



Pray in Community:

Good Shepherd weekly prayer gathering

Every Sunday at 9:15 am in Room 2

Good Shepherd UMC

Prayer Guide

A resource to help your prayer life grow.

Praying with the Lord's Prayer

Read or recite the prayer slowly, taking time to reflect on each phrase.

**Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be your name**

Adoration

**Your kingdom come
Your will be done, on earth as in heaven**

Surrender to God's will

Give us today our daily bread
Supplication - asking God for help or guidance

Forgive us our trespasses
Confession

As we forgive those who trespass against us
Commitment to follow

And deliver us from evil
Supplication

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now
and forever. Amen.**
Adoration and Praise

Pray the Psalms

Augustine of Hippo said, *“If the psalm prays, you pray. If the psalm laments, you lament. If the psalm exalts, you rejoice. If it hopes, you hope. If it fears, you fear. Everything written here is a mirror for us.”*

Much like praying with the Lord’s Prayer, allow the Psalms to provide a framework for your time of prayer.

Use the words directly:

- Read a psalm aloud, slowly and thoughtfully, and say "Amen" to the words you are reading.
- Let the psalm's words become your own, responding to its laments or praises as if they were your own feelings.

Rephrase the words:

- Paraphrase a psalm or a verse into your own words to make it a personal prayer.
- Condense a phrase into a short, repeatable breath prayer, such as "But I cry to you" (inhale) and "for help, O Lord" (exhale).

Meditate on the Psalms:

- Read a psalm and spend time reflecting on its message and its meaning for your life.

Resources Used:

Lord’s Prayer: A Disciple’s Path Workbook, Chapter 2, Page 32

Praying the Psalms:

<https://www.upperroom.org/resources/praying-the-psalms>

A.C.T.S.: A Disciple’s Path and A Disciple’s Path Workbook

Five Finger Prayer: A Disciple’s Path and A Disciple’s Path Workbook;
Image - Children’s Illustrated Ministry

Centering Prayer:

<https://www.contemplativeoutreach.org/centering-prayer-method/>

Lectio Divina: A Disciple’s Path and A Disciple’s Path Workbook;
<https://bustedhalo.com/ministry-resources/lectio-divina-beginners-guide>

SOAPY: A Disciple’s Path and A Disciple’s Path Workbook

Breath Prayer:

<https://www.curateministries.org/curateblog/2020/4/3/breath-prayer-for-when-you-dont-have-many-words>;

<https://www.upperroom.org/resources/the-breath-prayer>

Daily Examen: <https://pcusa.org/resource/examen>

Praying in Color: From: <https://prayingincolor.com/praying-in-color>

A.C.T.S.

“Note that ACTS does not include listening. You might set aside time to hear God through silence, journaling, solitude, or to experience other methods of prayer that cultivate silence and solitude.” A Disciple’s Path Workbook, pg 35

A - Adoration

“Prayer begins not with who we are or what we want from God but with who God is and what God wants for us.” - A Disciple’s Path, pg 29

Example: Pray with a psalm, sing a hymn, or praise God in your own words for who God is.

C - Confession

“Confession is the way we face the hard truth about who we are and where we are in our discipleship.” A Disciple’s Path, pg 30

Questions to ask (from Charles Wesley):

- Was I really present and sincere during prayer and in church?
- Did everything I said or did today glorify God?
- Did I give thanks to God after a moment of joy?
- Have I been active and enthusiastic about doing what good I can?
- Did I lose my temper or seem angry?
- Did I think or say anything unkind about someone else?

T - Thanksgiving

Express gratitude for what God has done.

Example: Begin with the words “Thank you, Lord for” and fill in the blanks.

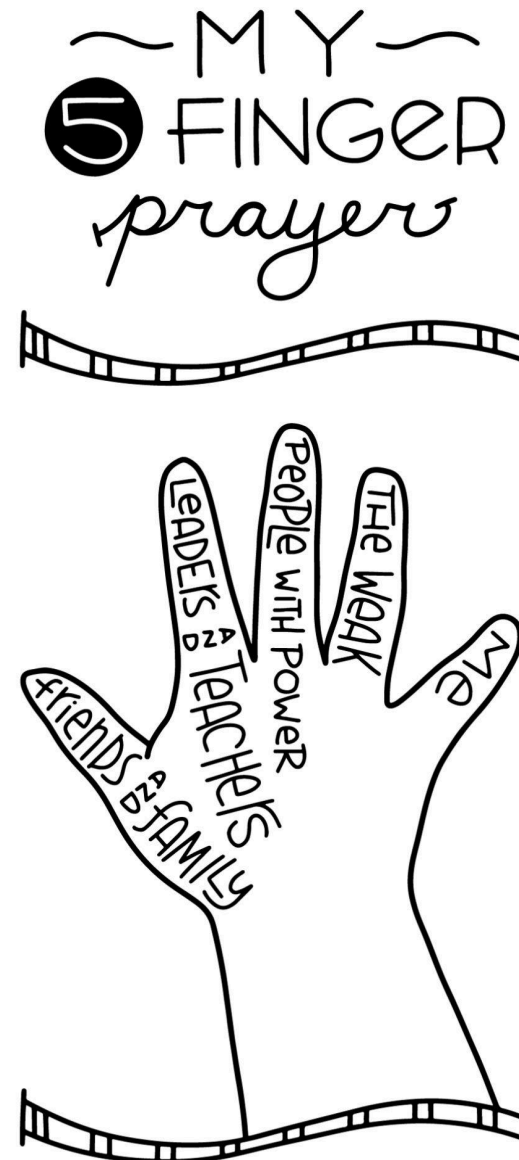
S - Supplication

“Another word for supplication is intercession...Intercession is the way we draw the very real concerns of our lives and the world into the presence of God and invite God to be at work in them through us.” A Disciple’s Path, pg 31

Example: Ask God to meet the needs of yourself and others, including prayers for family, friends, and people suffering around the world.

Five Finger Prayer

The five-finger prayer method uses the fingers of the hand as a guide to pray for different groups of people.



Thumb: Pray for those closest to you, such as family and friends.

Index finger: Pray for those who point you to God. This may include your pastor, prayer partners, members of your small group or Sunday School class, church leaders, and so forth.

Middle finger: As the longest finger, pray for leaders in the church and the world. This may include our Bishop and District Superintendent, government leaders, or business leaders.

Ring finger: The weakest finger reminds us to pray for the sick, the poor, and those in need.

Pinky finger: The smallest finger reminds us to pray for our own needs- keeping ourselves in proper perspective.

Centering Prayer

Centering Prayer is a receptive method of silent prayer that deepens our relationship with God.

Set a timer. You may want to start with five or ten minutes, gradually increasing the length of time. Sit comfortably and allow yourself to relax. Close your eyes or lower your gaze. Focus on your breathing.

Decide on a word or phrase to be your focus during this time. It may be something like love, peace, joy, Jesus, Holy Spirit, or a short scripture verse.

Invite the mystery of God's presence to be with you in this time of Centering Prayer.

With your body and mind settled, silently say the sacred word or phrase. Allow it to be the only thought in your mind. This is not a mantra you repeat over and over; rather, it is a word you use to bring your mind back into focus as distracting thoughts, sensations, or experiences arise.

At the end of the prayer period, sit in silence with your eyes closed for a couple more minutes. Feel gratitude for the opportunity to experience the gift of God's presence in the stillness.

Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina, an ancient form of prayer, was first introduced by St. Gregory of Nyssa (c 330-395). Lectio Divina translates to "Divine Reading". Choose a passage of scripture (1-5 verses long) and read the passage slowly and reflectively four times. The daily lectionary, the Psalms, or the Gospels are good places for reflection. Set aside at least 30 minutes.

Preparation: Sit quietly for a few moments, being mindful of God's presence. You may find lighting a candle helpful to centering and stilling your mind. Begin with a short prayer of understanding; one can be found each Sunday in the bulletin.

Lectio (Read): Read the passage aloud, very slowly. Just focus on the context of the passage. Sit in silence for a few moments.

Meditatio (Reflect): Read the passage again. Notice words or phrases that stand out. Re-read verses as they draw your attention, sitting with the words. Once you have finished, take time to reflect on what you hear God saying.

Oratio (Respond): Read the passage very slowly, stopping on the words or phrases that stand out. Say the word or phrase aloud and begin to reflect on it.

- Why did it strike my heart?
- How pertinent is it to my life?
- How is God calling me to respond?
- Are there actions I am being called to take?

If you would like, take a moment to journal by writing the word or phrase and recording how it speaks to you.

Contemplatio (Rest): After the final reading, sit in silence. This is a time to rest in God's presence. When your mind wanders, gently bring it back using the word or phrase. Close with a prayer of thankfulness focused on what God has spoken to you during this time.

SOAPY

A method for biblical reflection and prayer that stands for Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer, and Yielding. It's a way to engage with a Bible passage to understand its meaning, apply it to your life, and communicate with God about it. This method is used with journaling.

Scripture: Write the verse you have chosen as a lesson for the day.

Observation: Analyze the passage. Ask yourself what you notice, what jumps out at you, and what the main message is.

Application: Ask God how this passage applies to your own life. What is He revealing to you, and what action step should you take?

Prayer: Write out a prayer to God based on your reflections. You can ask for guidance, wisdom, or the strength to apply the truth you've learned.

Yielding: Ask yourself, "What must I yield to God in order for this lesson to come alive?" This step is about consciously surrendering your will to God's will and taking an action step based on the passage.

Breath Prayer

This is a prayer practice that Christians have observed for centuries, dating back to the Desert Fathers and Mothers of the 4th century. One of the most famous breath prayers is called the "Jesus Prayer": "Lord Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner." The earliest explicit reference to the Jesus Prayer is found in the *Discourse on Abba Philimon* from the Philokalia, dating back to around AD 600.

Take a few full breaths. Breathe in, slowly and deeply. Let your lungs and abdomen fill with each breath. Pay attention to your body, heart, mind, and spirit at this moment. Breathe in the Holy Spirit, and breathe out any anxieties or worries.

Breathe in again, and as you do, call upon a name for God.

Breathe out, and with your breath, pray the second half of your prayer.

Repeat your prayer of the heart several times, following the rhythms of your breath.

Examples of Breath Prayers:

"Lord, have mercy" (the Kyrie Eleison)

"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner." (The Jesus Prayer)

"Holy Spirit, fill me." (Marjorie Thompson, Soul Feast)

"My God... and my All." (Saint Francis)

Praying in Color

An intersection of prayer and doodling is a visual, active, meditative, and playful way to pray. For those who struggle to sit in stillness, this can be a powerful method of intercessory prayer.

1) Write your name for God on a piece of paper. Draw a shape around it or just start to doodle. Let your pen take you for a walk. The drawing becomes a prayer space, a small prayer closet.



2) Add marks and shapes. Focus on the name you chose. Ask God to be part of your prayer time. If words come to you, pray them; if not, rest in the silence. Think of each stroke as a nonverbal prayer.



3) To pray for a person, write their name somewhere else on the page. Draw around the name. Add color. Keep drawing as you release the person into God's care.



4) Add other people to your drawing. Think of each stroke of your pen as a prayer for them. Take a breath or say "Amen" between each person.



You can also use this method to pray a verse of scripture: write out the passage and as you reflect, write or draw the words or phrases that come to your mind.

Daily Examen for End of Day

Church Father Ignatius urged that all be taught the Examen, a daily reflection on our responses to the events of the day. Our responses to daily events fall into two categories: our consolations (what connects us with God, others, and ourselves) and desolations (what disconnects us). Ignatius believed that God would speak to us through these two feelings. The prayer of Examen takes about fifteen minutes and involves three parts. Find a place where you can relax and be comfortable.

1. Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance in looking back over the day for moments of grace.
 - a. Ask yourself:
 - i. When did I give and receive the most love today?
 - ii. When did I feel the most alive?
 - iii. When did I have the greatest sense of belonging— to myself, to others, to creation, and to God?
 - iv. If I could relive one moment, which one would it be?
 - b. Ask yourself what was said and done in that moment.
2. Allow the Holy Spirit to search your heart as you recall moments in the day in which you sensed the absence of grace.
 - a. Ask yourself:
 - i. When did I feel the life draining out of me?
 - ii. When did I have the least sense of belonging?
 - iii. Where did I lack joy or peace?
 - iv. What was the low point?
 - v. When was I least able to give and receive love?
 - b. Be with whatever you feel without trying to change or fix it in any way.
 - c. Take a deep breath and acknowledge God's love for you, just as you are.
3. Give thanks for whatever you have experienced.
 - a. Consider where God is calling you to grow. Accept the gift of God's relentless tenderness.