

LENT

a season of repentance,
prayer, sacrifice,
& anticipation



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DON'T STOP NOW!

Joel 2:13

Yet even now," declares the Lord,
"return to Me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend
your hearts and not your garments."

Return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and
merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love,
and He relents over disaster.



This prayer and worship guide is our gift to you this Lenten season. Use it during Ash Wednesday, then daily, weekly, or however the Spirit is leading you to ***return to the Lord your God*** in your heart and mind, with your body and life. We pray this is not just a night or tradition, but a transformational season of ***knowing God more*** and experiencing the beauty of living as a sacrifice unto the Lord (Romans 12).

scan the QR code and hit "send" on
your mobile device to be added to the
prayer text thread for this Lenten
season.





Ash Wednesday

Repent and believe the Gospel

Ash Wednesday starts Lent by focusing our hearts on repentance and prayer, through personal and corporate confession. It is a solemn day that symbolizes humility, human frailty, and mortality. It is a day for believers to look inward, to reflect on our lives, confess our sins, seek repentance, and prepare for the upcoming Resurrection celebration. ***Tonight***, you are invited to engage in this tradition of preparation for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and ultimately for His second coming.

- ***As worship begins, invite the Holy Spirit to lead you in reflection and confession of your sins.***
- ***“Father, You alone know how often I have sinned in wandering from Your ways, in wasting Your gifts, in forgetting Your love. Have mercy on me, O Lord.”***
- ***For families with small children you can ask,
“Is there anything in your heart or mind you want to ask Jesus to forgive you for?”***

You can write down any sins you want to confess individually or as a family below:

Receiving the Ashes

Receiving ashes during Lent is more than just a physical act. It's a symbolic gesture of repentance, a way to show remorse for our sins and confess our deep need for forgiveness and salvation.

- **Take a moment and reflect** on your own mortality and shortcomings. Sit in a space of mourning over your sin, confess to Jesus your neediness, welcoming His presence, His love, His correction and care.
- **For families with small children** you can invite them to hold your hand in prayer as a family, just like Jesus offers His hand to us in the learning process, in prayer and walking with Him through life. *Remind them, just like the ashes remind them, they are not alone; they belong to a family and to Jesus.*
- **Approach the altar when you feel ready to receive the ashes.**

Feel free to meditate on and pray this prayer from Psalm 51, individually or as a family, before you walk towards the altar in repentance.

***“Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion
blot out my transgressions.
Wash away all my iniquity
and cleanse me from my sin...Cleanse me with
hyssop, and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow...”***



A Corporate Response

A Prayer of Childlike Faith

God, Father and Creator, we thank You for all the gifts You have given us, especially the gift of Your Son, Jesus. During this season of Lent, help us to change and grow and become the kind of people You created us to be. Fill our hearts with love for You and love for all people, for we are all created in Your image. Show us how to use the gifts You have given us to help others in Your name. As we journey together toward the light of Easter, we know and believe You are right here with us. **In Jesus Name, Amen.**

A Prayer of Honesty and Sacrifice

Merciful God, You called us out from the dust of the earth, saved us through the sacrifice of Jesus, and have set us apart as Your people. Look upon us as we enter these Forty Days bearing the mark of ashes, and bless the journey through the desert of Lent, to the foot to the cross, and the feast of resurrection. As we remember our mortality and seek forgiveness today, we know You are rich in forgiveness and abounding in steadfast love, love that culminates in eternal life with You. Guide our steps this Lent season, so that we might find greater fulfillment in your promises and better serve others with a heart that's reflective of You. **In Jesus Name, Amen.**



A Corporate Response

A Prayer of Repentance and Renewal

Oh Almighty and Everlasting God, who loves all of your creation and forgives those who seek redemption: We ask that you create new hearts within us, hearts that are humble and repentant. With this, we can lament our wrongdoings and recognize our faults. Through Your infinite mercy, we pray for perfect remission and forgiveness of our sins. This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. **Amen.**

A Prayer of Confession and Anticipation

Oh, Precious Savior, Your radiance brings to light all that we conceal within ourselves. We ask for Your assistance in our battle against spiritual darkness within ourselves and in the Church. During these forty days, grant us the purity of both body and soul. Grant us the strength to confront our deepest fears and flaws and acknowledge our hidden sins and disobedience. May our abstinence from harmful habits liberate us for prayer and the warmth of love. We pray that Your limitless mercy and grace will transform us and bring pure joy during the Passion of Jesus. We trust in your never-failing mercy and entrust all our desires and worries to you. **In Jesus Name, Amen.**

Your Lenten Journey

Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you," declares the Lord, "and will bring you back from captivity." Jeremiah 29:12-14

Over the next 40 days, we are engaging in a season of repentance, prayer, sacrifice, and anticipation. This is a period of ***preparation*** in which we apply our faith, or put our faith to work, in order to be ready for the celebration of Easter. As we embark on a journey of longing for Jesus through prayer and sacrificial living, ask yourself these questions and contemplate with the Holy Spirit:

- ***What would it feel like to experience unspeakable joy on Easter morning? As an individual? As a family? As a church?***
- ***What if- when the sun rises on the horizon, I couldn't contain my gratitude for all God has done and will do?***
- ***What if I and my family/friends/church, could experience the resurrection without shame or guilt, but with a renewed sense of belonging and empowerment in Christ Jesus?***

A place to start:

For families with small children:

Scan the QR code below to access a video explaining Lent. Then follow up with the next page on your guide when the time is right.



Your Lenten Journey

Teach us to number our days so that we may truly live and achieve wisdom.
Psalm 90:12

Sometimes it feels impossible to do all that is required of us. Work, family, friends, social structures, healthy living...at the end of most days we can feel exhausted and overwhelmed at the thought of waking up and doing it all over again. But what if Jesus really meant what He said, “seek first the Kingdom, and all of these things will be added unto you...” ? (Matt. 6:33)

Let’s do a little math to put it into perspective...

If you live 75 years, you have 658,000 hours on earth.

- 105,408 spent in childhood
- 184,464 spent sleeping
- 163,800 spent working
- 23,424 spent in classroom education
- 92,232 spent eating, bathing, etc.
- Total = 569,328 hours

This leaves about 89,472 hours in your entire life that can be considered “free time” - a little less than four hours a day. These hours might look like household chores, family time, watching T.V., entertainment, hobbies, overtime... The Believer who attends *at least three* worship services *each week* for 63 years will spend 11,466 hours in worship of God - 1/2 hour a day. If he or she has a ½-hour quiet time each day for 63 years, he or she will spend one hour a day in activities that are strictly devoted to God. This does not include any additional service in ministries. To be clear- the Believer who is super-faithful in private and public worship, prayer, and study will spend only two years and seven months in God’s service during his 75 years on Earth!

“But, what if we tithed our time?”

-Dr. Scott Stripling

7 days a week = 168 hours

10% = 16.8 hours

658,000 earth hours = **65,800 Kingdom hours!**

What would life look like if even a portion these hours belonged to God, first?

As you ponder these facts, ask the Holy Spirit to show you how to seek first the Kingdom. Ask-seek with your whole heart- what it is God wants to enjoy with you! His plan and promise in the place of prayer is three-fold: it is **sustainable, enjoyable, and effective**. (Psalm 16:11)

A place to start:

Together with the Lord, ask these simple questions. Remember- you aren't achieving this in your own strength! Boldly approach the throne and ask for help in navigating this season with questions like:

- ***How do I make room in my life to establish a real, healthy, enjoyable relationship with God?***
- ***How do I carve out time in my calendar to be with God, or be about His business?***
- ***How do I include my family, friends, community in this process?***

Lay it Down

We are invited to lay down luxuries during Lent and pick up the ministry of the gospel to express our true inner conversion of heart. During this season, we work in partnership with the Spirit of God to develop a desire to follow Christ's will more faithfully and cultivate a life that pleases God.

Take time today to meet with the Lord and ask Him, "what would You have me lay down in these 40 days?"

It doesn't have to be food, but it could be! Or media consumption, sugar, shopping, habits or vices that are harmful... *It's a great time to put down our coping mechanisms and press into Jesus- asking for help in our time of need.* (Hebrews 4:16)

Write what you're "laying down," in the space below. Families can do this together!

"God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ"
Eph. 2:4-5

+ Pick It Up

Establishing a practice of prayer is one of the most enriching and Christlike things we can do. Its truly the foundation for any kind of satisfying, Spirit-filled life. If this is a new endeavor for you or your family, don't fret or worry! Even the disciples asked Jesus, "teach us how to pray." If you are feeling shame or guilt- ask the Holy Spirit to liberate your mind and bring you peace as you pursue this practice of the Presence. The Holy Spirit is our teacher, comforter, and counselor- our helper or Paraklētos in the Greek- meaning the "*One who comes alongside.*"

My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God? Psalm 42:2

Ask the Holy Spirit to let you feel that nearness or "coming alongside" you with tenderness and with power! Ask for the courage to carve out time in your daily life to meet with God for the sake of meeting with Him, alone. Write that time here and make a Holy-Spirit-empowered commitment to *keep it*: _____.

A place to start:

For individuals and families: Pray the Lord's Prayer (*on the next page*) out loud in the morning, before meals, or before bedtime. *Choose a time and stick to it!* Pray with the knowledge that you have God's Spirit coming alongside you to empower and teach you in this practice of prayer.

A resource we love:

The Practice of the Presence of God,
Brother Lawrence



scan QR code
for link to purchase



The Lord's Prayer

adapted

“Our Father in heaven,
HOLY is Your name
Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth, just as in heaven.
Give us everything we need
for today, and forgive us our
sins, as we forgive those who
sin against us. And lead us not
into temptation,
but free us from us from
evil.
For Yours is the kingdom and
the power and the glory
forever, AMEN!

A Life of Prayer

What does that even mean?! Sometimes prayer can seem confusing and complicated. It can feel odd or forced, leaving us longing for the satisfaction, peace, and power the gospel promises. Many times this causes us to give up the pursuit of Jesus in the place of prayer. But what if it didn't have to be complicated? **What if prayer is the most *simple practice or discipline we could engage in with God?***

Brother Lawrence was a 17th century Carmelite monk who wrote a book all about the simplicity of prayer, kindly demystifying Paul's words "*pray without ceasing*" in I Thess. 5:16-18.

He writes:

"I have abandoned all particular forms of devotion, all prayer techniques. My only prayer practice is attention. I carry on a habitual, silent, and secret conversation with God that fills me with overwhelming joy."

- **What would life look like if you began to simply give God your attention as often as possible?**
- **What if, in letting go of your current view of God and prayer, you simply began to ask to know Him more, to show Himself and the benefits of your salvation in His Word and in everyday life?**
- **Ask yourself this honest question: Am I willing to make room in my life - my heart, soul, and mind- for an ongoing conversation with God?**

A Prayer of Identity

Knowing our identity in Christ as new creations is paramount to an enjoyable, sustainable, and effective prayer life. At salvation, our nature changes! But our mind doesn't. Our minds must be renewed (Eps. 4:23, Romans 12:2)

Pray this prayer over yourself as often as you need to. Families can pray this over one another, or pray together!

Father In Heaven, thank You for making me Your child (John 1:12). Thank you that I have been justified (Romans 5:1). I speak over myself that I am Your friend (John 15:15), I belong to You (1 Corinthians 6:20), I am a member of Your body (1 Corinthians 12:27), I have been established, anointed, and sealed by You (2 Corinthians 1:21-22). I grab this truth with both hands: ***I am a citizen of heaven*** (Philippians 3:20), I am blessed in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing (Ephesians 1:3), I am chosen before the creation of the world (Ephesians 1:4, 11), I am holy and blameless in Your sight (Ephesians 1:4).

I rejoice because I am forgiven (Ephesians 1:8; Colossians 1:14) I am adopted as Your child (Galatians 4:1-7, Ephesians 1:5), I have purpose (Ephesians 1:9; 3:11), I have hope (Ephesians 1:12), I am included (Ephesians 1:13), I am an overcomer (1 John 4:4), I am protected (John 10:28), I am a **new creation** (2 Cor. 5:17).

A Prayer of Identity

continued

Thank you for sending Your Son, Jesus that I might share in Your inheritance (Colossians 1:12). I praise You for making me the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21), thank you that I am safe (1 John 5:18) and part of Your Kingdom (Revelation 1:6).

Continue to empower me, Holy Spirit, to know that I can understand what Your will is (Ephesians 5:17), I have God's power (Ephesians 6:10), and I am victorious through the blood of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:57). Let me hear You crying out, "ABBA FATHER!" and confirming my eternal identity.

I love You and give my life to you once again. Speak my eternal identity, my story of heavenly origin deep in my soul as I seek Your face and Your heart. In Jesus' name.

A Life of Prayer

Learning to pray, or repositioning ourselves for a fresh encounter in the place of prayer, is to take the posture of honesty and transparency with ourselves and with God. In the Old Testament we read of David, the young shepherd boy destined to be King of Israel. He is called by God, “a man after My heart... who pleases Me” (1 Samuel 13:14, Acts 13:22). He penned the most honest and beautiful poetry in the Psalms and gives us a transparent view into his intimate, inner life with God. But there is tension in David’s story; he was also a murderer, an adulterer, and a man of war. How could this be?!

Psalm 51 is David’s broken heartedness and repentance spilled on a page. His words invite all who are broken over their sin to *run* to the secret place with God and lean upon His compassion. Through it, we are taught that we need to be forgiven for our sins AND cleansed of the effects it has on our mental, emotional and physical states. It helps us recognize that in order to be healed of the *disease* of sin, we need God to create in us a heart that is clean and a spirit that is strong.

A place to start:

- ***Read through Psalm 51 on the next page and underline words or phrases that stand out. Ask God to create a clean heart in you and renew your spirit with His compassion and love as you meet with Him in scripture.***
- ***For families with small children: ask the question, “how does it make you feel to know- though you were born sick with sin, Jesus has cured you??***

Psalm 51 *The Voice Translation*

“Look on me with a heart of mercy, O God, according to Your generous love. According to Your great compassion, wipe out every consequence of my shameful crimes. Thoroughly wash me, inside and out, of all my crooked deeds. Cleanse me from my sins. For I am fully aware of all I have done wrong, and my guilt is there, staring me in the face. But still, You long to en throne truth throughout my being; in unseen places deep within me, You show me wisdom. Cleanse me of my wickedness with hyssop, and I will be clean. If You wash me, I will be whiter than snow... Create in me a clean heart, O God; restore within me a sense of being brand new. Do not throw me far away from Your presence, and do not remove Your Holy Spirit from me. Give back to me the deep delight of being saved by You: let Your willing Spirit sustain me.”

A Life of Prayer

In Matthew 5, Jesus teaches about the Kingdom of Heaven and what it looks to live a life pleasing to God. He explains further in chapter 6 *how* to go about living that life. He shares in verse 6, “*But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.*” He then goes on to teach the same prayer from Luke 11 (The Lord’s Prayer.)

The things we *do* to please God must *be* about pleasing God first and foremost. It requires humility to recognize that our motivation for “doing for” God, is utterly dependent on our “being with” God, enjoying what CS Lewis called a “*robust inner life*” with Him. The inner life we nurture and cultivate with God is the single most important thing we will do upon the earth. It influences every relationship, every circumstance, and every season of life. If we want His rewards more than the fleeting rewards of this world, we must **lay down** our devotion to human attention, human praise, or public accolades that eventually lead to pride. We must **pick up** a practice of the secret place.

A place to start:

Read through The Sermon the Mount this week (Matthew 5,6,7). Review the questions from the previous page before you begin your readings. When something stands out to you, or grabs your attention, or makes you scratch your head!, write it down on then next page to ponder and talk to God about over these 40 days.

For families and individuals:

Scan the QR code to access a 20 minute audio version. Listen and share what stands out, pray for one another to go to the secret place and talk/listen to God about these points.



This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

A Life of Prayer

When your heart is set on the secret pace - *cultivating your inner life with God* - you are free to explore the unique way God communicates with you AND how you were made to communicate with Him. Author Gary Thomas calls this discovering our “Sacred Pathways.” He gives helpful and broad categories in his book:

Naturalists Enjoy God in the midst of creation and discover spiritual truths in nature

Sensates Enjoy God through sensual experiences; sights (like art), sounds (music), smells, and more

Traditionalists Enjoy God Through Ritual and Symbol

Ascetics Enjoy God in Solitude and Simplicity

Activists Enjoy God Through Confrontation & “love in action”

Enthusiasts Enjoy God with Mystery, Wonder, and Celebration

Contemplatives Enjoy God Through Adoration

Intellectuals Enjoy God with the Mind

A place to start:

Ask yourself, “how do I enjoy God, and experience Him enjoying me?” Really give it some thought!

Read through this list and select a few ways you enjoy being with God. Remember: We rarely rely on a single approach to connect with God every time. Your life of prayer will evolve and grow, like any healthy relationship, over time.

Resource We Love: Simple study guide on Sacred Pathways by Adalee Lewis that helps you go on a journey of discovering your unique, enjoyable practice of prayer. →



Praying Scripture

One of the most effective ways to pray is by sitting with God in His Word, by the power of the Holy Spirit, for revelation of Jesus (*the Word made flesh*)! When we pray using Scripture, we can be sure that we are on the right track. When we ask the Holy Spirit to **show us** the heart of our Father and the ways of our Savior within the pages, He is faithful, *even delighted!*, to do so.

A place to start:

Ask the Lord to walk with you through these verses about prayer. There is no rush! Ask/write down any questions you might have...linger, wait, listen, breathe...

Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 5:16 – 18)

But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. (Matthew 6:6)

At all times, pray by the power of the Spirit. Pray all kinds of prayers. Be watchful, so that you can pray. Always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. (Ephesians 6:18)

Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. (Mark 11:24)

Praying Scripture

A simple method for praying through any Scripture:

- Spend some time quieting your mind and directing your heart, in love, towards the Holy Spirit.
- Choose a passage in scripture, begin to read it and pray it back to God silently. Focus your prayer on/with the Holy Spirit within you.
- Don't forget to *have a conversation* with God about His word!
- It can be helpful to make a list of questions about the passage or verses. Ask Him about the "who, what and how."
- Remain on a phrase as long as you want to with the Lord- there is no rush! Stay with what the Holy Spirit is revealing to you. You can write it down or even record a voice memo.
- As the Holy Spirit moves, move slowly through the passage and enjoy with curiosity and wonder as the Lord teaches you through His word.

Repentance

turning or returning towards...

Here is an example of a prayer of repentance based in Scripture. You can pray this one, or write one from your own heart/mind. You can find other topics of prayer in scripture and use this format, or one from the previous pages.

Families can write their own prayer together, draw a picture of what/how they are experiencing the Scripture, or even compose a song or poem. There is no "box," just follow the Spirit.

1 John 1:9

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Father, You are forever faithful and I am thankful for Your steadfast love and faithfulness toward me. I confess that I have not been faithful in all things and I have committed sins against You. Lord, I am sorry. I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway (Romans 7:19). Father, I repent for my sins. I purposefully and intentionally turn away from my sins and, with the power of Your Holy Spirit living within me, I walk toward and pursue holiness. Thank You, Father, that through Jesus Christ, you forgive me and cleanse me from all unrighteousness. Your mercy endures forever! Guard me, Lord, from repeating these sins so that my life may glorify you and bring others into the knowledge of you.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Don't Stop Now

What wings are to a bird, and sails to a ship, so is prayer to the soul.

Corrie Ten Boom

What you have accomplished with Jesus in these pages is part of the discipline of prayer- which is *never* without everlasting rewards. He is your ultimate reward, but there are benefits to your salvation He wants to enjoy with you here on the earth! Prayer is the special, secret place God wants to share with you. He wants to walk with you and your family, your friends, your church and community. From this foundation, it's our prayer that the Holy Spirit will continue to move in your heart and mind, move in your relationships, as you draw near to the One you love. From this place- seeking Him first- all other things will be added unto you. Peace, rest, joy, harmony in your relationships, abounding grace, mercy and faithfulness will take root in your life and the evidence of God's grace will be all over you. The gospel will go forward in your life because you can't help sharing the glory of Jesus!! *Remember: you are not working to earn your place in God's family- you were crafted in the Image of the Invisible God, set apart for good works in Christ Jesus, and made for intimacy with Him. **Don't stop now!*** All of heaven is rooting for you- the great cloud of witnesses cheering you on- towards the goal of closeness with Jesus and a life on fire with His gospel. The Prayer Ministry is here to support you in this eternal pursuit of the Beautiful One- your church family believes in the story God is writing with your life. Don't stop now!!!

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