



Return and Rediscover

Week 1: Prayer

OPENING PRAYER:

Lord, as we enter this first week of our Lenten journey, guide us on the path that leads to you. Fill our hearts with gratitude, patience, strength and peace. Help us to grow closer to you this Lent through the practice of prayer. In your name we pray, Amen.

Quote:

Any concern too small to be turned into prayer is too small to be made into a burden. -Corrie Ten Boom

SOMETHING TO PONDER:

Think about a time when someone stepped in and helped you when you had a need. How did this affect your situation?

WRESTLING WITH THE WORD:

Read Romans 8: 26-27

- What specific weakness is Paul addressing?
- Why does Paul include this phrase, "who searches our hearts"? Why is that important?
- These two verses are part of a longer section on suffering. How are these verses helpful to those who are suffering? How can they help you when ministering to suffering people?

Next Steps:

- What is the primary obstacle to your prayer life? How can you overcome it?
- Was there a time when you wanted to pray and just couldn't?
- If God knows our needs and the Spirit is praying for us, why do we need to pray?

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:

Listen God to my prayer! Don't reject my request. Please listen and help me. I ask for your help, Lord God, and you will keep me safe. Morning, noon and night you hear my concerns and my complaints. Our Lord, we belong to you. We tell you what worries us, and you won't let us fall. We place our needs before you in prayer, we trust you, oh Lord. Amen. (Based on Psalm 55: 1-2, 16-17, 22)

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Week 2: Scripture

OPENING PRAYER:

Lord, as we enter the second week of our Lenten journey, guide us on the path that leads to you. Fill our hearts with gratitude, patience, strength and peace. Help us to grow closer to you this Lent through the practice of meditating on scripture. In your name we pray, Amen.

Quote:

I want the whole Christ for my Savior, the whole Bible for my book, the whole Church for my fellowship and the whole world for my mission field. -John Wesley

SOMETHING TO PONDER:

What is something that really delights you? What adjectives would you use to describe how this makes you feel?

WRESTLING WITH THE WORD:

Read Psalm 1:1-3

- What is the difference between reading, studying and meditating on scripture?
- Does the phrase "law of the Lord" connote something different than God's word or scriptures?
- What are the promises offered to one who meditates on God's word?

Next Steps:

- What feeds you spiritually? How has that kept you rooted in your faith?
- What are some personal challenges you face in delighting and meditating on God's Word?
- This psalm points out the things one needs to avoid as well as the things one needs to do to live a blessed life. How might you specifically apply this advice to your life?

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:

Oh Lord, I will study your teachings and follow your footsteps. I will take pleasure in your laws and remember your words. Treat me with kindness so that I may live and do what you say. Open my mind and let me discover the wonders of your law. Let your teachings breathe new life into me. I am eager to learn all that you want me to do; help me to understand more and more. Please, Lord, hear my prayer and give me the understanding that comes from your word. Amen. (Based on Psalm 119: 15-18, 25, 32,169)

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Week 3: Fasting

OPENING PRAYER:

Lord, as we enter the third week of our Lenten journey, guide us on the path that leads to you. Fill our hearts with gratitude, patience, strength and peace. Help us to grow closer to you this Lent through the practice of fasting. In your name we pray, Amen.

Quote:

Fasting must forever center on God. More than any other discipline, fasting reveals the things that control us. -Richard Foster

SOMETHING TO PONDER:

Is there something in your life that you can't imagine living without?

WRESTLING WITH THE WORD:

Read Matthew 6:16-18

- How is fasting different than dieting, or just abstaining from food?
- Why did the Pharisees want others to know they were fasting? Are there ways that we do the same? Why?
- What is the purpose behind this teaching? Do you think Jesus expects his followers to fast?

Next Steps:

- Many are apprehensive about fasting as a spiritual discipline. What could fasting do for you if you occasionally practiced it?
- Often during Lent, Christians "give up" something. Is this the same as fasting? Why or why not?
- Fasting offers us an opportunity to focus on God. What things distract you from time with Jesus?

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:

Save me oh God, for I am sinking. Do not let those who hope in you be put to shame. I humble myself by fasting. My prayer reaches you at just the right time. God, in your great and faithful love, answer me with your certain salvation! I will praise you with song, I will magnify your name, for you listen to the needy. Amen. (based on Psalm 69:1,6-13)

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Week 4: Confession

OPENING PRAYER:

Lord, as we enter the fourth week of our Lenten journey, guide us on the path that leads to you. Fill our hearts with gratitude, patience, strength and peace. Help us to grow closer to you this Lent through the practice of confession. In your name we pray, Amen.

Quote:

A man who confesses his sins in the presence of a brother knows that he is no longer alone with himself; he experiences the presence of God in the reality of the other person. -Dietrich Bonhoeffer

SOMETHING TO PONDER:

If you could push delete and get rid of your mistakes, would you do so? Why or why not?

WRESTLING WITH THE WORD:

Read 1 John 1: 8-10

- To understand the benefits of confession, we need to understand the impact of sin. How does sin affect our lives and the lives of those around us?
- How do the verses about darkness and light (1John 1:5-7) relate to the practice of confession?
- The word "confession" in the Greek means "agree with." How does this relate to the practice of confessing one's sins?

Next Steps:

- Have you ever felt like you need to "clean up your life" before digging deeper into your faith?
- What draws you to confession of your sins to God? What holds you back?
- Often confession is practiced alone between God and ourselves; how might having an accountability partner change the practice of confession?

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:

You have looked deep into my heart, Lord and you know all about me. You know when I am resting or when I am working, and from heaven you discover my thoughts. Look deep into my heart, God, and find out everything I am thinking. We offer ourselves completely to you. Don't let me follow evil ways, but lead me in the way that time has proven true.

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Week 5: Worship

OPENING PRAYER:

Lord, as we enter the fifth week of our Lenten journey, guide us on the path that leads to you. Fill our hearts with gratitude, patience, strength, and peace. Help us to grow closer to you this Lent through the practice of worship. In your name we pray, Amen.

Quote

Praise and worship shouldn't be a few hours of church service entertainment. It should be our heartbeat and should never depart our lips. 'Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song' (Psalms 95:2)." -Euginia Herlihy

SOMETHING TO PONDER:

Often people have "favorite" church services, such as Christmas Eve, Easter, worship on mission trips, youth services. What is your favorite and why?

WRESTLING WITH THE WORD:

Read Colossians 3:16-17

- What does worship look like in this scripture? How is this similar or different from your experience of worship?
- Considering these verses, why is corporate worship important?
- This scripture talks about peace of Christ ruling our minds and thanksgiving in our hearts. How is this tied to acts of worship?

Next Steps:

- How can we let the word of Christ richly dwell in us?
- How can we do everything as an act of worship?
- Paul is sharing the characteristics of a new life in Christ. How do we keep our worship from becoming mundane?

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:

With all my heart I praise the Lord, and with all that I am I praise God's holy name! With all my heart I praise the Lord! I will never forget how kind God has been. All of God's creation, come and praise your Lord! With all my heart I praise the Lord! Lord we offer to you our worship, may we never stop praising you. Amen (Based on Psalm 103:1-2,22)

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Week 6: Silence

OPENING PRAYER:

Lord, as we enter the final week of our Lenten journey, guide us on the path that leads to you. Fill our hearts with gratitude, patience, strength, and peace. Help us to grow closer to you this Lent through the practice of silence. In your name we pray, Amen.

Quote

Not all are called to be hermits, but all need enough silence and solitude in their lives to enable the deep inner voice of their own true self to be heard at least occasionally. -Thomas Merton

SOMETHING TO PONDER:

Would you rather have a quiet dinner with a few friends, or party with 100 friends?

WRESTLING WITH THE WORD:

Read Mark 1:35, Mark 6:30-32, Mat 14:13

- Throughout the gospels there are instances where Jesus slips out for some solitude and quiet. What created the challenges for Jesus to practice solitude and silence?
- Is there a difference between being alone and solitude?
- What was Jesus looking for in his time apart? Can something really be learned from spending time alone, from taking time in silence and solitude?

Next Steps:

- How often do you currently withdraw to a solitary place?
- Do you find it difficult to find "quiet time?" What are things that can either hinder or encourage this type of quality time?
- Finding a quiet place is not enough. What helps you quiet your mind, heart and soul?

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:

I will wait quietly as God alone can save me. I will depend upon the inner peace that God alone gives. I will place my security in God, my rock and my redeemer. I will wait calmly, despite circumstances all around me, I will trust, for God is my strength and my refuge. Amen. (Based on Psalm 62:5-8)