, the King eternal, whose light divides the day from the night and turns the shadow of death into the morning: Drive far from us all wrong desires, incline our hearts to keep your law, and guide our feet into the way of peace; that, having done your will with cheerfulness while it was day, we may, when night comes, rejoice to give you thanks; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

FOR SELF-DEDICATION

Almighty and eternal God, so draw our hearts to you, so guide our minds, so fill our imaginations, so control our wills, that we may be wholly yours, utterly dedicated unto you; and then use us, we pray, as you will, and always to your glory and the welfare of your people; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

FOR THOSE WE LOVE

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

FOR THOSE WHO MOURN

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

HISTORICAL

PRAYER OF ST. CLEMENT OF ROME, FIRST CENTURY

The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you and with all men in all places who have been called by God and through Him, through whom is glory. *Amen.*

PRAYER OF ST. IRENAEUS, 130–202

O Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, look upon us and have mercy upon us; you who are yourself both victim and priest, yourself both reward and redeemer, keep safe from all evil those whom thou hast redeemed, O Savior of the world. *Amen.*

PRAYER OF ST. AMBROSE OF MILAN, 339–397

O Lord, who has mercy upon all, take away from me my sins, and mercifully kindle in me the fire of thy Holy Spirit. Take away from me the heart of stone, and give me a heart of flesh, a heart to love and adore thee, a heart to delight in thee, to follow and to enjoy thee, for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

PRAYER OF ST. JEROME, 342–420

O good shepherd, seek me out, and bring me home to your fold again. Deal favorably with me according to thy good pleasure, till I may dwell in your house all the days of my life, and praise you forever and ever with them that are there. *Amen.*

PRAYER OF ST. JEROME, 342–420

Lord, you have given us your Word for a light to shine upon our path; grant us so to meditate on that Word, and to follow its teaching, that we may find in it the light that shines more and more until the perfect day; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

PRAYER OF ST. CHRYSOSTOM, 347–407

Almighty God, who has given us at this time with one accord to make our common prayer to you; and does promise that when two or three are gathered together in your name you will grant their request: fulfill now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of your servants, as may be most expedient for them; granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth; and in the world to come life everlasting. *Amen.*

PRAYER OF ST. AUGUSTINE, 354–430

Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy. Act in me, O Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy. Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit, that I love but what is holy. Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit, to defend all that is holy. Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit, that I always may be holy. *Amen.*

PRAYER OF ST. PATRICK, 387–493

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, Christ when I stand, Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me, Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me, Christ in every eye that sees me, Christ in every ear that hears me. *Amen.*

OLD CELTIC PRAYER

Deep peace of the running wave to you, Deep peace of the flowing air to you, Deep peace of the quiet earth to you, Deep peace of the shining stars to you, Deep peace of the Son of Peace to you, for ever. *Amen.*

PRAYER OF ST. BENEDICT 480–547

Gracious and holy Father, give me wisdom to perceive you, intelligence to fathom you, patience to wait for you, eyes to behold you, a heart to meditate upon you, and a life to proclaim you, through the power of the Spirit of Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

PRAYER OF ST. COLUMBA, 521–597

Alone with none but you, my God, I journey on my way. What need I fear, when you are near O king of night and day? More safe am I within your hand than if a host did round me stand. *Amen.*

PRAYER OF ST. AIDAN, DIED 651

Leave me alone with God as much as may be. As the tide draws the waters close in upon the shore, make me an island, set apart, alone with you, God, holy to you. Then with the turning of the tide prepare me to carry your presence to the busy world beyond, the world that rushes in on me till the waters come again and fold me back to you. *Amen.*

PRAYER OF ST. CAEDMAN 658–680

Now let me praise the keeper of Heaven's kingdom, the might of the Creator, and his thought, the work of the Father of glory, how each of wonders the Eternal Lord established in the beginning. He first created for the sons of men Heaven as a roof, the holy Creator, then Middle-earth the keeper of mankind, the Eternal Lord, afterwards made, the earth for men, the Almighty Lord. *Amen.*

PRAYER OF ST. ANSELM, 1033–1109

Lord, because you have made me, I owe you the whole of my love; because you have redeemed me, I owe you the whole of myself; because you have promised so much, I owe you my whole being. Moreover, I owe you as much more love than myself as you are greater than I, for whom you gave yourself and to whom you promised yourself. I pray you, Lord, make me taste by love what I taste by knowledge; let me know by love what I know by understanding. I owe you more than my whole self, but I have no more, and by myself I cannot render the whole of it to you. Draw me to you, Lord, in the fullness of your love. I am wholly yours by creation; make me all yours, too, in love. *Amen.*

PRAYER OF ST. FRANCIS, 1181–1226

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; and 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.*

PRAYER OF ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, 1225–1274

Grant me, O Lord my God, a mind to know you, a heart to seek you, wisdom to find you, conduct pleasing to you, faithful perseverance in waiting for you, and a hope of finally embracing you. *Amen.*

PRAYER OF ST. THOMAS À KEMPIS, 1380–1470

Lord, You know what is best; let this be done or that be done as You please. Give what You will, as much as You will, when You will. Do with me as You know best, as will most please You, and will be for Your greater honor. Place me where You will and deal with me freely in all things. I am in Your hand; turn me about whichever way You will. Behold, I am Your servant, ready to obey in all things. Not for myself do I desire to live, but for You—would that I could do this worthily and perfectly! *Amen.*

PRAYER OF ST. IGNATIUS LOYOLA, 1491–1556

Soul of Christ, sanctify me. Body of Christ, save me. Blood of Christ, inebriate me. Water from the side of Christ, wash me.

Passion of Christ, strengthen me. O good Jesus, hear me. Within thy sacred wounds hide me. From the wicked enemy defend me. In the hour of my death call me. And bid me come to thee that with thy saints I may praise thee forever and ever. *Amen.*

PRAYER OF ST. IGNATIUS LOYOLA, 1491–1556

Take, O Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my whole will. You have given me all that I am and all that I possess: I surrender it all to you that you may dispose of it according to your will. Give me only your love and your grace; with these I will be rich enough, and will have no more to desire. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. *Amen.*

JOHN WESLEY 1703–1791

Lord, I am no longer my own, but Yours. Put me to what You will, rank me with whom You will. Put me to doing, put me to suffering. Let me be employed for You or laid aside for You, exalted for You or brought low for You. Let me be full, let me be empty. Let me have all things, let me have nothing. I freely and heartily yield all things to Your pleasure and disposal. And now, O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, You are mine, and I am Yours. So be it. And the covenant which I have made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. *Amen.*

5. 30-DAY PSALTER

Reading the Bible is not just an intellectual exercise to increase one's knowledge about God; rather it is the place where we encounter the living God through his Word. Just as Moses encountered God in the burning bush, we also come face to face with God through the Scriptures. A. W. Tozer reminded us, "The Bible is not an end in itself, but a means to bring men to an intimate and satisfying knowledge of God, that they may enter into Him, that they may delight in His Presence, may taste and know the inner sweetness of the very God Himself in the core and center of their hearts."¹ The Scriptures introduce the reader to the Holy Spirit and the Spirit makes them come alive as he applies the truths of the Word to the hearts of the reader.

One of the best ways to begin reading Scripture daily is by starting with the book of Psalms, which is also known as the Psalter. There are exactly 150 psalms, which expound and explore a wide range of diverse subject matter. Topics such as war, peace, repentance, forgiveness, joy, happiness, worship, praise, and prayer can be found within the pages of the psalms. The psalms have provided comfort and guidance for thousands of weary pilgrims who share in the journey of life. The psalms remind us that we are not alone in our pilgrimage, but that God is with us.

The book of Psalms has been the prayer book for God's people since before the time of Christ. Author Eugene Peterson said, "The Psalms were the prayer book of Israel; they were the prayer book of Jesus; they are the prayer book of the church."² They have been a part of the daily rhythm of the church's Bible reading since its earliest days and they continue to be an important part of the church's private and corporate prayer. It could be said that the reason for the popularity of the psalms is because they explore a wide range of human emotions and experiences: from delight to despair. In a way, the psalms express feelings common to all people.

Here is a 30-day cycle for reading through the book of Psalms. In the months which are shorter than thirty days, you can read extra psalms on the last few days of the month. Likewise, in months with thirty-one days, you can simply choose additional psalms to read. Once you have finished the 30-day cycle, you can simply start the journey through the psalms again on the first day of the next month.

By following this cycle of daily psalm readings, you can read through all 150 psalms on a monthly basis, repeating them twelve times a year. After a while, you will become intimately acquainted with the book of Psalms in a powerful way that will always be with you no matter where you are or what you are going through. The Lord will meet with you as you prayerfully read through the book of Psalms each month.

1. A. W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God* (Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, Inc., 1993), 10.

2. Eugene H. Peterson, *Working the Angles: The Shape of Pastoral Integrity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 50.

30-DAY CYCLE OF READING THE PSALTER

DAY	MORNING	EVENING
1	1-5	6-8
2	9-11	12-15
3	15-17	18
4	19-21	22-23
5	24-26	27-29
6	30-31	32-34
7	35-36	37
8	38-40	41-43
9	44-46	47-49
10	50-52	53-55
11	56-58	59-61
12	62-64	65-67
13	68	69-70
14	71-72	73-74
15	75-77	78
16	79-81	82-85
17	86-88	89
18	90-92	93-94
19	95-97	98-101
20	102-103	104
21	105	106
22	107	108-109
23	110-113	114-115
24	116-118	119:1-32
25	119:33-72	119:73-104
26	119:105-144	119:145-176
27	120-125	126-131
28	132-135	136-138
29	139-140	141-143
30	144-146	147-150

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