

A PRAYER JOURNEY FOR LENT

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SETTING THE SCENE

Solemn or exciting? Reflective or active? Hands off or hands on? The answer? All the above and much more! Many Christians use Lent to intensify their prayer life or study passages in the Bible in more depth. Others give up something such as chocolate, meat, or carbs, while others give up watching TV, going to the gym, or social media.

There is also a growing movement throughout the world who are looking at Lent differently by carrying out 40 days of acts of generosity as a way of putting others first during preparations for Easter. Lent is a time of reflection, but also a time of creative action.

In this Lent Focus we will take a preparatory journey towards Easter as we remember the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Each day will feature a verse of Scripture, a question, a prayer and something to put into practice. There will be a pause on Sundays as we pray through a song, and during Holy Week we will follow Jesus' journey to the cross.

WEDNESDAY 22 FEBRUARY - LOOSEN THE CHAINS OF INJUSTICE

'Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?' (Isaiah 58:6). Is it time to change your focus from the things of the flesh to the things of the Spirit? Father, as I approach this most significant of events in Christian history, where you lived, died and rose again for me, I ask you to strengthen my focus on you and your amazing grace. Help me to take my eyes off ritual and tiresome actions, and place it firmly on the world around me that so desperately needs a Saviour. Amen.

In practice – Focus on one person you know who is struggling in some way. Give them a text or a call to ask how they are and let them know you are praying for them right now. Pray that focused prayer now using the words 'Set them free' in the prayer.



📅 THURSDAY 23 FEBRUARY - WAIT FOR THE LORD!

'Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord' (Psalm 27:14). How are your trust levels in God? Lord, as I wait for your answers, for your solutions, for your guidance, I commit to be strong. I take heart because you are always there and you always come through. Therefore I will wait for you with confidence and valour. I love you so much. In Jesus' name. Amen.

In practice – Practise spiritual waiting! If you are waiting for God to answer a prayer or you're waiting for him to act in a situation that you are frustrated with, focus your strength and your prayers on strength and confidence in the Lord. Don't let your mind tell you that God isn't there – he is. Pull up your trust levels and wait. He is coming!

📅 FRIDAY 24 FEBRUARY - LIFE TO THE FULL


'The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full' (John 10:10). Has the enemy robbed, killed and destroyed parts of your life? Have you considered that there is a full life waiting for you through the life, death and resurrection of the living Christ? Father God, I come to you with a commitment to switch my life from darkness to the light of your promise of life in all its fullness. Thank you, Jesus. Amen.

In practice – Stop what you are doing and go for a walk in nature, or go and spend some quality time with a loved one. Do something you have always wanted to do. Choose to claim the full life God has for you.

📅 SATURDAY 25 FEBRUARY - LONGING FOR GOD

'My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?' (Psalm 42:2). Are you thirsty for something more, for a real encounter with the living God? Lord, I am tired of the processes of church life. I long for a vibrant, real, living encounter with you. I am thirsty for more, Lord. I need healing, I need transformation in my own life, Lord. I long for you. Amen.

In practice – Go for a walk with Jesus. Tell him everything on your heart – even the mundane stuff, like what you bought at



the shops yesterday, what you want for dinner, what you think of your neighbour's new car. Commit to letting him into every aspect of your life, good or bad. Develop a lifestyle of prayer with him today.

 **SUNDAY 26 FEBRUARY**

As we pause today from the daily Lenten prayers and reflections, make the words of this song your prayer: 'Lord, make Calvary real to me, Lord make Calvary real to me; Open mine eyes to see victory in Christ for me; Lord, make Calvary real to me' (SASB 182).

 **MONDAY 27 FEBRUARY - JOY, PATIENCE, FAITHFULNESS**

'Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer' (Romans 12:12). How does your life reflect the virtues of joy, patience and faithfulness? Lord, thank you for the example in which you approached the most trying of times: with the hope of being with your Father for ever, patient in affliction as you suffered the inhumane ridicule of a godless society, and faithful in prayer even in the most challenging of times. Help me to live out these virtues in my current situation. Amen.

In practice – Write a poem to God using these three words: joy, patience, faithfulness.

 **TUESDAY 28 FEBRUARY - LETTING GO**

'...they take delight in lies. With their mouths they bless, but in their hearts they curse. Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from him' (Psalm 62:4-5). Is there a person or some people who seem to claim your attention negatively? Is it time to let them go and find restoration in God? Lord, I ask you to bless [name]. I commit [name] to you as I move on from the things that have bound me to [name]. I declare my freedom through Jesus Christ, my Lord and Saviour. Amen.

In practice – Write the person's name(s) on a card or piece of paper. Pray a blessing on them and place them in God's hand. Then screw up the paper and put it in the bin as a physical act of letting them go.

MARCH

WEDNESDAY 1 MARCH - HOPE

'I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope' (Psalm 130:5). What are your hopes and dreams? Are there any that you have given up on? Lord, thank you for the reminder this Easter that hope is alive. Revive my hopes and dreams, help me to pick them up and follow them for your glory. In Jesus' name. Amen.

In practice – Cut out a cross using card or paper. Write on it your hopes and dreams. Ask the Lord to ignite a realisation of them, starting right now.

THURSDAY 2 MARCH - FROM DUST TO DUST

'All go to the same place; all come from dust, and to dust all return' (Ecclesiastes 3:20). Have you shared your life story with anyone recently? Are you aware it hasn't ended and there is much more to come? Lord, thank you that my story, whatever it contains, is a powerful witness to your glory. Help me to share it with people as a testimonial to your grace and the victory you have secured for my life. Amen.

In practice – In your quiet time, reflect on your life story. Write or draw up an account of it to help you to get it straight in your mind so you are ready to share it when appropriate.

FRIDAY 3 MARCH - POWER OF SCRIPTURE

"...If you are the son of God, tell these stones to become bread." Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" (Matthew 4:3-4). Help me, Father, to arm myself with Scripture. Help me to learn it, live it and use it, especially when the heavy pull of temptation drags me down. Thank you, Jesus, for the amazing example of how we should resist temptation. I worship you beyond measure. Amen.

In practice – Switch off your phone, tablet or computer for an hour and use that time to find a passage of Scripture that grabs your attention and memorise it. Every time you feel temptation come, press pause and quote your learned Scripture.



 **SATURDAY 4 MARCH - DO NOT PUT GOD TO THE TEST**

'Then the devil took him to the holy city ... "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down." ... Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"' (Matthew 4:5-7). Here is the enemy trying to set a trap for the Lord, trying to test his written word. How much confidence do you really hold in the word of God? Lord, when I am tempted to question your word or even struggle to accept it, help me not to be tempted to test you. Bless me through your word, and may your Spirit bring it alive to me today. Amen.

In practice - Read Romans 12:9-21 slowly a few times and reflect on it. Evaluate your own thoughts and actions in light of this passage.

 **SUNDAY 5 MARCH**

As we pause today from the daily Lenten prayers and reflections, make the words of this song your prayer: 'Worthy is the Lamb seated on the throne. Crown you now with many crowns, You reign victorious. High and lifted up, Jesus, Son of God, the darling of Heaven, crucified. Worthy is the Lamb, Worthy is the Lamb' (SASB 201).

 **MONDAY 6 MARCH - RESISTING WORLDLY THINGS**

'Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."' (Matthew 4:8-11). What temptations do you struggle with? What worldly things are pulling strongly at your life? Father, thank you for your majestic resistance demonstrated for 40 days in the wilderness. I want to stand firm as you did. Strengthen me by your Holy Spirit. During this Lenten period, may 'All the vain things that charm me most be sacrificed to your blood' (Isaac Watts). In Jesus' name. Amen.

In practice - Find the lyrics to the hymn 'When I survey the wondrous cross' (SASB 208). Read them, pray them or listen to a recording of the song. Be blessed.

 **TUESDAY 7 MARCH - CLEANSING**

'Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded' (James 4:8). What is on our hands right now that we need to wash off spiritually, and what impurities are lurking in our hearts? Lord, as I draw near to you, I know you are drawing close to me. Lord, I want to be clean, I want to be purified in your presence. In this intimate moment, make me a better person. Give me a fresh perspective on everything. Thank you that I can be in your presence, Lord. Bless me in Jesus' name. Amen.

In practice - As you pray this prayer, rest your hands in a bowl of clean water.

 **WEDNESDAY 8 MARCH - THE GOODNESS OF GOD**

'I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living' (Psalm 27:13). What can I do to usher in the goodness of the Lord to my family, friends and community? Lord, how society needs you! Even the writer of this psalm longed to see your goodness in the world! Help me to bring in your goodness through the way I live and to all those I come across. Amen.

In practice - Visit your favourite coffee shop. Get your favourite drink. Then spend the next hour praying silently for everybody who comes in, including the staff.

 **THURSDAY 9 MARCH - REJOICING WITH GLADNESS**

'The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will ... rejoice over you with singing' (Zephaniah 3:17). How do you feel knowing that the Lord is rejoicing over you and you can experience renewal in his love? Lord, I celebrate what you did for me on the cross, with affection and with awe. I breathe in your gladness and worship and adore you. You are my life and my everything. Amen.

In practice - Play some worship music and feel the Lord's gladness upon you.



 **FRIDAY 10 MARCH - INVENTORY OF THE HEART**

“Even now,” declares the Lord, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.” Rend your heart and not your garments” (Joel 2:12,13). What are you bringing to the table in your walk with Jesus – your garments or your heart? Lord, show me as I pray what I am bringing to you. Is it true, is it my all? Help me to decipher the things that need to change from the things I can keep building on. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

In practice - Make that inventory! Reflect on it! Work on it!

 **SATURDAY 11 MARCH - HUMILITY BEFORE GOD**

‘Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time’ (1 Peter 5:6). Do you intentionally set out with humility? Lord Jesus, thank you for your magnificent example of humility. Strengthen me through your Spirit to humble myself under your mighty hand. Use my humility to touch the lives of others. Amen.

In practice - Do something for someone who comes to mind. Humbly bless them with a card, a phone call or a visit. Maybe send flowers or chocolates.

 **SUNDAY 12 MARCH**

As we pause today from the daily Lenten prayers and reflections, make the words of this song your prayer: ‘O, the wonderful cross, O, the wonderful cross bids me come and die and find that I may truly live. O, the wonderful cross, O the wonderful cross, all who gather here by grace draw near and bless your name’ (SASB 208).

 **MONDAY 13 MARCH - SET THINGS RIGHT**

“Come now, let us settle the matter,” says the Lord. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are as red as crimson, they shall be like wool” (Isaiah 1:18). Is there any unforgiveness in your heart right now? Lord, I recognise that unforgiveness towards myself and others brings pain and destruction all round. Thank you for the forgiveness that is found in Jesus. Help me to forgive others as I have been forgiven. Amen.

In practice - Think of anyone towards whom you may hold some unforgiveness. Reflect on the sacrifice of Jesus, and then write their names on a piece of paper and commit to praying for this relationship.

TUESDAY 14 MARCH - GOD'S CALLING

'While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them"' (Acts 13:2). Are you struggling with what the Lord is calling you to do? Are you longing for the Lord to clearly communicate his calling to you? Lord, please show me what Kingdom work you are calling me to. Amen.

In practice - Set aside some time today as a sacred act of focusing on God's presence and worshipping him. Listen for his voice, listen for his calling.

WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH - THE LORD WILL FIGHT

'The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still' (Exodus 14:14). Are you tired of 'fighting' and getting nowhere? Lord, forgive me for 'fighting' in my own strength. I place my feelings into your hands right now. This situation has dragged on and has drained me. Bless me, Lord, in the stillness. Strengthen my reserves. I declare that I know through his life, death and resurrection that Christ is alive and is fighting for me. In Jesus' name. Amen.

In practice - Find a quiet place and give yourself an hour of silence. Allow God to speak to you.

THURSDAY 16 MARCH - GOD SO LOVED ...

'For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life' (John 3:16). Have you stopped lately to consider the depths of the sacrifice that God made for humanity? Jesus, thank you for all you have done for me, especially taking my sin and shame to the cross and rising again so that I can live eternally both now and in Heaven. Amen.

In practice - Read this Scripture verse over and over today.



FRIDAY 17 MARCH - NO CONDEMNATION

'For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him' (John 3:17). Are you beating yourself up over something right now? Is it making it hard to engage with Jesus in prayer? Lord, I confess that at times I have let self-condemnation touch me. However, thank you for the reminder that you do not condemn me and that I am saved through the power of Jesus. Help me to come into your presence with everything, good and bad. Amen.

In practice – Write yourself an affirmation, such as 'In Christ I am not condemned!' Speak it out for however long you need to.



SATURDAY 18 MARCH - HOPE IN THE WILDERNESS

'Therefore I am now going to allure her; I will lead her into the wilderness and speak tenderly to her' (Hosea 2:14). When hope seems gone, to whom or to what do you turn? Father God, thank you for the hope and the restoration that you offer a sinful world through Jesus. I grasp your hand in the wilderness and walk through the door of hope you have set for me. Thank you for restoring to me the things that have been stolen in past struggles. Amen.

In practice - Find something in your house that is broken – maybe a watch that needs a new battery, or an ornament. You could even start a jigsaw puzzle. Whatever it is, as you put the pieces back together, reflect on the hope of restoration that God offers.



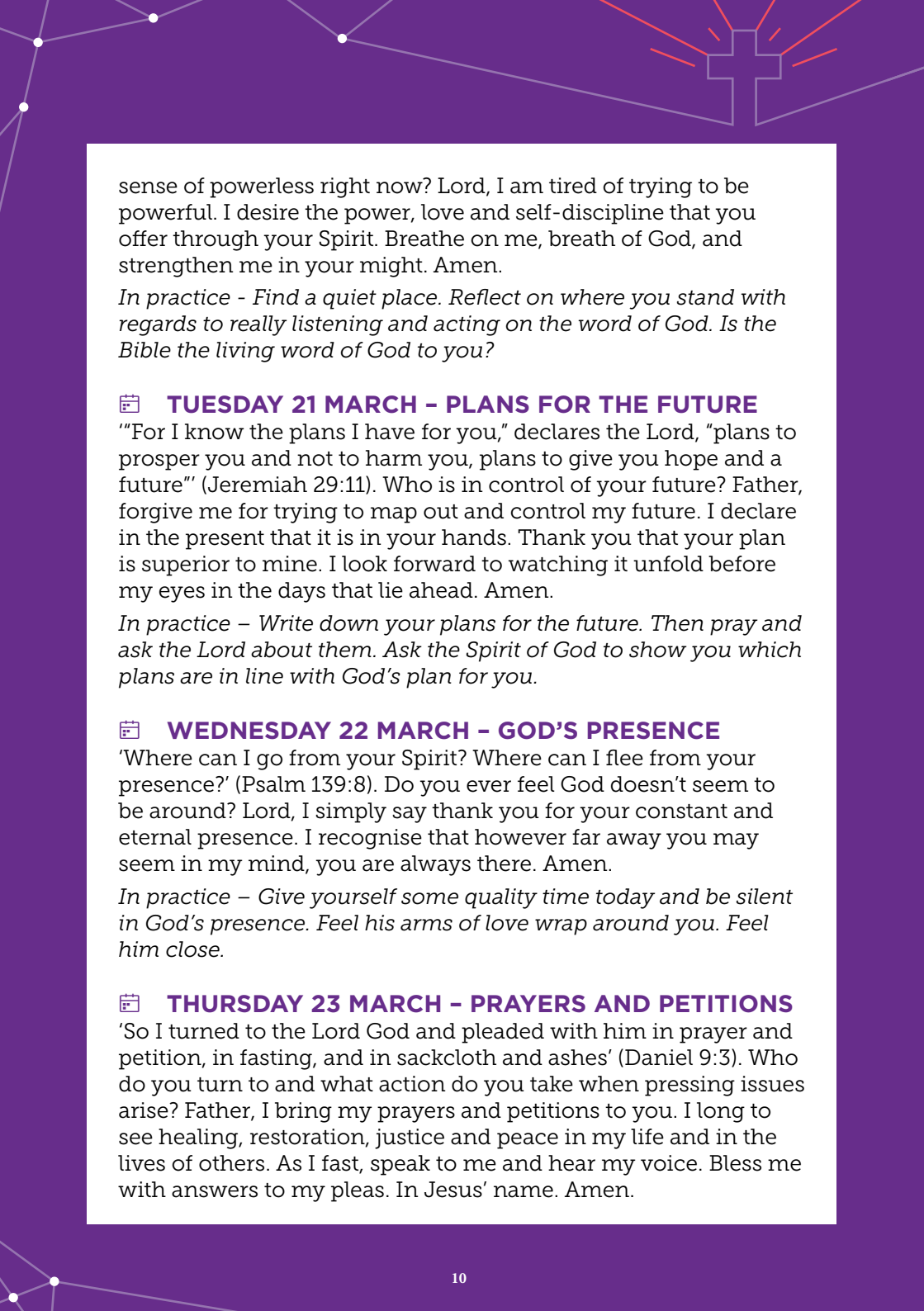
SUNDAY 19 MARCH

As we pause today from the daily Lenten prayers and reflections, make the words of this song your prayer: 'Before the throne of God above, I have a strong, a perfect plea, a great High Priest whose name is Love, who ever lives and pleads for me. My name is graven on his hands, my name is written on his heart; I know that while in Heaven he stands no tongue can bid me thence depart' (SASB 243).



MONDAY 20 MARCH - POWER IN CHRIST

'For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline' (2 Timothy 1:7). Do you feel any



sense of powerless right now? Lord, I am tired of trying to be powerful. I desire the power, love and self-discipline that you offer through your Spirit. Breathe on me, breath of God, and strengthen me in your might. Amen.

In practice - Find a quiet place. Reflect on where you stand with regards to really listening and acting on the word of God. Is the Bible the living word of God to you?

TUESDAY 21 MARCH - PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (Jeremiah 29:11). Who is in control of your future? Father, forgive me for trying to map out and control my future. I declare in the present that it is in your hands. Thank you that your plan is superior to mine. I look forward to watching it unfold before my eyes in the days that lie ahead. Amen.

In practice – Write down your plans for the future. Then pray and ask the Lord about them. Ask the Spirit of God to show you which plans are in line with God’s plan for you.

WEDNESDAY 22 MARCH - GOD’S PRESENCE

‘Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?’ (Psalm 139:8). Do you ever feel God doesn’t seem to be around? Lord, I simply say thank you for your constant and eternal presence. I recognise that however far away you may seem in my mind, you are always there. Amen.

In practice – Give yourself some quality time today and be silent in God’s presence. Feel his arms of love wrap around you. Feel him close.

THURSDAY 23 MARCH - PRAYERS AND PETITIONS

‘So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes’ (Daniel 9:3). Who do you turn to and what action do you take when pressing issues arise? Father, I bring my prayers and petitions to you. I long to see healing, restoration, justice and peace in my life and in the lives of others. As I fast, speak to me and hear my voice. Bless me with answers to my pleas. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

In practice - Consider fasting a meal today and use the time to bring your prayers and petitions before God.

FRIDAY 24 MARCH - THE LORD BLESS YOU

'The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace' (Numbers 6:24-26). Today we take a break from our Lenten journey. Just let the living Lord bless you as you read this prayer from Scripture. Then in turn look out of your window and pray this blessing over your family, your friends and your community, as well as the nation you are situated in and the global community.

SATURDAY 25 MARCH - 'BREAKING CAMP'

'The Lord our God said to us at Horeb, "You have stayed long enough at this mountain. Break camp and advance into the hill country of the Amorites ..."' (Deuteronomy 1:6-7). What situation in your life have you focused on for too long? Lord, it can be too easy to settle with what is comfortable and familiar. Strengthen me to have the courage to 'break camp', to move on and to claim new ground in my life and new territory in my relationship with you. In Jesus' name. Amen.

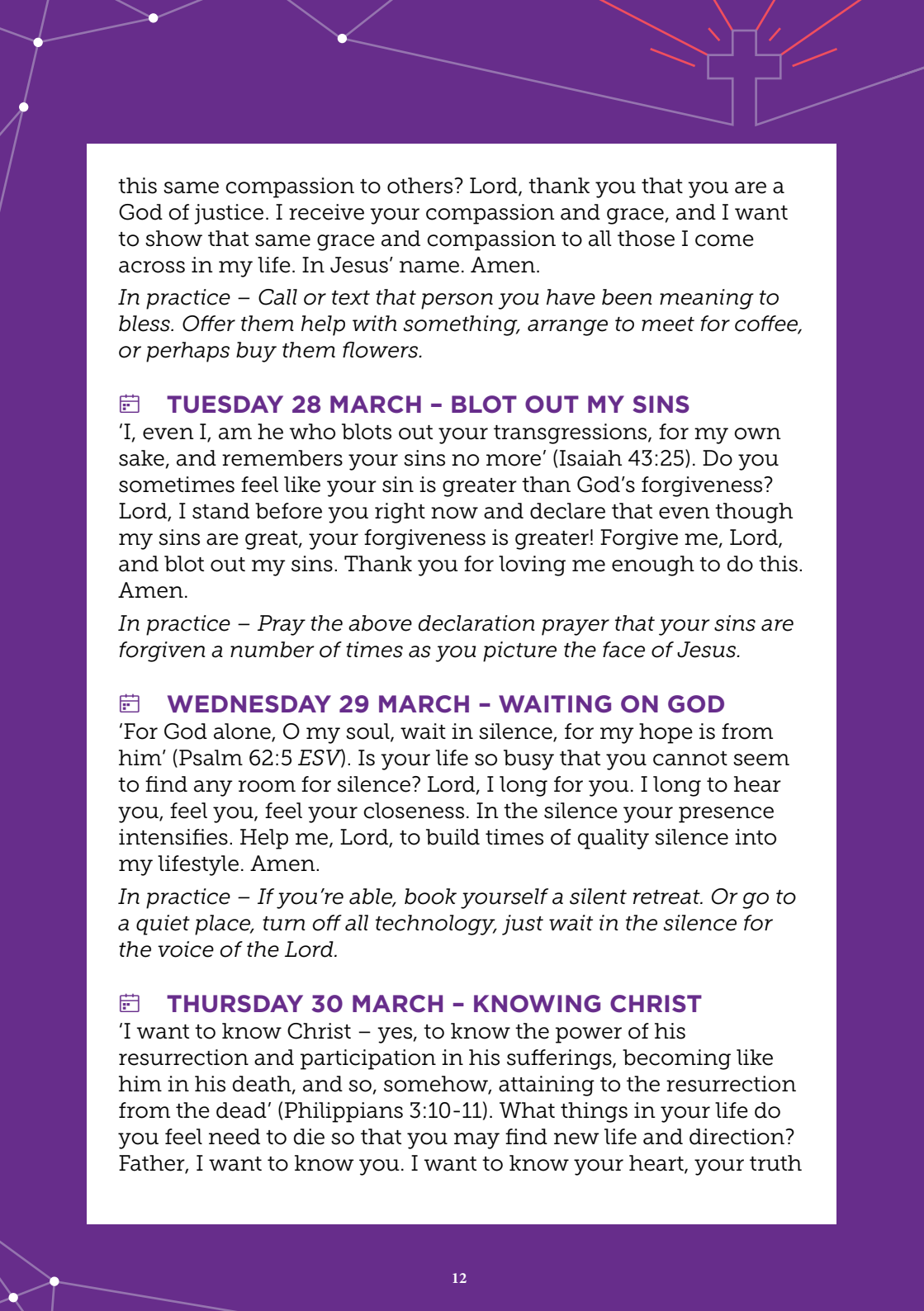
In practice – Is there any situation, relationship, job, dispute or issue that you feel you have stayed with way too long? Write them down and pray for courage to be able to make a decision to 'break camp'!

SUNDAY 26 MARCH

As we pause today from the daily Lenten prayers and reflections, make the words of this song your prayer: 'I love you, Lord, and I lift my voice to worship you, O my soul rejoice. Take joy, my King, in what you hear, may it be a sweet, sweet sound in your ear.' (SASB 369)

MONDAY 27 MARCH - OFFERING COMPASSION

'Yet the Lord longs to be gracious to you; therefore he will rise up to show you compassion. For the Lord God is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him!' (Isaiah 30:18). Are we offering



this same compassion to others? Lord, thank you that you are a God of justice. I receive your compassion and grace, and I want to show that same grace and compassion to all those I come across in my life. In Jesus' name. Amen.

In practice – Call or text that person you have been meaning to bless. Offer them help with something, arrange to meet for coffee, or perhaps buy them flowers.

TUESDAY 28 MARCH – BLOT OUT MY SINS

'I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more' (Isaiah 43:25). Do you sometimes feel like your sin is greater than God's forgiveness? Lord, I stand before you right now and declare that even though my sins are great, your forgiveness is greater! Forgive me, Lord, and blot out my sins. Thank you for loving me enough to do this. Amen.

In practice – Pray the above declaration prayer that your sins are forgiven a number of times as you picture the face of Jesus.

WEDNESDAY 29 MARCH – WAITING ON GOD

'For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him' (Psalm 62:5 ESV). Is your life so busy that you cannot seem to find any room for silence? Lord, I long for you. I long to hear you, feel you, feel your closeness. In the silence your presence intensifies. Help me, Lord, to build times of quality silence into my lifestyle. Amen.

In practice – If you're able, book yourself a silent retreat. Or go to a quiet place, turn off all technology, just wait in the silence for the voice of the Lord.

THURSDAY 30 MARCH – KNOWING CHRIST

'I want to know Christ – yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead' (Philippians 3:10-11). What things in your life do you feel need to die so that you may find new life and direction? Father, I want to know you. I want to know your heart, your truth

and your vision for my life. Show me those areas of my life that need to die. Create a better me. Amen.

In practice – Sit or stand in front of a mirror. Look at your face. Have an honest conversation with yourself. Speak out anything in your life that needs to die. Lay it at the foot of the cross. Ask God to show you a new direction.

FRIDAY 31 MARCH - 'EVEN NOW'

“Even now,” declares the Lord, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning” (Joel 2:12). How are your ‘hope levels’? Thank you, Lord, because you are a God of second chances. ‘Even now’ I can come to you. This is the essence of the hope I have in you. Amen.

In practice – Take a walk or a ride today. Use the time to reflect on the hope that comes directly from a God who loves you completely.

APRIL

SATURDAY 1 APRIL

Read Matthew 21:1-11. Jesus, the long-awaited Messiah, King of the Jews, fulfilled Old Testament prophecy when he entered Jerusalem, meek and lowly and riding on a colt (Zechariah 9:9). Lord, you are still the long-awaited humble King. I cry ‘Hosanna!’ and bless your name. Come and save me, come and save us. May the start of Holy Week tomorrow be a spiritual mark in people’s lives across the world. Amen.

HOLY WEEK

SUNDAY 2 APRIL

As we pause today from the daily Lenten prayers and reflections, make the words of this song your prayer: ‘Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest. Lord, we lift up your name, with hearts full of praise, be exalted, O Lord, my God, Hosanna in the highest.’ (SASB 366)

 **MONDAY 3 APRIL**

Read Matthew 21:12-22. Jesus turned the tables in the Temple courts. He makes the statement: 'My house will be called a house of prayer, but you are making it "a den of robbers!"' (v13). Lord, I love you. Thank you for reminding me that your house is a house of prayer. I am sorry when I have made your house a den of robbers! I want to increase my lifestyle of prayer with you. In Jesus' name. Amen.

 **TUESDAY 4 APRIL**

Read Luke 19:47-48. Jesus is teaching in the Temple every day. Some other religious people and teachers were disgruntled to the point of wanting to kill Jesus. Yet they could not find a way to carry out this threat because most people were hanging on his every word. Jesus, I declare you as the one constant in the history and the future of this world. I want to live my life for you and join you in your mission to save the world. Amen.

 **WEDNESDAY 5 APRIL**

Read Matthew 26:1-5. Jesus directly confronts the appointed leadership as he reminds his disciples that he will be delivered up and crucified. The appointed leadership would not take this truth well. This fuelled their desire to eradicate him. Lord Jesus, I accept your truths. I thank you that through the acceptance of your truth, I will be set free. Thank you for your wonderful sacrifice for me. In Jesus' name. Amen.

 **THURSDAY 6 APRIL**

Read Luke 22:3-6. Judas gave over a life for 30 pieces of silver. Judas betrayed Jesus. The fleshly desire of money overwhelmed him and caused him to deliberately betray Jesus. Lord, forgive me when worldly desires overtake and overwhelm me. Thank you for your radical and total forgiveness. I want to serve you, not betray you. I declare that you are Lord of my life! In Jesus' name. Amen.



FRIDAY 7 APRIL

Read Matthew 26:26-30. The Last Supper is a significant moment in the journey of humanity. Jesus offers his body and his blood in a symbolic and beautiful demonstration of his love for us. This is an amazing event that offers us a real, vibrant and living relationship for ever with the King of kings. Thank you, God, for your astonishing offer of relationship with you through the shedding of your blood and body as a sacrifice for us. Amen.



SATURDAY 8 APRIL

Read Mark 15:37-39. As Jesus breathed his last earthly breath, the curtain in the Temple was torn in two and any barriers that prevented a relationship with the living Lord were removed. The centurion had a sudden realisation as the truth hit him. He speaks his realisation out loud: 'Surely this man was the Son of God!' (v39). Father God, you opened the floodgates as you breathed your last. It seemed like the end, but it was just the beginning! I declare that you are truly the Son of God. Amen.



SUNDAY 9 APRIL - HE HAS RISEN!

Read Matthew 28:1-20. Lord, you have risen! Risen in my life! Risen in my heart! Risen in this world! I believe it, I acknowledge it and I embrace it! I take the words of your great commission seriously. I want to go into this world in relationship with you, the risen Lord, and spend my life bringing the life you gave me to those who desperately need you! Amen!