



Journeying in Prayer through Lent

When we think about Lent, we often focus on “giving up” something. This Lenten season, we want to focus on giving our whole selves to God. What would it look like for us, this Lent, to intentionally seek to deepen our intimacy with Jesus? This guide offers a different method of prayer each week, with the goal that we might seek His face, spend time with Him, and know Him better.

“I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.” –Ephesians 1:17

You will notice that each week there are four prompts. Prompt 1 is for both Day 1 and 2 of that week. The intention is to use that prayer guide for BOTH days, not just one of the other. Our goal is not to move too quickly through these, but to linger a bit longer and go deeper.

Each week there is a recommendation for families with young children. Some weeks there are resources for those who want to dive deeper in their study.

Week 1 | Praying with Jesus

The disciples came to Jesus and had a very important and noteworthy request. The disciples didn't come to Jesus and say, after hearing the Sermon on the Mount, "Lord, teach us to preach." They didn't come to Jesus, after one of Jesus' many healings, and say, "Lord, teach us to heal." But they did come to Jesus, and say, "Lord, teach us to pray." May that be our posture this Lenten season, and with the disciples, say, "Lord, teach us to pray."

- **February 23 & 24:** Read Luke 11:1-4. Use the Lord's Prayer as your guide, in prayer today. Don't just recite it; pause and pray at each phrase. It may be helpful to read in another translation you are less familiar with to help you hear this familiar prayer in a fresh way.
 - Reflection: Which specific line of the Lord's Prayer feels most urgent or difficult for you to say today?
- **February 25 & 26:** Read Luke 11:5-13. Jesus tells us to be "shameless" in our asking. Set aside several minutes to "knock" on God's door regarding a long-standing request you've nearly given up on.
 - Reflection: Do I stop asking because I don't want to "bother" God, or because I'm afraid He will say no?
- **February 27 & 28:** Read Luke 10:21. Jesus "full of joy in the Holy Spirit." Spend your prayer time today exclusively on gratitude and "Thank Yous." Do not ask for a single thing; simply list the ways God has been kind.
 - Listen: "Thank You" – The Porter's Gate
 - Reflection: If you woke up tomorrow with only the things you thanked God for today, what would you have left?
- **March 1:** Read Luke 10:38-42: As we seek to rest in Jesus, on this Sabbath day, may we intentionally choose what is "better" and rest in Him, at his feet.
 - Reflection: What has you distracted right now in life? Practice laying your distractions down as you focus on Jesus.

Idea for Children & Families: Read the story of Jesus blessing the children (Mark 10:13-16). Set an empty chair at the dinner table. Explain that Jesus is always present. Let each person say one thing they want to tell Him about their day.

Deeper Dive: Spend time reflecting on this quote: "The purpose of prayer is not to get *something*, but to get *someone* – intimacy with the Lord is to be our pursuit in prayer."

Week 2 | Praying with Scripture

Sometimes our own words run dry. This week, we use the Bible as our prayer script & guide. The Psalms, in particular, give us words to sing and words to pray. We aren't just reading *about* God; we are talking *to* Him using His own words.

- **March 2 & 3:** Read Psalm 23. Repeat it verse by verse, out loud 3 times. Pray it as a declaration of trust. Repeat parts of this Psalm throughout the day.
 - Reflection: In what area of your life are you currently acting like a "sheep without a shepherd"?
- **March 4 & 5:** Read Psalm 13. This is a "complaint" prayer. Pray your own version. Start with "How long, O Lord?" and be brutally honest about your frustrations. End by choosing to trust in His unfailing love.
 - Reflection: Does it feel "wrong" to be frustrated with God? Why might He want to hear your complaints?
- **March 6 & 7:** Pick a verse to pray that includes a promise (e.g. Isaiah 41:10). Turn it into a personal prayer: *"Father, You said You are with me, so I will not be dismayed today. Strengthen me as You promised."*
 - Reflection: Which of God's promises do you find the hardest to believe? Take some time to repeat the promise in prayer and ask the Lord for His help to trust Him fully in this area.
- **March 8:** Lectio-Divina: Read John 15:1-11 through 4 times. First time, read the passage through. Second time, as you read, look for a word or passage that particularly stands out to you. Third, spend time with that word or phrase, and ask God to unfold His word to you. Fourth, sit in the Lord's presence with how the passage spoke to you.
 - Listen: "Speak, O Lord" by Keith & Kristyn Getty
 - Reflection: What is one "dead branch" in your life that God might be asking to prune so you can grow?

Children/Family: Read Psalm 23 slowly, as a family, have your children draw the scene. Ask: "Where is Jesus in your drawing?" & have them memorize verse 1.

Week 3 | Ancient Prayers

This week, we will lean into the prayers and practices of those who came before us. Their words and ideas can provide a framework for prayer, especially when our own hearts are heavy or distracted.

- **March 9 & 10:** Choose a hymn/song such as "Rock of Ages" or "How Deep the Father's Love for Us." Read the lyrics aloud as a spoken prayer. Focus on the theology (Who God is) in the verses.
 - Reflection: Which lyric do you want to hold near to you today?
- **March 11 & 12:** Pick one of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17) and turn it into:
 1. An instruction, 2. A thanksgiving, 3. A confession, and 4. A petition.
 - Reflection: How does using a "structure" like this inform or change the way you feel while praying?
- **March 13 & 14:** Use a written liturgy (like the *Book of Common Prayer*, available at bcponline.org). Realize that millions of believers are saying these exact words with you.
 - Reflection: How does it change your perspective to know you aren't praying alone, but with the whole Church?
- **March 15:** Read this quote from Henri Nouwen on solitude: "We enter into solitude first of all to meet our Lord and to be with him and him alone. Only in the context of grace can we face our sin; only in the place of healing do we dare to show our wounds; only with a single-minded attention to Christ can we give up our clinging fears and face our own true nature."
 - Set a timer for 10 minutes and simply sit in communion with Jesus. Use a phrase like "The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing" or "Jesus, my hope and salvation" to gently bring your mind back whenever it wanders.
 - Reflection: What is the "loudest" distraction that keeps popping up when you try to be silent? Ask Jesus to help you keep your mind stayed on Him as you pray.

Children/Family: Choose a worship song that your kids love. Sing it together as a gift from God and a prayer to God.

Deeper Dive (Reading): *Prayer in the Night* by Tish Harrison Warren

Week 4 | Praying Without Ceasing

We often limit prayer to an official quiet time, before meals, or at church services. This week, we want to open our awareness to God's presence with us in our everyday lives. The prayer practices this week help us keep the connection with God open all day long.

- **March 16 & 17:** Practice the ancient rhythmic prayer: *"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me."* Say it while walking, driving, or waiting in line. Let the words match your breath.
 - Reflection: What reminds & encourages you to return your mind to God throughout the day?
- **March 18 & 19:** Place a Post-it note with Psalm 46:10, "Be still, and know that I am God..." somewhere (on your desk or mirror, or elsewhere). Every time you see it, take one big breath—inhaling His peace, exhaling your anxiety – and reminding yourself of the truth of that verse.
 - Reflection: Think of a normal part of your schedule during which you routinely forget about God. How would it transform your day if you invited God's presence into this part of your schedule? What might remind you to pause and set your heart on Him?
- **March 20 & 21:** While performing a mundane chore (washing dishes, folding laundry, etc.), pray for the Lord to meet you in the mundanity of that task.
 - Reflection: Can you see mundane work as an act of worship? Why or why not?
- **March 22: The Daily Examen.** Before bed, review each aspect of your day with God. Where did you feel His "warmth" and nearness? Where did you feel "cold" or distant from Him?

Children/Family: Everyone kneels by the bed for 2 minutes of prayer. It's a physical reminder that we are small and God is big.

Deeper Dive (Reading): *The Practice of the Presence of God* by Brother Lawrence.

Reflection for the week: What was one thing you tried this week that reminded you to turn to God? Ask the Lord's help to continue this practice.

Week 5 | Praying using our own Words

We move into using our own words to pray, this week, and seek to talk to Jesus as our closest friend. Here we can focus on our specific hurts, and our specific hopes. We will use some established frameworks to help us in forming our prayers using our own words.

- **March 23 & 24:** Use the ACTS acronym to organize your heart: Adoration (God, You are...), Confession (I'm sorry for...), Thanksgiving (Thank You for...), Supplication (Help with...).
 - Reflection: Which of the four parts of ACTS do you usually skip, and why?
- **March 25 & 26:** Create your own short breath prayer. (e.g., Inhale: "*Father, you are...*" Exhale: "...*my refuge and strength.*") Use this prayer whenever you feel a spike of stress today.
 - Reflection: What is the "deepest sigh" or longing of your soul right now?
- **March 27 & 28:** Use the PRAY acronym to form your prayers today. Praise (Thank you for...) Repent (I confess that...) Ask (Help me with...) Yield (I surrender...).
 - Reflection: How does the Yield portion of this framework make you feel?
- **March 29:** Sit in silence and solitude for 5 minutes. Ask: "*Lord, what is one thing You want me to know about Your love for me?*" Don't rush to answer; just listen for a sense of peace or a thought.
 - Reflection: Was the silence uncomfortable? If so, what do you think made it that way? Write down your thoughts and requests to the Lord after this time with Him.

Children/Family Prayer Walk: Walk in your neighborhood or a park. Before you start off, pray for the Lord to be with you. Take turns pointing out the beauty and wonder of His creation and thanking Him.

Week 6 | Praying with and For Others

As we enter Holy Week, we remember that we are not alone - we are the Body of Christ. This week, we focus on intercession—carrying the burdens of our friends, our neighbors, and the world to the Cross – as well as praying with others.

- **March 30 & 31:** Text one person and ask, "How can I pray for you today?" When they reply, pray for them immediately & let them know that you did.
 - Reflection: How does it feel to carry someone else's burden, even for a few minutes?
- **April 1 & 2:** Walk or drive through your neighborhood. Pray for the people & families in each house. Pray for "the house with the red door", or "that neighbor who always walks their dog", etc.
 - Reflection: If West Side disappeared tomorrow, would our neighbors feel the loss of our prayers?
 - Reflection: Is there someone you know - family, neighbor or friend - who may not have anyone praying for them except you? Take time to pray for that person today.
- **April 3 & 4:** Open a news app or a map. Choose one crisis or country. Pray over that. Ask God to move in the hearts of those people.
 - Reflection: How can you bridge the gap between "the news" and "the Kingdom of God" in your prayers?
- **Easter Sunday:** Attend Easter service. Focus especially on the community of the church, and our voices raised together in prayer and praise.
 - Reflection: Where has Jesus met you during these 6 weeks of prayer? We are commanded to "ask, seek, and knock" but in an even greater sense, God himself is always seeking us, and knocking at the door of our hearts (Rev 3:20). As we move into the weeks ahead, continue to ask His grace to lead you into deeper knowledge of Him through prayer.

Children/Family: Have your kids make a card for a teacher or a friend. Pray for that person together - and have them give that card to that person.

Deeper Dive (Reading): *Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God*, by Timothy Keller.