

Prayer Guide – Summer 2020

“Come close to God, and God will come close to you.” James 4:8a

Practical Tips

- **Set aside a range of time to focus on being with God and to pray.** You could set aside 30 minutes, an hour, or even part of a day. Pray on your own or with others (friends, family, groups you’ve been part of through church, etc.).
- **Choose a place that will allow you to minimize distractions.** A practical tip: turn your phone notifications and alarms to “do not disturb.” Remember, no matter how well we plan, distractions happen! When they do, don’t beat yourself up. Simply return your focus to God.
- If you’re physically able to do so, **determine a time from which to fast from food.** Fasting (abstaining from food or another important part of our lives) serves as a focusing reminder that we need God and His Word more than anything else. If you cannot fast from food, consider other ways to better focus on God during your prayer time.
- Remember that God loves you and that He invites you to meet with Him!

PAUSE

“Be still and know and know that I am God.” Ps 46:10

“Be still...”

Take a few moments to be silent and still, moving your attention from whatever has been on your mind so far today and turning your whole focus to being with God right here and now.

- Take 5 - 10 minutes to be completely silent.
- Take a few moments after you’ve been silent to talk to God/journal about your honest expectations, hopes, fears, desires for this prayer time.

“And know that I am God.”

Spend several minutes focusing on who God is and what He’s done.

- List as many things about God that you can. Talk to Him about who He’s been for you.
- If you’re outside, take a walk and notice the beauty and detail of His creation.
- Let yourself express specific gratitude to God for the blessings in your life.
- Read [Psalm 103](#) and let the words become part of your prayer.

REFLECT

When people met and talked with Jesus in the Bible, their up-close encounters with Him were life-changing! [Read through John 3 and 4 – noting these remarkable conversations Jesus had with people.](#)

Read slowly, resist the urge to glance over familiar passages and read these chapters several times, pausing to invite God to speak to you through His Word.

- What do you observe? What do you notice about Jesus?
- What questions do you want to ask Jesus?
- Where do you see yourself in these stories?
- What do you sense God saying to you? Let your conversation with Him be real and honest!

ASK

“Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.” Matthew 7:7-8

Jesus tells His followers to keep on asking Him for the things on our hearts and minds. Take some time to do that!

Consider praying for our community during this season:

- For the needs of our Springfield and central Illinois community
- For our church community—as we meet on our campus, in homes, and online this summer—that we would be united
- For our brothers and sisters from other churches throughout our region
- For our leaders—those in our church community, in positions of leadership locally and nationally—to lead with love and wisdom
- For leaders and educators in our schools as they prepare for the fall
- For local business owners and employers adapting and navigating unique challenges
- For those who serve the under-resourced and those on the margins
- For health care workers as they care for those who are sick and in need of care
- For our workplaces and neighborhoods
- For our families and friends

YIELD

“He must become greater and greater, and I must become less and less.” John 3:30

This year and the uncertainty we’ve experienced already has us in a unique posture where the future is less clear than perhaps it usually is.

As you prepare to end your time of focused prayer, take some time to surrender to God—asking Him to lead and guide you, especially in the coming weeks.

“My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it. Therefore will I trust you always, though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.” –Thomas Merton

Additional Prayer Ideas for This Season:

- Take a prayer walk or prayer drive around our community. Pause as you notice places and people for which you want to pray (examples: schools, offices, businesses, community services, etc.). Ask God to show you how you can encourage God’s will to be done throughout our community.

Pray, “Holy Spirit, come and fill this place. Turn every heart toward you.

Help me to be an instrument of your peace.

God, may Your Kingdom come, Your will be done here on earth as it is in heaven.”

- In recent months, our community and country have been paying extra attention to lamenting and grieving racial injustice. A guide for prayer that we used as a staff and as a church community with these themes in mind is available here:

<http://www.wschurch.org/content/pdf/prayerguidejune4.pdf>