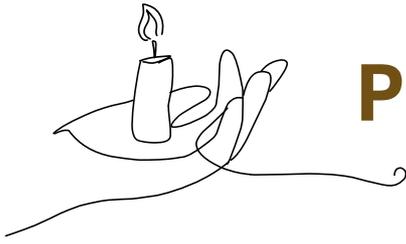


Meditating

IN

PRAYER



There is no right or wrong way to pray. For some it may be in quiet time at home, for others while taking a stroll through nature. Others still may enjoy talking to God regularly throughout the day. Whether writing, speaking, calling out or thoughtfully meditating, prayer is a vital part of our walk with God. In this guide are some prayerful activities which may help you as you consider the courageous love of Jesus, and all that this week means.

The prayer resources include the following:

- Pray continually
- Pray through the day
- Breath Prayers
- Prayer Prompts with artwork

You can find some of these prayers in *Prayer Matters* - a resource that seeks to inform, encourage, disciple and ensure that the UK and Ireland Territory is immersed in prayer.

You can download *Prayer Matters* each month from www.salvationist.org.uk/resources/discipleship/prayer-matters

PRAY CONTINUALLY

1 Thessalonians 5:17 commands us to ‘pray continually’. However, continually shouldn’t mean literally do nothing except pray. Rather, it should be an instruction to talk to God continually throughout the day. Esther Shin Chuang says:

‘Prayer should be less of a one-time event and more of a common and constant component throughout the day. When prayer becomes a regular rhythm of your life, it will feel like you are always praying.’

For more information and to dive more into what it means to pray continually, read Eather’s blog post at: <https://www.christianitytoday.com/2023/07/breath-prayer-busy-mom-spiritual-disciplines/>

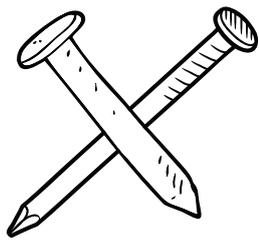
PRAY THROUGH THE DAY

When you see objects around your house or workplace, what thoughts or feelings do they spark in you? It may be that mundane daily items can be used to help you reflect on your walk with God. Each time you see one of these items, reflect on how God can use you, no matter your situation.



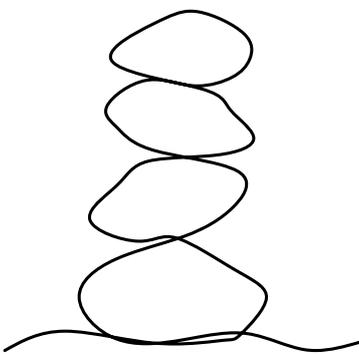
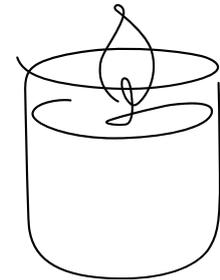
MIRROR - Who do you see when you look in the mirror? Society can persuade us who we are and we can lose sight of who we really are in God’s eyes. Our Creator’s words show us who we were created to be, and who we have always been. Pray that God will reveal to you who he says you are, and you will know your value and worth in him.

CUP - As you use a cup, think about the new covenant of Jesus' blood and the sacrifice he made for our salvation. Remember how his cup overflows with grace. May this Easter be a fresh start, knowing that through him we are forgiven and made whole.



NAILS - Nails hold so many things together around our house; yet this week we remember the suffering and pain they caused as Jesus was nailed to the cross. Pray for God's help to nail pride, selfishness and negativity to the cross, and instead embrace the freedom and forgiveness he offers.

CANDLE - Even a small candle, burning steadily, brings light to the darkness. How can you be a light in your setting? Pray that God would use you to bring light to your home, workplace, school or community.



STONE - Go outside in nature and find a stone. Stones often represent stability, strength and endurance. At Easter we rejoice in the rolled-away stone - Jesus has overcome death and risen again. Pray that during this time and beyond, God will be your strength and stability. Just as Jesus conquered death, pray for the strength to conquer the burdens you carry, and instead allow God to roll them away.

BREATH PRAYERS

Jesus said his words are 'full of the Spirit and life' (John 6:63). Jesus breathing the Holy Spirit into his disciples recalls the creation story when the Lord breathed his Spirit into Adam's dust-formed body and he became a living soul (Genesis 2:7). There's living power in the word of God!

To learn how to do a Breath Prayer, it's best to settle down in a quiet place where there are no distractions and then get still before God.

To begin, slow down your breathing and your heart rate.

Breathe in deep.

Hold your breath.

And then slowly exhale.



Think of it as if you're breathing in God's Spirit along with the oxygen in the air, knowing that the Holy Spirit is around you and inside of you.

As you hold your breath, embrace the awareness of his presence dwelling in you.

Then, as you exhale, release your worries, allowing yourself to rest in God's love and power.

To practise, you may wish to centre your mind on God's word. You may wish to use Psalm 46:10 (ESV) as a Breath Prayer: 'Be still, and know that I am God.'

Breathe in slowly and deeply as you whisper or think 'Be still and know that I am God.' Hold your breath, then exhale and repeat.

You may wish to use other short Scripture verses, or words of affirmation about God's love and promises to you as you rest in God's presence.

PRAYER PROMPTS WITH ARTWORK

Here you will find visual and written prayer prompts to meditate on. There is also a prayer for personal devotion time for each day of Holy Week, and how we can become more like him.

PALM SUNDAY - YOUR TRIUMPH



- Celebrate the Saviour, just as the crowds gathered to welcome, greet and praise Jesus upon his triumphant entry into Jerusalem.
- As you reflect on the crowds, pray for the strength to engage in worship fully, not just as passive observers but as active participants.
- Reflect on how you can boldly engage in praising God, not only in moments of celebration, but through the challenges you may face. Ask God to help your worship be more than a moment - it should be a lifestyle.

Heavenly Father, on this Palm Sunday, we come before you with hearts full of praise, remembering the triumphant entry of your Son, Jesus, into Jerusalem. We thank you for his sacrifice, his love, and his unwavering commitment to your will.

As we grasp our palms and triumphantly wave them as a symbol of our praise, Lord, we ask that you stop us simply standing by and observing. Instead, may we actively engage in worship with our whole lives. May our songs of adoration not just echo from our lips but resound in our hearts and in all that we do. Let our worship be a living, breathing expression of our faith, where our hands and feet follow where you lead.

MONDAY - YOUR FOCUS



- Consider Jesus going to the Temple and finding it had become a place of exploitation, greed, and distraction from its true purpose as a house of prayer.
- Reflect on the things in your life that may be a stumbling block to your walk with the Lord - the things that distract you and take away your attention.
- Instead focus on the things that enhance sincerity in worship and the sanctity of God's house.

Father, we come before you today acknowledging that our hearts are often distracted and our minds pulled in many different directions. Just as Jesus cleansed the Temple, we ask you to cleanse our hearts and reveal the areas in our lives where distractions, materialism, selfishness and worldly pursuits have taken priority over our relationship with you.

We ask that you refocus our attention on what truly matters. Teach us to honour your house, not just in a physical space but in our hearts, where your Spirit dwells. May we approach you with humility, reverence, and a desire to worship you in spirit and truth.

TUESDAY - YOUR STRENGTH



- Think about Jesus spending time on the Mount of Olives, urging his disciples to live with expectancy and faithfulness, and remain prepared for both the challenges ahead and the ultimate return of Christ.
- Pray for the inspiration to live a life of selfless love and service, and guidance on how to reflect the heart of Christ in all that you do.
- Take a moment to thank God for the times in your life when he has been your constant companion, both in moments of joy and in times of struggle, and how his unwavering presence has shaped your faith.

Loving God, thank you that you are with us through the peaks and troughs. In times of joy you are our strength, and in times of struggle you are our comfort. Help us to remain faithful to you, no matter what we face. Guide us to walk in your ways, trusting that you are with us always.

As we think about your sacrifice, we also trust that we can count on your promised return when we will join you for ever. Lord, stir in us the courage to take up our crosses daily, to walk with you through the highs and lows of life. Empower us to live out the message of love and humility that Jesus showed us.

WEDNESDAY - YOUR EXAMPLE



- Think about when Jesus and his disciples gathered for the significant Passover meal. It would have been a familiar practice for the disciples, yet Jesus gave the elements a whole new meaning to represent his sacrifice for the salvation of all.
- At that supper, Jesus gave the instruction to ‘love one another’, whilst showing welcome and grace to all, including Judas. Consider how this act of love and sacrifice calls us to remember his sacrifice and live in obedience.
- Pray for wisdom on how you can open your heart and reach out to others with the same inclusivity and compassion. Reflect on those to whom you may also be able to extend an invitation - perhaps someone new at your church, or a neighbour without family nearby.

Lord Jesus, as we reflect on the powerful moment when you gathered with your disciples for the Passover meal, we are humbled by how you offered your body and blood for the salvation of all. Thank you for being the ultimate Passover Lamb, whose death brings freedom from sin. In that sacred moment, you not only showed us the depth of your sacrifice but also called us to love one another, extending grace even to those who would betray you.

Help us to live in obedience to your command to love, offering welcome and compassion to all, just as you did. Grant us wisdom to open our hearts, to reach out with inclusivity, and to extend invitations to those around us who may need to experience your love. May we follow your example and reflect your love in every action.

THURSDAY - YOUR HUMILITY



- Contemplate the humble service of Jesus in washing the dirty feet of the disciples during the Last Supper.
- In the world, authority and leadership take the form of ruling over and domineering others. In stark contrast, Kingdom authority and leadership requires its citizens to humble themselves and serve others.
- Reflect on the importance of humility, selflessness and serving others, and consider how you can embody that same servant-hearted love in your own life.

Gracious God, as you humbled yourself by washing the feet of your disciples, you showed us the true heart of servant leadership and the power of humility. Teach us to follow your example, embracing selflessness and love in all that we do and serving others with a heart of grace.

Show us how to live sacrificially and extend ourselves to the poor, the outcast and those who suffer around the world. May we remember that true greatness in your Kingdom comes through serving, and let our lives reflect this radical love and humility.

GOOD FRIDAY - YOUR SACRIFICE



- Jesus was put on trial, then mocked, beaten, flogged and eventually crucified so that we may be forgiven.
- Consider the price of your redemption, remembering that Jesus' suffering and death were necessary for us all to be forgiven and reconciled to God. Take time to reflect on how his sacrifice calls you to live in gratitude, humility and obedience.
- Reflect on how Jesus' death was not the end, but the beginning of victory over sin, death and the grave, offering eternal life to all who believe. Pray for those who do not know about the eternal life and salvation that Jesus offers.

Father God, how can we thank you enough for the sacrifice of your Son on the cross of Calvary? We stand in awe of your incredible plan of salvation and are filled with joy, knowing that through Jesus we can have a relationship with you and live in your presence for ever.

Our hearts ache for those who don't yet know your truth, and we yearn for them to experience the redemption and new life that only Christ offers.

Today we pray for those still far from you, asking that the gospel would reach their ears and that their hearts would be softened, ready to receive the hope found in Jesus.

Thank you, Lord, for the sacrifice of Good Friday which helps us to experience the depth of your love and grace. Teach us all to call on your name as Jesus did, for we live by your strength not our own.

EASTER SATURDAY - YOUR PROMISES



- Reflect on the silence and waiting of Easter Saturday, as the disciples and followers of Jesus were in sorrow and uncertainty.
- Consider how God works even in the quiet moments of your life - through loneliness, grief and pain. Pray for strength when facing the darkness, and for hope to see the light that Christ offers.
- Meditate on the coming resurrection, the triumph over death, and how to prepare your heart to celebrate the new life we have in Christ through his victory over the grave.

Father God, help us to remember that us that even in dark times, God's promises are sure. Thank you for your unwavering presence which brings light to our path and peace to our hearts. When we feel lost or overwhelmed, remind us that you are near, walking with us through every trial and hardship. Help us to trust in your strength and find hope, knowing that you will never leave us, even in our darkest hours. Thank you that Jesus' death and burial are not the end, but the fulfilment of his promise of resurrection.

EASTER SUNDAY - YOUR RESURRECTION



- On Resurrection Sunday, celebrate the joy and power of Jesus' resurrection, which conquered death and sin, to give hope, new life and the assurance of eternal salvation.
- Thank God for the depth of his love for you, demonstrated in the resurrection, showing that nothing, not even death, can separate us from his love.
- Pray about the hope and transformation that Easter brings. Ask God to reveal anything that should be left in the darkness of the tomb so that you can step into the eternal salvation offered to you.

Our risen Saviour, on this Easter Sunday, we celebrate your resurrection, the ultimate victory over sin and death, and the assurance of eternal life through you. We thank you that through your sacrifice and triumph, our sins are forgiven, and we are made new in your grace.

Help us to live each day in the light of your resurrection, walking in the freedom and hope you have given us. May our hearts overflow with gratitude as we share this good news with others, reflecting your love and forgiveness to the world.

Amen.