

SPIRITUAL FORMATION TOOLS · NO. 2

A Simple Morning Prayer

Psalm 5:3 · Five movements before the day gets its hands on you.

Most mornings, my phone gets my first thoughts before God does.

Alarm goes off, thumb finds the screen before my feet find the floor, and by the time I'm sitting up I've already absorbed the news, three texts, and somebody's vacation photos. God gets whatever's left over — which some days is nothing at all.

This is the second tool in our spiritual formation series at Restoration Church. The first was the Lord's Prayer — Jesus' framework for prayer itself. This one is smaller and more practical: five simple movements to walk through before the day gets its hands on you. It won't take more than five or ten minutes. It will change which voice you hear first.

You don't need special words. You need five honest questions and the willingness to sit with the answers.

“In the morning, LORD, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait expectantly.” — Psalm 5:3 (NIV)

HOW TO USE THIS

Before the phone. Before the coffee finishes brewing, if you can manage it. Find somewhere to sit — car, kitchen table, edge of the bed — and move through the five movements in order. Don't rush any one of them, but don't overthink them either. The first honest answer is usually the right one.

Some mornings this takes three minutes. Some mornings one question cracks something open and you stay there for twenty. Both are fine. This isn't a checklist to finish. It's a door to walk through.

1. Gratitude — What am I thankful for right now?

WHY

Whatever gets your attention first sets the tone for everything after it. Start with what's wrong and the day feels like a threat to survive. Start with what's good and true, and you walk into the day already standing on solid ground. This isn't positive thinking. It's aim.

HOW

Name three things — specific, not generic. Not “my family,” but the way your kid laughed at dinner last night. Not “my health,” but that your knees still let you get down on the floor with your grandkids. Specific gratitude sticks. Generic gratitude evaporates by the time you stand up.

PAUSE AND PRAY

“God, this morning I’m thankful for ____, ____, and ____.”

2. Honesty — What’s actually going on inside me?

WHY

God isn’t impressed by “I’m fine.” He already knows what’s underneath it. Let’s be honest — most of us have gotten so good at the polished version that we say it to God out of habit, not truth. Prayer isn’t a performance review. It’s a place to finally stop pretending.

HOW

Sit with it for a second before you name it. Not the surface word — the real one. Anxious about the meeting, or actually grieving something you haven’t said out loud yet. Tired, or actually resentful. Say the true word, even if it’s messy.

PAUSE AND PRAY

“God, if I’m honest, what’s really going on in me this morning is ____.”

3. Surrender — What do I need to release today?

WHY

Most of what wrecks a day isn’t what happens in it — it’s what we’re gripping too tight walking in. An outcome we can’t control. Somebody’s opinion of us. A fear about tomorrow that has no business showing up before breakfast. Surrender isn’t giving up. It’s opening your hand.

HOW

Name one specific thing — not “everything,” one thing. Then actually open your hands, palms up, as you say it. The body remembers what the mind forgets. Let it be a physical release, not just a mental note.

PAUSE AND PRAY

“God, today I’m releasing ____ into your hands instead of mine.”

4. Request — What do I need? What do others need?

WHY

Jesus told us to ask. Not to figure it out ourselves and report back — to actually ask. And prayer was never meant to be just about you. The people in your life are carrying things too, whether or

not they've said so. Naming their need in your prayer is a small act of love before your day even starts.

HOW

Name what you need today — practical or spiritual, doesn't matter which. Then name at least one other person and what they might need, even if it's just a sentence: “Be with my son in his interview today.”

PAUSE AND PRAY

“God, today I need _____. And would you meet _____ in their need for _____.”

5. Listening — Sit quietly. See if anything comes.

WHY

Prayer is a conversation, not a monologue — but most of us do all the talking and none of the listening, then wonder why it feels one-sided. This last movement isn't about performing stillness. It's about actually making room for God to get a word in.

HOW

Set a timer for sixty seconds if that helps. Close your eyes. Don't force words or expect a voice from the ceiling. Just notice what surfaces — a verse, a name, a picture, a sense of peace, or nothing at all. Nothing is a real answer too. Showing up to listen matters more than what you hear.

PAUSE AND PRAY

“God, I'm listening. Whatever you have for me, I'm here.”

This Week's Invitation

1. Walk through these five movements before you touch your phone, five mornings this week.
2. Keep a running list of what you're releasing in the Surrender step. Look back at it on Sunday.
3. Ask someone in your house or your circle what they need — then actually pray it, not just remember it.

Start there.

A Simple Prayer

God, meet me before the day does. Thank you for what's good and true. Here's what's real in me right now. Here's what I'm letting go of. Here's what I need, and what the people I love need. Now I'm listening. Amen.