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Lenten Experiment

Wednesday March 1 – Saturday April 8, 2017

INTRODUCING LENT

Lent is the period of 40 days preceding Palm Sunday (the Sunday before Easter – i.e. the start of Holy Week). It is a subdued time of repentance, reflection, soul training and discipline. It parallels Jesus' 40 days of fasting and trial in the desert (Matt. 4:1ff) and has been observed since at least the third century AD.

It has been traditional to give up something pleasurable that is part of our everyday lives for the purpose of:

- Learning self-control and freeing our minds and hearts from material things.
- Remembering Christ's sufferings and our true pleasures, which are found in Him.
- Repenting of our wrongdoings and drawing near to God.

By giving up something we regularly enjoy or do, we remind ourselves of how easily we become attached to pleasure and habits, and we have the opportunity to re-focus our lives on God. Monks of the Franciscan order call this 'detachment' – the idea that the less that 'stuff' preoccupies our lives, the more room there is for God (and for ourselves and others).

It is also common during Lent to acquire new disciplines and habits. Thus we are not simply turning away from one thing to nothing or emptiness, rather we turn away from one thing and towards another soul-nurturing thing.

The following excerpt from Robert Webber's *Ancient-Future Time: Forming Spirituality through the Christian Year* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004), describes the movement and spirituality of Lent well.

A Time to Repent

Although we praise our common Lord for all kinds of reasons, we praise and glorify him above all for the cross. [Paul] passes over everything else that Christ did for our advantage and consolation and dwells incessantly on the cross. The proof of God's love for us, he says, is that Christ died for us while we were yet sinners. Then in the following sentence he gives us the highest ground for hope: If, when we were alienated from God, we were reconciled to him by the death of his Son, how much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life!

John Chrysostom (AD 347–407)

Unfortunately some Christians live as though the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ never happened. Our lives become absorbed in the day-to-day experiences of life. We focus on name-brand clothing, the color of

our houses, the size of our bank account, the year and make of our automobile, the prestige in which others hold us, and the symbols of our own power. We too easily forget our Maker and Redeemer, replacing God with things and ambition. Lent is the season that does something about this situation.

It calls us back to God, back to basics, back to the spiritual realities of life. It calls on us to put to death the sin and the indifference we have in our hearts toward God and our fellow persons. And it beckons us to enter once again into the joy of the Lord—the joy of a new life born out of a death to the old life. This is what Ash Wednesday is all about—the fundamental change of life required of those who would die with Jesus and be raised to a new life in him. ...

... The purpose of the fast with the accompanying prayer and resulting almsgiving [giving money, time, ourselves] is not to accumulate works and gain favor in the eyes of God. Such a view is unbiblical and leads to legalism. Rather, the purpose of fasting is to establish, maintain, repair, and transform our relationship with God. For fasting, prayer, and almsgiving are means through which we express our spiritual pilgrimage during Lent, and through these means we experience the turning away from sin and conversion to Christ ordered by the spirituality of Lent.

Fasting, prayer, and almsgiving are not only the acts of giving up something such as food, time, and money. It is also the activity of taking something on. When we give up a sin that has its grip on our lives, we need to replace it with a positive alternative. Our Lenten spirituality not only calls on us to turn away from a sin that holds us in its power but to turn toward a virtue that replaces our sin.

For example, fasting from food is a symbol of the discipline it takes to turn away from our sin. Prayer is the actual experience of turning to God in dependence. Almsgiving is the symbol of the virtue we are taking on to replace our sin. Consequently, it is of utmost importance for us to do the actual act of fasting, prayer, and almsgiving simultaneously with the turning away from a sin and turning toward a virtue. The two actions interlock with each other in such a way that success in one discipline corresponds with our achievement in the other. If we fail to keep the discipline of fasting, prayer, and almsgiving, the chances of succeeding in overcoming our sin and transplanting it with a virtue are severely weakened.

How to Begin

For the period of the Lenten Experiment (Ash Wednesday – Palm Sunday), we are encouraging everyone to invest significantly in a deeper relationship with God. The goal is not to add to your busy schedule, but that you will clear all unnecessary distractions and activities from your day and give the time to your relationship with God. How earnestly you invest will be a significant contributor to how you fare.

This manual is a workbook in pursuing intimacy with God and therefore just as Jesus revealed in the parable of the sower (Luke 8:1-15) it matters that we are “good soil.” God promises that we will find him when we seek him, but only if “we seek him with all our hearts” (Jer. 29:13). This manual is intended as a tool for making God real in your life. May he bless your endeavour!

Overview of the Guide

In this manual, we have erred on the side of providing too much, rather than too little. Feel free to adapt it to suit your needs and constraints.

At the start of each week, there is a suggested memory verse. You may of course choose an alternative.

Every day has a prepared devotional for the morning and evening as well as a soul training activity. With the exception of the first four days, the activities for each day are as follows:

Sunday	Join with brothers and sisters in Christ for fellowship, teaching and worship
Monday	Morning Prayer 7am. Reading to expand your understanding of faith.
Tuesday	Biography . To show great people of faith are not spiritual giants.
Wednesday	Morning Prayer with communion 7am. Reflect on an artwork .
Thursday	A Reading to expand your understanding of faith
Friday	Morning Prayer 7am. Reflect on a piece of music or a poem .
Saturday	Alternates Lectio Divina and a “ good work ” to do (Eph 2:10).

Please adapt the guide to suit you.

- Be intentional about how you spend your time.
- Do not rush through prayers, readings, and reflective times. Initial discomfort with silence, quiet, and reflection as we face our true selves is normal. It will ease over the course of the 40 days.
- Try to make extra time for your family and yourself during Lent (i.e. be less busy)
- Try to go to sleep earlier, and wake up earlier to do devotions and Morning Prayer.

MORNING & EVENING DEVOTIONS

In the morning and evening devotions there are different methods of engaging with scripture and dwelling with God. Some may feel a bit strange but invest in them and see if they bring you to new space in your walk with the Lord.

In the morning devotions in particular there are two ‘methods’ of Bible study which come at our relationship with God from two different angles.

1. **INSTRUCTED by the Word through the Spirit**

This is the more ‘usual’ kind of Bible study. Paying attention to the written word – meaning, context, principle – while letting the Holy Spirit be your teacher. The focus is to understand what the text would say to everyone: its general and regular meaning. Application to your own life flows from your study at the Spirit’s prompting.

This form of study is the bedrock on which the Holy Spirit's leading and prompting can build. Whatever the Spirit may say 'personally' it will never be at variance with what He has already said through the prophets and apostles.

2. INSTRUCTED by the Spirit through the Word

This is a more personal and Spirit-directed approach to the Word. While not moving outside the generally accepted meaning of the text, within the context of the whole counsel of Scripture, you are seeking to let the Holy Spirit direct your attention. Your focus is on how the text is stirring your heart – a thrill, curiosity, concern, conviction – that suggests there is something God is saying to *you*. Sometimes the message will be obvious and hit you head on. Other times it may require work and attentive self-examination to grasp what God is saying to you. Be attentive to recurring impressions and themes.

The purpose is to move away from treating the Bible like a textbook with bland information that has to be studied. It is training towards making encounters with God's Word transformative rather than simply informative.

A Table with the Bible readings for each day is on page 7.

Listening to God

In this guide we encourage you to take time in your devotions and through the day to listen to God. It is impossible to cultivate a relationship with God without being attentive and taking time to listen. Make space in your day for God to answer a simple prayer – “Lord, speak to me, I am listening”. You can be attentive to His voice even as you get on with other things. In his book, *Hearing God*, Dallas Willard describes how he ‘listens’ to God:

Personally I find it works best if after I ask God to speak to me in this way, I devote the next hour or so to some kind of activity that neither engrosses my attention with other things nor allows me to be intensely focused on the matter in question. Housework, gardening, driving about on errands, or paying bills will generally do. I have learned not to worry about whether or not this is going to work. I know that it does not have to work, but I am sure that it will work if God has something he really wants me to know or do. This is ultimately because I am sure of how great and good he is.

Often by the end of an hour or so there has stood forth within my consciousness an idea or thought with that peculiar quality, spirit and content that I have come to associate with God's voice. If so, I may write it down for further study. I also may decide to discuss the matter with others, usually without informing them that “God has told me...” Or I may decide to reconsider the matter by repeating the same process after a short period of time. Remember Gideon (Judges 6:11-40). Remember too that scientists check their results by rerunning experiments. We should be so humble.

(Hearing God, p. 199-200)

Daily Bible Readings

Morning & Evening Prayer readings based on the *Daily Office Lectionary* of the Anglican Church in North America.

Day	Date	Psalm	Morning Prayer	Evening Prayer
Ash Wed: March	<i>1st</i>	32	Isa. 57. 15-end, Mark 2. 13-22	Isa. 58, Heb. 3. 12—4. 13
Th.	2	4	Gen. 35. 1-29, Matt. 24. 29-end	Gen. 37 (38), Rom. 14
F.	3	5	Gen. 39, Matt. 25. 1-30	Gen. 40, Rom. 15
S.	4	10	Gen. 41. 1-40, Matt. 25. 31-end	Gen. 41. 41-end, Rom. 16
1st Sunday in Lent	5	30	Gen. 13, Matt. 9. 1-17	Gen. 8, Mark 14. 1-26
M.	6	62	Gen. 42, Matt. 26. 1-30	Gen. 43, Phil. 1
Tu.	7	97	Gen. 44, Matt. 26. 31-56	Gen. 45. 1-15, Phil. 2
W. <i>Ember Day</i>	8	113	Gen. 45. 16—46. 7, Matt. 26. 57-end	Gen. 46. 26—47. 12, Phil. 3
Th.	9	116	Gen. 47. 13-end, Matt. 27. 1-26	Gen. 48, Phil. 4
F. <i>Ember Day</i>	10	118	Gen. 49. 1-32, Matt. 27. 27-56	Gen. 49. 33—50 end, Col. 1. 1-20
S. <i>Ember Day</i>	11	148	Exod. 1. 1-2. 10, Matt. 27. 57—28:20	Exod. 2. 11-22, Col. 1. 21—2. 7
2nd Sunday in Lent	12	17	Gen. 18. 1-15, Luke 15. 11-end	Gen. 9. 1-17, Mark 14. 27-52
M.	13	19	Exod. 2. 23—3. end, John 1. 1-28	Exod. 4. 1-23, Col. 2. 8—3. 11
Tu.	14	25	Exod. 4. 27—6. 1, John 1. 29-end	Exod. 6. 2-13, 7. 1-7, Col. 3. 12-4. 1
W.	15	36	Exod. 7. 8-end, John 2	Exod. 8. 1-19, Col. 4. 2-end
Th.	16	38	Exod. 8. 20—9. 12, John 3. 1-21	Exod. 9. 13-end, Philemon
F.	17	39	Exod. 10. 1-20, John 3. 22-end	Exod. 10. 21—11 end, Eph. 1
S.	18	40	Exod. 12. 1-20, John 4. 1-26	Exod. 12. 21-36, Eph. 2
3rd Sunday in Lent	19	1	Gen. 18. 16-end, Luke 18. 1-14	Gen. 24. 1-28, Mark 14. 53-end
M.	20	8	Exod. 12. 37-end, John 4. 27-end	Exod. 13. 1-16, Eph. 3
Tu.	21	11	Exod. 13. 17—14. 14, John 5. 1-23	Exod. 14. 15-end, Eph. 4. 1-16
W.	22	12	Exod. 15. 1-26, John 5. 24-end	Exod. 15. 27—16. 36, Eph. 4. 17-30
Th.	23	15	Exod. 17, John 6. 1-21	Exod. 18, Eph. 4. 31—5. 21
F.	24	16	Exod. 19, John 6. 22-40	Exod. 20. 1-21, Eph. 5. 22—6. 9
S.	25	20	Exod. 22. 20—23. 17, John 6. 41-end	Exod. 23. 18-end, Eph. 6. 10-end
4th Sunday in Lent	26	49	Exod. 1. 8—2. 10, Luke 18. 35—19. 10	Gen. 24. 29-end, Mark 15. 1-21
M.	27	51	Exod. 24, John 7. 1-24	Exod. 25. 1-22, 1 Tim. 1. 1-17
Tu.	28	53	Exod. 28. 1-43, John 7. 25-end	Exod. 29. 38—30. 38, 1 Tim. 1. 18—2. 15
W.	29	65	Exod. (31) 32, John 8. 1-30	Exod. 33, 34, 1 Tim. 3
Th.	30	66	Exod. 35 (36), John 8. 31-end	Exod. (37) 38, 1 Tim. 4
F.	31	90	Exod. (39) 40, John 9	Lev. 6. 8-end, 1 Tim. 5
S. April	<i>1st</i>	94	Lev. 19. 1-18, 30- end, John 10. 1-21	Lev. 25. 1-24, 1 Tim. 6
5th Sunday in Lent	2	63	Exod. 2. 23—3. 20, Mark 10. 32-45	Exod. 6. 2-13, Mark 15. 22-39
M.	3	75	Num. 6, John 10. 22-end	Num. 9. 15-23, 10. 29-36, Tit. 1. 1—2. 8
Tu.	4	84	Num. 11. 10-33, John 11. 1-44	Num. 12, Titus 2. 9—3 end
W.	5	91	Num. 13. 1-3, 17- 33, John 11. 45-end	Num. 14. 1-25, 2 Tim. 1
Th.	6	96	Num. 16. 1-35, John 12. 1-19	Num. 16. 36—17. 13, 2 Tim. 2
F.	7	130	Num. 20, John 12. 20-end	Num. 22. 1-35, 2 Tim. 3
S.	8	138	Num. 22. 36—23. 26, John 13	Num. 23. 27—24. 25, 2 Tim. 4

Week 1

Ash Wednesday March 1 – Saturday March 4

Memory Verse for the Week

If the whole passage is too long, then try to memorize just the verse in bold.
Feel free to use another translation or passage if you prefer.

Luke 11:9-13

(English Standard Version)

⁹ And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.

¹¹ What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; ¹² or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? ¹³ **If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!**

Planning Ahead – This Week's Events:

Ash Wednesday	Mar 1 – Service with communion 7am. Penitential service 7pm.
Morning Prayer	Monday, Wednesday (with communion) and Friday, 7.00 – 7.45am
All night Concert of prayer	Mar 3, Friday, 10pm – 6am.

MORNING PRAYER

INSTRUCTED by the Word through the Spirit

See the explanation on page 5 in the introduction.

- **Come**

- Acknowledge your mood and how you feel. (Be open as you dwell with Jesus)
- Affirm His presence: “Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matt 28:20)

- **Confess**

Read the Psalm for today (see table p. 7).

- Take time to confess your sins to God and to seek his gracious forgiveness
- Resolve, with the Spirit’s help, to amend your life.

PRAYERS of John & Charles Wesley

A SERVICE *for* SUCH AS WOULD MAKE *or* RENEW THEIR COVENANT WITH GOD¹

CONFESSION

[Make this prayer personal by replacing “we” and “us” with “I” and “me” as appropriate]

Preparation:

Let us now examine ourselves before God, humbly confessing our sins and looking for his promised forgiveness, watching our hearts, lest by self-deceit we shut ourselves out from his presence.

Here all shall kneel

O God our Father,
who has set forth the way of life for us in your beloved Son:
we confess with shame our slowness to learn of him,
our reluctance to follow him.
You have spoken and called, and we have not given heed;
your beauty has shone forth and we have been blind;
you have stretched your hands to us through our fellows and we have passed by.
We have taken great benefits with little thanks;
we have been unworthy of your changeless love.
Have mercy upon us and forgive us, O Lord.

¹ Wesley, J., & Wesley, C. (1981). **John and Charles Wesley: Selected Prayers, Hymns, Journal Notes, Sermons, Letters and Treatises.** (R. J. Payne & F. Whaling, Eds.) (pp. 384–386). Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press.

Forgive us, we beseech you,
the poverty of our worship,
the formality and selfishness of our prayers,
our inconstancy and little faith,
our neglect of fellowship,
our hesitating witness for Christ,
our false pretenses
and our willful ignorance of your ways.
Have mercy upon us and forgive us, O Lord.

Forgive us wherein we have wasted our time or abused our gifts.
Forgive us if we have excused our evil-doing or evaded our responsibilities.
Forgive us that we have been unwilling to overcome evil with good,
that we have drawn back from the cross.
Have mercy upon us and forgive us, O Lord.

Forgive us that so little of your love has reached others through us.
We have borne too easily wrongs and sufferings that were not our own.
We have been thoughtless in our judgments,
hasty in condemnation,
grudging in forgiveness.
Forgive us as we forgive others, O Lord.

Most Holy Father, our sins are such as sent our Lord to his cross.
We have no ground where we can stand before you
save the greatness of the mercy revealed in that cross.
*Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling.*

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to your loving kindness;
according to the multitude of your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions.
Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.

[Psalm 51:1, 10]

As the heaven is high above the earth,
so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.
As far as the east is from the west,
so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

[Psalm 103:11-12]

God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.
If we walk in the light as he is in the light,
we have fellowship one with another,
and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.
If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins,
and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness

[1 John 1:5, 7-9]

AMEN.

- **Consider**

Read the Morning Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

- What have you learned about **God** – Father, Son, Holy Spirit?
- What have you learned about **life** – commands, promises, affirmations, consequences, ... ?
- What have you learned about **people** – encouragements, responses, examples, ... ?
- What have you learned about **yourself** – be attentive to how the Spirit stirs your heart, ... ?

- **Commit**

What is the Spirit saying to you?

Is there a verse you should carry with you through the day?

What might change in your life?

- **Confide**

Bring what you have learned and the circumstances of life to your gracious heavenly Father.

Chat with God (thanksgiving, discussion, intercession) about:

Your city
Your employer / school
Your church (people and ministries)
Your neighbours and colleagues
Your family and friends
Yourself

A Collect for Grace²

O Lord, our heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God,
you have brought us safely to the beginning of this day:

Defend us by your mighty power,

that we may not fall into sin

nor run into any danger;

and that guided by your Spirit,

we may do what is righteous in your sight;

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

DAILY ACTIVITY – READING

Catherine of Siena. (1980). **Catherine of Siena: The Dialogue**. (R. J. Payne, Ed., S. Noffke, Trans.) (pp. 327–332). New York; Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press.

² From: *Texts for Common Prayer* of the Anglican Church of North America (2016)

OBEDIENCE

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Then the high eternal compassionate Father looked on her with mercy and said:

O dearest, gentlest daughter! Your holy longing and just petitions deserve to be heard. I am supreme Truth, and I will fulfill my truth by keeping my promise and granting your wish. You ask me where you may find obedience, what can take it away, and how you may know whether or not you have it. My answer is that you will find it in its fullness in the gentle loving Word, my only-begotten Son. His obedience was so ready that to realize it he ran to his shameful death on the cross.

What takes obedience away? Look at the first man. What took away the obedience that I the eternal Father had laid on him was the pride that came from his selfish love and his desire to please his companion. This is what gave him disobedience in place of the perfection of obedience, death in place of the life of grace, wretched filthiness in the place of innocence. And it was not only he who fell, but the whole human race with him, as I have told you.

The sign that you have this virtue is patience, and impatience is the sign that you do not have it. (As I tell you more, you will find that this is so.)

Notice that there are two ways of observing obedience. The one is more perfect than the other, but like the commandments and the counsels the two are not separate but united. The one is good and perfect; the other is most perfect. But only the obedient can attain eternal life, for eternal life, which had been locked by Adam's disobedience, was unlocked by the key of obedience.

When I saw that humankind, whom I so loved, were not returning to me their end, my infinite goodness constrained me to put the key of obedience into the hand of the gentle loving Word, my Truth, and he like a doorman unlocked heaven's gate. Without this key and this doorman, my Truth, no one can enter. This is why he said in the holy Gospel that no one can come to me, the Father, except through him. When he rose beyond human companionship through his ascension to return triumphantly to me into heaven, he left you this sweet key of obedience. As you know, he left it in the hands of his vicar, Christ on earth, whom you are all obliged to obey even to the point of death. Whoever refuses to obey him is, as I have told you elsewhere,⁴ living in damnation.

Now I want you to see and know this most excellent virtue and its source in the humble spotless Lamb. What was the source of this Word's obedience? His love for my honor and your salvation. And what was the source of this love? The light of his soul's clear vision of the divine Essence and eternal Trinity, for he always saw me, God eternal. ...

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...

Your entire faith is founded on obedience, for it is by obedience that you show your fidelity. My Truth imposed on all of you in general the commandments of the Law, the chief of which is to love me above all things and your neighbors as your very self. And the others are so bound up with this one that those who observe this one necessarily observe them all, and those who let go of this one let go of them all. Those who observe this double commandment observe all the others; they are faithful to me and to their neighbors; they love me and are affectionate toward my creatures. Therefore they are obedient and submit themselves to the commandments of the Law and to other people for my sake. And they humbly and patiently endure every sort of labor and slander.

The Word's obedience was so superb that all of you draw grace from it, just as you had drawn death from disobedience. But it would not be enough for it to be in him alone and not be exercised by you here

and now. I have already told you that this obedience is a key that unlocked heaven, a key that he put into the hands of his vicar. This vicar puts it into the hands of each of you when you receive holy baptism, promising to obey [me] and to renounce the devil, the world, and all their pleasures and ostentation. So each of you individually has it, the very Word's key. And unless you walk by the light of faith and with the hand of love to open heaven's gate with this key, you will never enter there, even though it has been opened by the Word. For I created you without your help, without your ever asking me, because I loved you before you even existed,¹² but I will not save you without your help.

You must, then, carry the key in your hand; you must walk, not sit—walk along the way of my Truth's teaching and not sit down by setting your heart on finite things as do those fools who follow the old man, their first father [Adam]. They do what he did, for he threw the key of obedience into the filthy mire and smashed it with the hammer of pride and let it get rusty with selfishness. Not until the Word my only-begotten Son came was this key of obedience picked up again. He purified it in the fire of divine charity after he had picked it out of the mire and washed it with his blood. With the knife of justice he straightened it and on the anvil of his body he hammered out your iniquities. He repaired it so perfectly that no matter how you might damage it with your free choice, by your same free choice you can, with the help of my grace and using these same instruments, repair it again. ...

O obedience! You sail on without weariness until you arrive safely at the port of salvation. You pattern yourself after the Word, my only-begotten Son, boarding the ship of the most holy cross to suffer so as not to violate the Word's obedience or depart from his teaching. You make of it your table, where you feast on souls in your affection for your neighbors.

You are anointed with true humility, so you do not hanker after your neighbors' possessions against my will. You are straight, not winding, because you keep your heart direct and true, loving my creatures freely and without guile.

You are a dawn bearing the light of divine grace. You are a warming sun, never without charity's heat. You make earth blossom: The instruments of soul and body all bring forth fruit for the soul's own life and that of others.

You are wholly joyous, for you have not marred your face with impatience but have kept it pleasant with the pleasantness of patience, wholly and strongly serene. You are great in your perseverance—so great that you reach from heaven to earth—for it was with you that heaven was unlocked. You are a pearl hidden and unknown, trampled on by the world, humbling yourself in submission to others.

Your authority is so great that no one can have authority over you, because you have left behind the deadly servitude of selfish sensuality that had deprived you of your dignity. Once this enemy was slain by contempt for doing your own will, you regained your freedom.

DAILY ACTIVITIES

- **Attend the Ash Wednesday services at University Chapel at 7:00am (Sojourn) and 7:00pm (UC).**
- If you haven't already, read the [introductory sections](#) of this guide as a way of preparing your heart and planning for the season of Lent. Also note what you hope for from this season.
- Pray, asking the Lord to show you what habit, routine, or dependency He would like you to give up.
- Pray, asking the Lord to show you what new practice He would like you to acquire. Record your commitments here.

My 2017 Lenten Hopes & Commitments

EVENING PRAYER

Prepare:

Review your day being attentive for:

- Something to learn from.
- Something to be thankful for.
- Something to repent of.
- Something that especially seemed to have God's hand on it.
- Something that is part of a recurring pattern.

Ponder:

Read the Evening Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)
Dwell in a word, phrase or verse that comforts or instructs your heart.

Pray:

Give thanks for special moments in your day.
Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him (Matthew 11:28)

Lord, take as your right, and receive as my gift,
all my freedom, my memory,
my understanding and my will.
Whatever I am and whatever I possess,
you have given to me;
I restore it all to you again,
to be at your disposal,
according to your will.
Give me only a love for you,
and the gift of your grace;
then I am rich enough,
and ask for nothing more.
AMEN

*St Ignatius Loyola (1491-1556)*³

Presence:

Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

(John 14:23)

³ Ashwin, Angela. (2002). The Book of a Thousand Prayers. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan.

MORNING PRAYER

INSTRUCTED by the Word through the Spirit

See the explanation on page 5 in the introduction.

- **Come**

- Acknowledge your mood and how you feel. (Be open as you dwell with Jesus)
- Affirm His presence: "Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matt 28:20)

- **Confess**

Read the Psalm for today (see table p. 7).

- Take time to confess your sins to God and to seek his gracious forgiveness
- Resolve, with the Spirit's help, to amend your life.

Gracious Father,
 You have given us a world of beauty, and we have spoilt it.
 A world to feed us, and so many go hungry.
 A world of riches, and we are unwilling to share.
 A world to care for, and we think only of ourselves.
 Forgive us, gracious God,
 for those times your heart is saddened by our selfishness.
 For those times we have no thought for others,
 no cares but ours.
 Enable us to see this world anew as a gift from you,
 to be shared and nurtured,
 and those who live upon it to be loved and cared for.
 We ask this that your name may be glorified,
 through the beauty of this world,
 and the service of our lives
 AMEN⁴

- **Consider**

Read the Morning Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

- What have you learned about **God** – Father, Son, Holy Spirit?
- What have you learned about **life** – commands, promises, affirmations, consequences, ... ?

⁴ FROM: www.faithandworship.com

- What have you learned about **people** – encouragements, responses, examples, ... ?
- What have you learned about **yourself** – be attentive to how the Spirit stirs your heart, ... ?

- **Commit**

What is the Spirit saying to you?

Is there a verse you should carry with you through the day?

What might change in your life?

- **Confide**

Bring what you have learned and the circumstances of life to your gracious heavenly Father.

Chat with God (thanksgiving, discussion, intercession) about:

Your city
Your employer / school
Your church (people and ministries)
Your neighbours and colleagues
Your family and friends
Yourself

A Collect for Guidance⁵

Heavenly Father,

in you we live and move and have our being:

We humbly pray you so to guide and govern us

by your Holy Spirit,

that in all the cares and occupations of our life

we may not forget you,

but may remember that we are ever walking in your sight;

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

⁵ From: *Texts for Common Prayer* of the Anglican Church of North America (2016)



Father Sieger Köder, *The Return of the Prodigal*, oil on canvas, 1975-95

“The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ And they began to celebrate.” – Luke 15:21-24

In this seemingly simple scene, the artist uses bright colours and distorted, exaggerated forms to provoke emotions from the viewer. The embracing figures of father and son dominate this image; the repentant son clings to his loving father. Hovering out of sight of the pair is the other son, jealous of the warm welcome given to his brother.

1. Have you ever felt like the prodigal son, receiving unexpected and undeserved love?
2. Have you ever felt like the other son, jealous of the unmerited good fortune of another?
3. How does the love of the father in this parable remind you of God’s love?

4. What hope do you have in the knowledge that ours is a God full of grace, a God who forgives and brings salvation to those who repent and turn to Him?

EVENING PRAYER

Prepare: Review your day being attentive for:

- Something to learn from.
- Something to be thankful for.
- Something to repent of.
- Something that especially seemed to have God's hand on it.
- Something that is part of a recurring pattern.

Ponder: Read the Evening Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)
Dwell in a word, phrase or verse that comforts or instructs your heart.

Pray: Give thanks for special moments in your day.
Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him (Matthew 11:28)

Eternal Trinity, you are a deep sea,
into which the more I enter the more I find,
and the more I find the more I seek.
The soul ever hungers in your abyss, Eternal Trinity,
longing to see you with the light of your light,
and as the deer yearns for the springs of water,
so my soul yearns to see you in truth.

St Catherine of Siena (1347-1380) ⁶

Presence:

For he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."
(Heb 13:5)

⁶ Ashwin, Angela. (2002). The Book of a Thousand Prayers. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan.

MORNING PRAYER

INSTRUCTED by the Word through the Spirit

See the explanation on page 5 in the introduction.

- **Come**

- Acknowledge your mood and how you feel. (Be open as you dwell with Jesus)
- Affirm His presence: "Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matt 28:20)

- **Confess**

Read the Psalm for today (see table p. 7).

- Take time to confess your sins to God and to seek his gracious forgiveness
- Resolve, with the Spirit's help, to amend your life.

PRAYER OF DR MARTIN LUTHER KING

King, Martin, L. (2004) *Thou, Dear God: Prayers That Open Hearts and Spirits*, The Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr., edited by Lewis V. Baldwin (Boston: Beacon Press)

O Thou Eternal God,
out of whose absolute power and infinite intelligence
the whole universe has come into being,
we humbly confess that we have not loved thee with our hearts, souls and minds,
and we have not loved our neighbors as Christ loved us.
We have all too often lived by our own selfish impulses
rather than by the life of sacrificial love as revealed by Christ.
We often give in order to receive.
We love our friends and hate our enemies.
We go the first mile but dare not travel the second.
We forgive but dare not forget.
And so as we look within ourselves,
we are confronted with the appalling fact that the history of our lives
is the history of an eternal revolt against you.
But thou, O God, have mercy upon us.
Forgive us for what we could have been but failed to be.
Give us the intelligence to know your will.
Give us the courage to do your will.
Give us the devotion to love your will.
In the name and spirit of Jesus we pray.
AMEN.

- **Consider**

Read the Morning Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

- What have you learned about **God** – Father, Son, Holy Spirit?
- What have you learned about **life** – commands, promises, affirmations, consequences, ... ?
- What have you learned about **people** – encouragements, responses, examples, ... ?
- What have you learned about **yourself** – be attentive to how the Spirit stirs your heart, ... ?

- **Commit**

What is the Spirit saying to you?

Is there a verse you should carry with you through the day?

What might change in your life?

- **Confide**

Bring what you have learned and the circumstances of life to your gracious heavenly Father.

Chat with God (thanksgiving, discussion, intercession) about:

Your city
Your employer / school
Your church (people and ministries)
Your neighbours and colleagues
Your family and friends
Yourself

A Collect for Endurance⁷

Almighty God,
whose most dear Son went not up to joy
but first he suffered pain,
and entered not into glory
before he was crucified:
Mercifully grant that we,
walking in the way of the cross,
may find it none other than the way of life and peace;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.
Amen.

⁷ From: *Texts for Common Prayer* of the Anglican Church of North America (2016)

Newbigin, Lesslie. (2009). **Sin and Salvation** (pp. 104–110). Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers.

Justification

The problem with which we started, the problem with which God has to deal in order to bring about salvation, is the problem of sin. Sin means that man is cut off from the true source of his being in God; instead of loving, trusting and obeying God, he loves himself, distrusts God, and tries to be his own master. We have seen that man cannot save himself from this situation. His will has been thoroughly corrupted, and even when he wills salvation, he wills it for himself. Even when he wills to be righteous, it leads him to a selfish sort of righteousness which cuts him off from the love of God and man. And equally God cannot solve the problem by simply wiping out man's sin as though it did not exist. If God did not resist and punish sin, the world would become a hell. Yet God's punishment of sin, the wrath with which He withstands sin, does not and cannot bring about salvation.

We have seen that the mighty act of Jesus in dying on the cross reveals both God's judgment upon sin and also His mercy. It reveals both the awful character of sin, and the terrible punishment which it brings, and at the same time it shows us God bearing all the punishment upon His own heart for our sake. ... And it is those sufferings which enable him to commit himself wholly to God's love, because behind the wrath of God he sees the love of God going to the last limit to save the sinner.

... True righteousness is a relation of loving trust and obedience towards God. At the beginning of our study we saw that unbelief is the root of sin. So now we have to say that faith is the essence of righteousness. By His dying for sinners, with sinners, in the place of sinners, Christ has made it possible for sinners to have that mind towards God; and that mind is righteousness. It is what Paul calls 'the righteousness which is of God by faith' [Rom 3:22 KJV].

In St Paul's Epistles, especially Romans and Galatians, but also in others, much time is given to the explanation of this 'righteousness which is of God by faith', and the contrast between it and 'the righteousness of the law'. But the same difference is very simply portrayed in two of Jesus' parables. In one he describes two men praying in the Temple. One, a Pharisee, thanked God for his own good deeds; the other, a publican, simply stood with bowed head and said: 'God be merciful to me a sinner'. And Jesus said that it was the publican and not the Pharisee whom God accepted as a righteous man. If we think of righteousness as a possession of our own, then certainly the Pharisee was more righteous than the publican. His own list of virtues is enough to prove that. But this is not true righteousness, because it is centred in the self and not in God, and therefore it is without love. In fact such so-called 'righteousness' is the very essence of sin; it is the most extreme form of man's attempt to be like God.²⁶ That was proved when the Pharisees, the religious leaders of the time, took the lead in crucifying Jesus. Probably the publican was guilty of breaking most of the ten commandments. He did not even dare to lift up his eyes in the Temple. He could only cast himself utterly on the love of God. And Jesus says: 'He went home justified'. That does not mean that he had been suddenly transformed into a good Pharisee; it means that he was in the right relationship to God.

The other story is even better known. We call it 'The Prodigal Son', but the proper name for it is 'The Two Sons'. If you read the whole chapter you will see that the reason for which Jesus told it was that the Pharisees were murmuring against Him for His close association with sinners. The elder son never left his father's house, and never transgressed his commandments. But at the end he was left outside the

father's house—not of the father's will, but of his own. The father went out to entreat him to come in, but he would not. He thought that his status in the father's house was his right, that he had earned it by his hard work. Therefore he could not share his father's joy when the bad son came home. The younger son had shamefully betrayed his father's good name and wasted his goods. He knew that he had no right to be in his father's house. He did not claim any rights. He simply cast himself on his father's love. And at once he was taken in as a beloved son, given the ring and the robe and the fatted calf. At the end of the story Jesus leaves this unforgettable picture on our minds: the younger son who has deserved nothing is in the father's home, and surrounded by love and joy; the elder son who believes that he deserves everything is left outside—even though the father pleads with him to come in. That is a picture of the two kinds of righteousness—what Paul calls 'the righteousness of God by faith', and 'the righteousness which is of the law'; the faith-righteousness which is all God's gift, and the self-righteousness which a man tries to have as his own possession. The former takes us into the very presence of God; the latter finally shuts us out. What Paul is saying again and again in his Epistles is this: you must choose between these two kinds of righteousness, and you cannot possibly have both. You cannot be both a coolie and a son. You cannot both earn God's favour as a right, like a workman earning his wages, and also enjoy His love like a son in his father's home. If you want to have a righteousness of your own, the righteousness which comes by law, then you are certainly shut out of the righteousness of God, that which is by grace.

The pious Jews had longed and prayed for the day when God would appear and His righteousness be made manifest. In spite of all the wickedness of the world, the successes of the wicked and the sufferings of the good, they continued to believe that there was a righteous God in heaven, and that He would surely come to judge the earth. Then those who had faithfully kept the Law of God would be pronounced righteous, and those who had flouted it would be condemned.

This is the proper meaning of the word 'justify'. It is the opposite of the word 'condemn'. It does not refer to a process by which a man is changed inwardly from a bad man into a good man. It refers to the sentence of a judge by which a man is pronounced to be in the right. In Jewish thought (as in any ordinary human thought) a just judge is one who justifies the righteous and condemns the ungodly. It was a terrible scandal to the Jews to hear Christians preaching that God is one who justifies the ungodly. Yet this is the very heart of the Gospel. Jesus Himself gave expression to it when He said: 'I came not to call the righteous, but sinners'.³⁰

...

There is thus absolutely no place in the Christian life for the idea of merit. It is not because of any good that we do that we are accepted by God. There is no possibility of earning His favour. If we have even a little of that thought we shall find ourselves outside with the elder brother, we shall find the feasting of heaven as unpleasant as he found the feasting for the prodigal son. The greatest saint cannot earn his place in God's home. We are there simply because of His grace. We are ready to come in there when we have the new mind that is created by Christ's death, when we know, at the same moment, how hateful we are to God, and how precious we are to Him.

– A SPECIAL FRIDAY NIGHT –

All Night Concert of Prayer, 10pm-6.00am

Continue to enrich your spiritual life by spending the night in prayer, worship and fellowship. We will pray for our church, our ministries, our neighbourhood, our world and one another. Come, and be blessed.

– OR –

Individual Prayer

If you cannot attend, spend an hour in prayer. If you are unsure how to begin, use the Lord's Prayer as your guide. Pray it one phrase at a time, and allow your personal prayers to flow out from that theme.

- *"Our Father ..."* *Reflect on the intimacy we have with God.*
- *"Hallowed be your name ..."* *Give praise to God, who is holy and great.*
- *"Your Kingdom come ..."* *Invite God's kingdom reality into your life.*
- *"Your will be done ..."* *Ask God to reveal his will and to empower you.*
- *"Give us today our daily bread ..."* *Lift up your needs to God.*
- *"Forgive us our sins ..."* *Confess your sins and struggles.*
- *"As we forgive those who sin against us ..."* *Ask God to help you forgive and let go of hurt/anger.*
- *"Lead us not into temptation ..."* *Ask God to reveal where you are weak or tempted.*
- *"Deliver us from evil ..."* *Ask God to protect and help you in those areas.*

Consider praying the Lord's Prayer for your family and friends as well.
Close with *"For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, Amen."*

MORNING PRAYER

INSTRUCTED by the Word through the Spirit

See the explanation on page 5 in the introduction.

- **Come**

- Acknowledge your mood and how you feel. (Be open as you dwell with Jesus)
- Affirm His presence: "Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matt 28:20)

- **Confess**

Read the Psalm for today (see table p. 7).

- Take time to confess your sins to God and to seek his gracious forgiveness
- Resolve, with the Spirit's help, to amend your life.

Saving God,
 we are your people yet the world cannot see this.
 We are your children, and fail to live in peace.
 We are your voices and choose to be silent.
 We are your hands and feet and walk a different road.
 Forgive us,
 for ignoring your love,
 for brushing aside your hand
 and trusting our own wisdom.
 Enable us to worship you in spirit and in truth,
 to bring to you our joyful songs in the everyday moments of our lives;
 that your name might be glorified
 through our words and lives.
 AMEN⁸

- **Consider**

Read the Morning Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

- What have you learned about **God** – Father, Son, Holy Spirit?
- What have you learned about **life** – commands, promises, affirmations, consequences, ... ?
- What have you learned about **people** – encouragements, responses, examples, ... ?
- What have you learned about **yourself** – be attentive to how the Spirit stirs your heart, ... ?

⁸ FROM: www.faithandworship.com.

- **Commit**

What is the Spirit saying to you?

Is there a verse you should carry with you through the day?

What might change in your life?

- **Confide**

Bring what you have learned and the circumstances of life to your gracious heavenly Father.

Chat with God (thanksgiving, discussion, intercession) about:

Your city

Your employer / school

Your church (people and ministries)

Your neighbours and colleagues

Your family and friends

Yourself

A Collect for Sabbath Rest⁹

Almighty God,

who after the creation of the world

rested from all your works

and sanctified a day of rest for all your creatures:

Grant that we, putting away all earthly anxieties,

may be duly prepared for the service of your sanctuary,

and that our rest here upon earth may be a preparation

for the eternal rest promised to your people in heaven;

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

DAILY ACTIVITY – A “Good work” to do

– DETACHMENT –

But godliness with contentment is great gain, ⁷ for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. ⁸ But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. ⁹ But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge

⁹ From: *Texts for Common Prayer* of the Anglican Church of North America (2016)

people into ruin and destruction.¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

1 Timothy 6:6–10

We live in a consumptive and indulgent society where ‘things’ invade our lives, often with our collusion. This spiritual exercise is an intentional practice to reverse the trend. “Stuff” no longer has mastery over us. By moving towards simplicity and away from acquisition, we open up our lives to the work of the Spirit by making space for attentiveness to God and others.

The plan is that over the next two weeks (and then beyond) you will act quite purposefully to detach from one or two things (or more) that clutter your life, distract you, and consume your time.

- This may be as simple as getting rid of clutter by giving yard-sale type items to a local charity. Open and uncluttered space has its own soothing effect on the soul.
- If you are willing to go deeper: consider whether something is taking away your precious time in unproductive and mindless activity (e.g. game console, TV). Could you give it away?
- Alternatively, for example, look at your wardrobe, furniture, tool cupboard, etc. Are the items adequate for your needs and in good condition? Could you decide that for the next year (or longer) that you can manage with what you have? No new purchases. Give the money to the Lord and ask Him what He would like to do with it.
- What are your vacation plans? Could you forego a trip or simplify your plans in ways that reduce the cost and consumption involved? What might God do if you offer the time or money to Him?
- Maybe you are living relatively simply right now (e.g. because you’re a student). But inside you look forward to the time when you can improve your circumstances. Some of this is reasonable, but do you dream about what you will have one-day? Spend time with the Lord and begin re-orienting your hopes and dreams towards His Kingdom and His will. Repent of an avaricious heart before it begins to bear the fruit of indulgence and consumption.
- It is quite possible that you might be led by the Spirit into some combination of the above.

The plan is that over the next two weeks (and beyond) you will make specific decisions about how you will amend your life. Take action. The bolder you are the more space you will make for the new life in the Spirit.

You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires;²³ to be made new in the attitude of your minds;²⁴ and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Ephesians 4:22–24

EVENING PRAYER

- Prepare:** Review your day being attentive for:
- Something to learn from.
 - Something to be thankful for.
 - Something to repent of.
 - Something that especially seemed to have God's hand on it.
 - Something that is part of a recurring pattern.
- Ponder:** Read the Evening Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)
Dwell in a word, phrase or verse that comforts or instructs your heart.
- Pray:** Give thanks for special moments in your day.
Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him (Matthew 11:28)

*The Good Work of Praise*¹⁰
Strange Lord,
who would rule your creation
 through the crucified Son of a carpenter,
make us workers in your kingdom.
We want to work,
 but so often our work turns out to be nothing but busyness.
We think that if we are busy we must be doing something that you
 can use.
At least being busy hides our boredom.
Yet we know you would not have us busy,
having given us the good work of prayer.
Help us, in our busyness, learn to pray—
 so that all our work, all that is our lives,
 may glorify you.
In a world that for so many seems devoid of purpose,
we praise you for giving us the good work of praise.
HALLELUJAH AND AMEN.

Stanley Hauerwas

- Presence:**
- Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's
Spirit dwells in you?

(1 Cor 3:16)

¹⁰ Hauerwas, S. (2003). **Prayers Plainly Spoken**. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers.

Week 2

Sunday March 5 – Saturday March 11

Memory Verse for the Week

If the whole passage is too long, then try to memorize just the bolded verse.

Feel free to use another translation or passage if you prefer.

Matthew 16:24–27

(English Standard Version)

²⁴ Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

²⁶ For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul? ²⁷ For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done.”

Planning Ahead – This Week’s Events:

Worship Services	Sun Mar 5 – Contemporary worship 10am. Liturgy of St James 7pm.
Morning Prayer	Monday, Wednesday (with communion) and Friday, 7.00 – 7.45am

Whom would you like to serve or spend time with? Plan and arrange the details.

MORNING PRAYER

INSTRUCTED by the Spirit through the Word

See the explanation on page 6 in the introduction.

- **Encounter**

Sit silently for five minutes.

- Try not to let your mind race. Be still. Listen to your breathing. Relax.
- Be open to thoughts and musings that may come from the Holy Spirit.
- Experience your physical environment. Enjoy it.
- Do not think about or plan the specifics of your day.

- **Examine**

Read the Psalm for today (See table p. 7).

- Consider yourself with sober judgment.
- Confess where you have walked contrary to God's will.
- Rejoice where the Spirit is bearing fruit in your life.
- Celebrate forgiveness, blessings, comfort, growth, ...
- Remind yourself of God's goodness and commit your way to him.

- **Explore**

Read the Morning Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

- Notice impressions of **words** or **phrases** that stood out to you. Why?
- Notice impressions of **principles**, **examples** and **warnings**. What do they imply?
- Notice impressions of **responses** – right and/or wrong. Does this explain anything in your life?
- Notice impressions of **decisions** – made, recommended, condemned. How do you decide?
- Notice impressions of **results** – adversity, success, blessing, release, trouble. A word for you?
- Notice impressions of who/what is **commended** or **censured**. Connections to your life?

Is the Holy Spirit prompting you to repent of, or develop, a habit, attitude, or life practice?
What will you do? (Be specific)

- **Engage**

Enter a time of reflective and contemplative prayer.

- Discern: Ask God what He is saying to you.
- Dwell: Give thanks for resolution, joy. Talk through concerns, fears.
- Dream: In your imagination walk and talk with God through a visualized life situation.
- Discharge: Find peace, embrace what God has revealed. He is always good.

- End

Reborn and Unafraid

Lord of the Flood,
 wash us with your Spirit
 that we may be your ark of life,
 your peace in the sea of violence.
 Water is life; water cleans; water kills.
 Frightened, we are tempted to make a permanent home on the ark.
 But you force us to seek dry ground.
 We can do so only because you have taught us to cling to our baptisms,
 where we are drowned and reborn by the water and fire of your Spirit.
 So reborn, make us unafraid.
 AMEN.¹¹

DAILY ACTIVITIES

WORSHIP SERVICES

Contemporary worship 10am (UC)
 Liturgy of St. James 7pm (Sojourn)

EVENING PRAYER

Think:

The Ignatian Examen

CONSOLATION The basis for thanks and re-orientation of my life.

- What was life-giving for me today?
- Where/when did I sense God's presence?
- What was nurturing, soothing, refreshing to my soul?
- What drew me closer to God?

DESOLATION The basis for confession, drawing on God, re-orienting my life.

- What was life-draining for me today?
- Where/when did I feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, cold?
- Was there evil or sin— mine or another's?

Treasure:

Read the Evening Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)
 Dwell in a word, phrase or verse that comforts and encourages your heart.

Thank:

Even difficult situations and challenging relationships have redeeming features. Take time to notice where God prepared, or equipped, or helped you in the midst of your day.

¹¹ Hauerwas, S. (2003). *Prayers Plainly Spoken* (pp. 21–35). Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers.

Give thanks for special moments, memories, ideas, assistance, encouragement.
Give thanks for the people who came across your path.
Give thanks for the situations you experienced and what you learned.
Give thanks for what God has taught you through Scripture (today or in the past)
Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him (Matthew 11:28)

Trust:

Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him.

I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in
righteousness and justice, in love and compassion.

Hosea 2:19

MORNING PRAYER

INSTRUCTED by the Spirit through the Word

See the explanation on page 6 in the introduction.

- **Encounter**

Sit silently for five minutes

- Try not to let your mind race. Be still. Listen to your breathing. Relax.
- Be open to thoughts and musings that may come from the Holy Spirit.
- Experience your physical environment. Enjoy it.
- Do not think about or plan the specifics of your day.

- **Examine**

Read the Psalm for today (See table p. 7).

- Consider yourself with sober judgment.
- Confess where you have walked contrary to God's will.
- Rejoice where the Spirit is bearing fruit in your life.
- Celebrate forgiveness, blessings, comfort, growth, ...
- Remind yourself of God's goodness and commit your way to him.

- **Explore**

Read the Morning Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

- Notice impressions of **words** or **phrases** that stood out to you. Why?
- Notice impressions of **principles**, **examples** and **warnings**. What do they imply?
- Notice impressions of **responses** – right and/or wrong. Does this explain anything in your life?
- Notice impressions of **decisions** – made, recommended, condemned. How do you decide?
- Notice impressions of **results** – adversity, success, blessing, release, trouble. A word for you?
- Notice impressions of who/what is **commended** or **censured**. Connections to your life?

Is the Holy Spirit prompting you to repent of, or develop, a habit, attitude, or life practice?

What will you do? (Be specific)

- **Engage**

Enter a time of reflective and contemplative prayer.

Discern: Ask God what He is saying to you.

Dwell: Give thanks for resolution, joy. Talk through concerns, fears.

Dream: In your imagination walk and talk with God through a visualized life situation.

Discharge: Find peace, embrace what God has revealed. He is always good.

- End

Give Us the Sight of Children

Light of True Light, true God from true God,
 give us clear sight,
 courage to see your sinful, rebellious, dreadful world as it is,
 not as we want it to be.
 Save us from narcissistic fascinations
 that cloud our understanding with our unknowings.
 Give us clear and innocent sight,
 the sight of children,
 capable of seeing beauty in a common rock.
 Your creation glows with your fiery glory.
 Draw us to the fire,
 consume us with your glory,
 that we may glow with your salvation,
 your light for the world.
 AMEN.¹²

DAILY ACTIVITIES - READING

Hauerwas, Stanley. (2000). **A Better Hope: Resources for a Church Confronting Capitalism, Democracy, and Postmodernity** (pp. 189–192). Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press.

SICKNESS AS SIN

Given the choice, most people in America would rather be sick than a sinner. “Sin” sounds too judgmental for a “compassionate culture.” Sickness has become our way to indicate deviancy without blame. Karl Menninger lamented this development in his book *Whatever Became of Sin?* He acknowledged, however, that his attempt to rehabilitate the language of sin is not for the sake of the word itself “but for the reintroduction of the concepts of guilt and moral responsibility.” It is ironic that many conservative Christians were sympathetic with Menninger’s effort to reclaim sin, not only because his account of sin drew on conceptions derived from Protestant liberalism, that is, Tillich and Reinhold Niebuhr, but because his conception was hopelessly moralistic.² What could be more sinful than the assumption that our guilt might tell us something interesting about our sin? Guilt is, after all, just an invitation to self-righteousness.

Sin and sickness are not easily distinguished, but distinguish them we must. I believe sickness is a manifestation of sin, but how to say that without inviting false theodical speculations is difficult. Indeed in our time the discovery that we are sick is often the nearest analogy we have for understanding what it means to discover and confess we are sinners. Alcoholics discover they are possessed by a power they do not remembering choosing but for which they must take responsibility if they are to stand any chance of being free from that possession. In like manner Christians confess that we are sinners. Sin, like

¹² Hauerwas, S. (2003). **Prayers Plainly Spoken** (pp. 21–35). Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers.

sickness, seems like something that happens to us more than what we do. Yet Christians believe we are rightly held accountable for our sins.

Before exploring how sickness manifests our sin I need to make clear why for most people the language of being sick seems more intelligible than the language of being a sinner. I think the answer is very simple—we are atheists. Even if we say we believe in God, most of our lives are constituted by practices that assume that God does not exist. The most effective means I have discovered to illustrate this is to ask people how they want to die. We all want to die quickly, painlessly, in our sleep, and without being a burden. We do not want to be a burden because we can no longer trust our children. We want to die quickly, painlessly, and in our sleep because when we die we do not want to know we are dying.

It is quite interesting to contrast this way of dying with the past, when the death Christians feared was a sudden death. Such a death meant they might die unreconciled with their neighbors, their church, and, of course, God. We no longer fear the judgment of God, but we do fear death. So our lives are lived in an attempt to avoid death (or at least the knowledge that we are to die) as long as we can. As any doctor can tell you, sickness—even hangnails—is the intimation of death. Accordingly we order our lives to be free of sickness. But so ordered, sickness becomes overdetermined as a description that indicates any aspect of our lives that threatens death. Growing old turns out therefore to be an illness.

This set of assumptions, of course, has resulted in giving extraordinary power to the medical profession. The hospitals at Duke, Duke North and Duke South, are like the cathedrals of the past—our Chartres and Notre Dames that testify not as those cathedrals did to what we love but rather to what we fear. As I often point out to seminarians, if you want some idea of what medieval Christianity felt like, hang around any modern research medical center. The term *byzantine* fails to do justice to the complex forms of power exercised in such a context. Nowhere is such power more manifest than in the ability of those in medicine to redescribe our lives through the language of illness. Thus we are now being taught that “baldness” is a condition that we can “cure.”

That medicine has such power is one of the reasons medical schools are more morally impressive than, for example, divinity schools. When challenged about where schools of virtue may exist, I often say Paris Island and/or medical schools. For example, a person can come to divinity school today saying, “I am not really into Christology this year. I am really into relating. I would like to take more courses in CPE.” They are likely to be confirmed in that option by being told, “Right, take CPE; after all that is what ministry is—relating. Learn to be a wounded healer.”

Contrast that with a medical student who might say, “I am not really into anatomy this year. I am really into people. I would like to take another course in psychiatry.” He or she would be told, “We do not care what you are ‘into.’ Take anatomy or ship out.” That is real moral education, if not formation. Why is medical education so morally superior to ministerial education? I think the answer is very simple. No one believes that an inadequately trained priest might damage their salvation; but people do believe that an inadequately trained doctor might hurt them.

It is a mistake, moreover, to blame physicians for having such power over our lives. They simply reflect who we are. In many ways those in medicine suffer from our determination to redescribe our lives in the language of sickness. For example, we now expect doctors to keep us alive to the point that when we die we do not have to know we are dying. We then get to blame doctors for keeping us alive to no point. Physicians are sued for doing too much or too little to “cure us,” because they now serve patients who have no sense of the limits of medicine. Patients have forgotten what every doctor knows, namely, that the final description for every patient for whom a physician cares is “dead.”

I think it would be a mistake to think the overdetermination of the language of sickness in our culture to be a conspiracy by those in medicine to acquire power. On the contrary, I believe patient and physician

alike to manifest the fundamental presumption of liberal social orders that assume freedom to be not only the ideal but the necessary condition for moral and political life. As I am fond of putting the matter, the project of modernity has been to produce people who believe they should have no story other than the story they choose when they have no story. Of course what such a story cannot explain is how that story became our story. In short, modernity names those social orders in which freedom became our fate.

As a result we suffer from those forms of life we believe necessary to make us free. We desire to be free from illness, and illness is now understood as any condition that limits my choices. Sickness names those aspects of my life I have not chosen. This creates the desire of modern people to find the “cause” of their illness in some “lifestyle” choice: such a “cause” at least makes their suffering intelligible. That is why the illness and death of children, which is a challenge for any time and people, is a particular challenge for us. Medicine too often becomes the institutionalized practice we use to free us from our fear of sickness and death which, because we can only view death and our fear of it as surds, now threaten to tyrannize our lives. That we have now become subject to the power of medicine is not the fault of doctors and others in healthcare professions but the reflection of our inability to make sense that we are creatures destined to die. Put bluntly, we are unable to make sense of our being sick because we no longer understand what it means for our lives to be captured by sin.

EVENING PRAYER

Think:

The Ignatian Examen

CONSOLATION The basis for thanks and re-orientation of my life.

- *What was life-giving for me today?*
- *Where/when did I sense God's presence?*
- *What was nurturing, soothing, refreshing to my soul?*
- *What drew me closer to God?*

DESOLATION The basis for confession, drawing on God, re-orienting my life.

- *What was life-draining for me today?*
- *Where/when did I feel alone, far from God?*
- *What was stressful, joyless, dark, cold?*
- *Was there evil or sin— mine or another's?*

Treasure:

Read the Evening Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

Dwell in a word, phrase or verse that comforts and encourages your heart.

Thank:

Even difficult situations and challenging relationships have redeeming features. Take time to notice where God prepared, or equipped, or helped you in the midst of your day.

Give thanks for special moments, memories, ideas, assistance, encouragement.

Give thanks for the people who came across your path.

Give thanks for the situations you experienced and what you learned.

Give thanks for what God has taught you through Scripture (today or in the past)

Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him (Matthew 11:28)

Trust:

Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him.

He prayed to the LORD, "Isn't this what I said, LORD, when I was still at home? ... I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity.

Jonah 4:2

MORNING PRAYER

INSTRUCTED by the Spirit through the Word

See the explanation on page 6 in the introduction.

- **Encounter**

Sit silently for five minutes

- Try not to let your mind race. Be still. Listen to your breathing. Relax.
- Be open to thoughts and musings that may come from the Holy Spirit.
- Experience your physical environment. Enjoy it.
- Do not think about or plan the specifics of your day.

- **Examine**

Read the Psalm for today (See table p. 7).

- Consider yourself with sober judgment.
- Confess where you have walked contrary to God's will.
- Rejoice where the Spirit is bearing fruit in your life.
- Celebrate forgiveness, blessings, comfort, growth, ...
- Remind yourself of God's goodness and commit your way to him.

- **Explore**

Read the Morning Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

- Notice impressions of **words** or **phrases** that stood out to you. Why?
- Notice impressions of **principles, examples** and **warnings**. What do they imply?
- Notice impressions of **responses** – right and/or wrong. Does this explain anything in your life?
- Notice impressions of **decisions** – made, recommended, condemned. How do you decide?
- Notice impressions of **results** – adversity, success, blessing, release, trouble. A word for you?
- Notice impressions of who/what is **commended** or **censured**. Connections to your life?

Is the Holy Spirit prompting you to repent of, or develop, a habit, attitude, or life practice?

What will you do? (Be specific)

- **Engage**

Enter a time of reflective and contemplative prayer.

- | | |
|------------|---|
| Discern: | Ask God what He is saying to you. |
| Dwell: | Give thanks for resolution, joy. Talk through concerns, fears. |
| Dream: | In your imagination walk and talk with God through a visualized life situation. |
| Discharge: | Find peace, embrace what God has revealed. He is always good. |

- End

Who Am I to Pray?

Gracious God,
we thank you for the gift of prayer.
What an extraordinary thing that we can pray to you,
unburden ourselves before you,
place our cares, woes and joys before you.
I confess I find praying an awkward business.
I keep thinking, *Who am I to pray?*
But I know that to be false humility,
hiding my prideful desire to be my own creator.
So we pray a prayer of joy in prayer,
asking that we become your prayers for one another.
*AMEN.*¹³

DAILY ACTIVITIES – BIOGRAPHY of a Reformer

George, T. (2003). Luther, Martin. In T. Larsen, D. W. Bebbington, M. A. Noll, & S. Carter (Eds.), *Biographical dictionary of evangelicals* (pp. 375–379). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

LUTHER, Martin (1483–1546), German Reformer, stands at the headwaters of that vast movement of ecclesial and spiritual renewal known as the Reformation. He was born on 10 November 1483 in the Thuringian village of Eisleben. He was the son of Hans Luder, a copper miner, and his respectable wife, Margaret Ziegler. He was named Martin because he was baptized on 11 November, the feast day of St Martin of Tours.

Although Luther later complained of the harsh discipline he received as a young boy, his parents recognized that he was a precocious child and provided for his early education at Latin schools in Magdeburg and Eisenach. In 1501 Luther matriculated at the University of Erfurt, where he received his baccalaureate (1502) and master's (1505) degrees. He then took up the study of law in accordance with his father's wishes.

In the summer of 1505, however, Luther's career underwent a dramatic change when, in the midst of a violent thunderstorm, he cried out in panic, 'Saint Ann, help me, I will become a monk.' To the chagrin of his friends and parents, Luther insisted on fulfilling his vow. He joined the monastery of the Observant Augustinian friars, a strict religious order in Erfurt. By all accounts, Luther was a conscientious monk and kept the rule of his order scrupulously. But his many prayers, vigils and fastings only made him more uncertain of his own salvation. At every turn he was frustrated in his quest to find a gracious God.

Luther was overwhelmed by his sense of God's sovereign power and holiness. After being ordained priest in 1507, Luther nearly fainted at the altar while presiding at his first mass. The idea that a finite creature could hold in its hands the very body of Christ terrified him. But Luther was troubled even more by his fallenness and falling short of God's standard. Could he be sure that he had remembered every single sin in the confessional? On one occasion Johann von Staupitz, Luther's confessor, admonished him to forget his scruples and simply love God. 'Love God?' retorted Luther, 'I hate him.' Luther experienced the dark night of the soul, when he seemed to tremble on the verge of the abyss, when the rustling of a

¹³ Hauerwas, S. (2003). *Prayers Plainly Spoken* (pp. 21–35). Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers.

mere fear was enough to produce in him the terrors of hell. Luther later described these bouts of dread as *Anfechtungen*, times of testing and fierce assault from the devil.

Luther found relief only through his 'discovery of the Gospel', which he made after a long, arduous study of the Scriptures. In the preface to the collection of his Latin writings in 1545, Luther recalled this process: 'I did not learn my theology all at once, but I had to search deeper for it where my trials and temptations took me ... living, nay rather dying and being damned make a theologian, not understanding, reading or speculation.' Luther wrestled with the Bible, especially the Psalms and Paul's letter to the Romans. He stumbled over the phrase 'the righteousness of God' in Romans 1:17. This verse brought him no comfort so long as he interpreted the righteousness of God as the exacting justice by which God condemned sinners. By focusing on the atoning work of Christ on the cross, Luther came to believe that the righteousness of God to which Paul referred was the righteousness secured by Christ alone. On the basis of the righteousness secured by Christ, God declared unworthy sinners acceptable in his sight. On the basis of this insight, Luther developed his doctrine of justification by faith alone (*per solam fidem*).

...

Luther's conflict with the church of Rome was the result of both his biblical studies and his pastoral labours in Wittenberg. Within the space of five years, Luther was catapulted onto the stage of European history. The obscure monk became a famous theologian at the centre of an international movement that would leave the church in the West permanently divided.

On 31 October 1517 Luther posted on the door of the Castle Church of Wittenberg ninety-five theses protesting against the selling of indulgences and calling for a public debate on this issue. Luther was incensed because members of his own church had purchased indulgences from the Dominican Johann Tetzel. Luther attacked the assumption that forgiveness of sins or release from purgatory could be bought by such a monetary exchange. The sale of indulgences, Luther argued, undermined the sacrament of penance and reinforced a theology of cheap grace.

Using Erasmus' Greek New Testament of 1516, Luther interpreted *poenitentiam agite* ('do penance') in the original biblical sense of *metanoiete*, 'change your mind and heart; be converted'. Thus, in the first of his ninety-five theses, Luther declared: 'When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said "Repent", he meant for the entire life to be one of repentance.' Other theses called into question the treasury of merits, the invocation of the saints, and the power of the papacy. Luther's call for an academic debate became an ecclesiastical *cause célèbre* as his ninety-five theses were disseminated far and wide.

The pope sent Cardinal Cajetan to Germany to persuade Luther to recant his teachings, but to no avail. In April 1518 Luther further clarified his views in the Heidelberg Disputation, at which time he also won over Martin Bucer, later the Reformer of Strasbourg. On this occasion Luther challenged certain fundamental assumptions of medieval theology, which he called the theology of glory, in favour of a more Christocentric 'theology of the cross'.

...

Luther was excommunicated in the papal bull *Exsurge Domine*, which he burned publicly along with the corpus of canon law in December 1520. He was then summoned to appear before the Diet of Worms, where he was asked to retract his writings. He refused to do so, claiming that his conscience was captive to the Word of God. Unless he was persuaded by reason and conscience, he said, he would not recant. His famous words, 'Here I stand, I can do no other', became the watchword of the Reformation.

The 1520s witnessed the consolidation of the Lutheran Reformation, culminating in the famous Augsburg Confession of 1530. Following his defiant stand at the Diet of Worms, Luther had been taken secretly to the Wartburg Castle near Eisenach, where he lived in seclusion for several months under the protection of his territorial prince, Elector Frederick III. He spent his time wisely, however, translating the New Testament into German. His *Das Neue Testament Deutsche* was published in 1522. His work on the Old Testament took much longer, and his complete translation of the Bible appeared only in 1534. Luther's translation of the Bible influenced the development of the German language in the same way as the King James Version influenced English.

...

As Luther grew older, his health began to fail. He was beset by numerous ailments, including kidney stones, gout, constipation, urine retention and depression. Near the end of his life, his attacks against his enemies became even more extreme. He excoriated the papacy, which he equated with the Antichrist. He was never reconciled with Zwingli and his followers, whose memorialist doctrine of the Lord's Supper Luther regarded as a betrayal of the Christian faith. Most disturbing of all in the light of recent history were Luther's virulent attacks against the Jews, whose refusal to embrace the gospel led him to call for their banishment from Germany. Although Luther's disdain for the Jews had little in common with Hitler's racist policies, it is not surprising that the Nazis cited Luther as a precursor of their own antisemitism.

Luther's legacy does not lie primarily in the saintliness of his life. His faults were many; his vices were sometimes more visible than his virtues. Yet despite his foibles and sins and blindspots, he was able to conceive with remarkable clarity his belief in the paradoxical character of the human condition and the great possibility of human redemption through Jesus Christ. Luther's true legacy is his belief in the gracious character of God. 'What else was Luther,' asked Karl Barth, 'than a teacher of the Christian church whom one can hardly celebrate in any other way but to listen to him?'

EVENING PRAYER

Think:

The Ignatian Examen

CONSOLATION The basis for thanks and re-orientation of my life.

- What was life-giving for me today?
- Where/when did I sense God's presence?
- What was nurturing, soothing, refreshing to my soul?
- What drew me closer to God?

DESOLATION The basis for confession, drawing on God, re-orienting my life.

- What was life-draining for me today?
- Where/when did I feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, cold?
- Was there evil or sin— mine or another's?

Treasure:

Read the Evening Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

Dwell in a word, phrase or verse that comforts and encourages your heart.

Thank: *Even difficult situations and challenging relationships have redeeming features. Take time to notice where God prepared, or equipped, or helped you in the midst of your day.*

Give thanks for special moments, memories, ideas, assistance, encouragement.

Give thanks for the people who came across your path.

Give thanks for the situations you experienced and what you learned.

Give thanks for what God has taught you through Scripture (today or in the past)

Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him (Matthew 11:28)

Trust: Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him.

I led them with cords of human kindness, with ties of love. To
them I was like one who lifts a little child to the cheek, and I
bent down to feed them.

Hosea 11:4

MORNING PRAYER

INSTRUCTED by the Spirit through the Word

See the explanation on page 6 in the introduction.

- **Encounter**

Sit silently for five minutes

- Try not to let your mind race. Be still. Listen to your breathing. Relax.
- Be open to thoughts and musings that may come from the Holy Spirit.
- Experience your physical environment. Enjoy it.
- Do not think about or plan the specifics of your day.

- **Examine**

Read the Psalm for today (See table p. 7).

- Consider yourself with sober judgment.
- Confess where you have walked contrary to God's will.
- Rejoice where the Spirit is bearing fruit in your life.
- Celebrate forgiveness, blessings, comfort, growth, ...
- Remind yourself of God's goodness and commit your way to him.

- **Explore**

Read the Morning Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

- Notice impressions of **words** or **phrases** that stood out to you. Why?
- Notice impressions of **principles**, **examples** and **warnings**. What do they imply?
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Is the Holy Spirit prompting you to repent of, or develop, a habit, attitude, or life practice?
What will you do? (Be specific)

- **Engage**

Enter a time of reflective and contemplative prayer.

- Discern: Ask God what He is saying to you.
- Dwell: Give thanks for resolution, joy. Talk through concerns, fears.
- Dream: In your imagination walk and talk with God through a visualized life situation.
- Discharge: Find peace, embrace what God has revealed. He is always good.

- End

Living Confessions of Love

Lord of All Life,
 we come before you not knowing who we are.
 We strut our stuff,
 trying to impress others with our self-confidence.
 In the process we hope to be what we pretend.
 Save us from such pretense,
 that we might learn who we are through trust in you
 to make us more than we can imagine.
 Help us, Augustine-like, to reread our lives as confessions of sin
 made possible by your love.
 Bind up our wounds and our joys
 so that our lives finally make sense only as a prayer to you.
 AMEN.¹⁴

DAILY ACTIVITY - ARTWORK



Carl Heinrich Bloch, *Healing of the Blind Man*, oil on canvas, 1871

¹⁴ Hauerwas, S. (2003). *Prayers Plainly Spoken* (pp. 21–35). Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers.

Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." So they called to the blind man, "Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you." Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus. "What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asked him. The blind man said, "Rabbi, I want to see." "Go," said Jesus, "your faith has healed you." Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road. – Mark 10:48-52

In this luminous painting, a crowd gathers round as Jesus reaches out to heal the blind man. Jesus is in the very centre, with all other figures leaning in towards him. Each figure displays a different reaction to the scene unfolding in front of them, from eagerness and excitement to curiosity to skepticism. Bloch has created a very serene Jesus; peace seems to emanate from him. Adding to this illusion is the way in which the artist has used backlighting to create a halo around the head of Christ.

1. When in your life have you asked something of God? How has he responded?
2. Mark tells us that immediately upon receiving sight, the blind man "followed Jesus along the road." How have you reacted when God has answered a prayer, big or small?
3. Take time to meditate on the words to Amazing Grace, a hymn published nearly 100 years before this painting was produced: *Amazing Grace! How sweet the sound / That saved a wretch like me. / I once was lost, but now am found / Was blind but now I see.*

EVENING PRAYER

Think:

The Ignatian Examen

CONSOLATION The basis for thanks and re-orientation of my life.

- *What was life-giving for me today?*
- *Where/when did I sense God's presence?*
- *What was nurturing, soothing, refreshing to my soul?*
- *What drew me closer to God?*

DESOLATION The basis for confession, drawing on God, re-orienting my life.

- *What was life-draining for me today?*
- *Where/when did I feel alone, far from God?*
- *What was stressful, joyless, dark, cold?*
- *Was there evil or sin— mine or another's?*

Treasure:

Read the Evening Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

Dwell in a word, phrase or verse that comforts and encourages your heart.

Thank:

Even difficult situations and challenging relationships have redeeming features. Take time to notice where God prepared, or equipped, or helped you in the midst of your day.

Give thanks for special moments, memories, ideas, assistance, encouragement.

Give thanks for the people who came across your path.
Give thanks for the situations you experienced and what you learned.
Give thanks for what God has taught you through Scripture (today or in the past)
Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him (Matthew 11:28)

Trust:

Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him.

The LORD is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those
who trust in him.

Nahum 1:7

MORNING PRAYER

INSTRUCTED by the Spirit through the Word

See the explanation on page 6 in the introduction.

- **Encounter**

Sit silently for five minutes

- Try not to let your mind race. Be still. Listen to your breathing. Relax.
- Be open to thoughts and musings that may come from the Holy Spirit.
- Experience your physical environment. Enjoy it.
- Do not think about or plan the specifics of your day.

- **Examine**

Read the Psalm for today (See table p. 7).

- Consider yourself with sober judgment.
- Confess where you have walked contrary to God's will.
- Rejoice where the Spirit is bearing fruit in your life.
- Celebrate forgiveness, blessings, comfort, growth, ...
- Remind yourself of God's goodness and commit your way to him.

- **Explore**

Read the Morning Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

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What will you do? (Be specific)

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- Discern: Ask God what He is saying to you.
- Dwell: Give thanks for resolution, joy. Talk through concerns, fears.
- Dream: In your imagination walk and talk with God through a visualized life situation.
- Discharge: Find peace, embrace what God has revealed. He is always good.

- End

Free Us from Self-Fascination

Lord Almighty,
 we say we want to serve you,
 we say we want to help others less fortunate than ourselves,
 we say we want justice.
 But the truth is, we want power and status
 because we so desperately need to be loved.
 Free us from our self-fascination
 and the anxious activity it breeds,
 so that we might be what we say we want to be—
 loved by you and thus capable of unselfish service.
 AMEN.¹⁵

DAILY ACTIVITY - READING

Volf, M. (2010). **Against the Tide: Love in a Time of Petty Dreams and Persisting Enmities** (pp. 12–14). Cambridge, U.K.; Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Scaling a Sandy Slope

“Incredible wealth” and “breathless pace”—two of the most prominent features of Western societies as the old millennium ended and the new began. True, it is breathless pace for all, and incredible wealth only for some. Yet the eyes of all are set on material wealth, and so we keep running. Faster and faster. In his classic *The Affluent Society*, John Kenneth Galbraith compared the struggle in modern societies to satisfy wants with the “efforts of the squirrel to keep abreast of the wheel that is propelled by his own efforts.” We work in order to spend and we spend in order to work; the faster we work the more we spend, and the more we spend the faster we must work. “If you want to have more cake tomorrow, you have to eat more today.” This counterintuitive wisdom of today’s economic life has become a basic rule for the way we live. And if anyone asks, “Why would one want to eat so much cake in the first place?” we give her a look of surprised incomprehension.

One day I was leafing through a new volume in *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*. In one of his early unpublished writings, Nietzsche observed his contemporaries’ obsession with power, glory, and moneymaking. If we give our world a good look, he claimed, we will see “refined beasts of prey run, and we [ourselves] run[ning] in their midst.” He continued:

The tremendous mobility of human beings on the great earthly desert, their founding of cities and states, their waging of wars, their ceaseless gathering and dispersing, their confused mingling, their imitation and deceit of one another, their mutual outwitting and trampling underfoot, their cries in distress and their joyous cheers in victory—all this is a continuation of animality, as if human beings were intended to regress and be cheated out of their metaphysical disposition; indeed, as if nature,

¹⁵ Hauerwas, S. (2003). **Prayers Plainly Spoken** (pp. 21–35). Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers.

having yearned and labored for human beings for so long, now recoiled from them in fear and preferred to return to the unconsciousness of instinct.

The bait with which human beings have been lured into slavery to their inane desires, says Nietzsche, is “earthly happiness.” And the veil they hang “over the vulgar and animalistic face of a wild lust for existence” in order to hide its true nature from themselves is a “culture of luxury”—“the rich and powerful human being, a free personality, the cultured state.”

The slippage into animality is neither human fate nor a result of the mindlessness of consumers or the deviousness of producers, argued Nietzsche. It is rather a strategy of evasion.

Everyone knows from his own experience how unpleasant memories suddenly force themselves upon us and how we then make an effort to drive them out of our heads by means of violent gestures and sounds—but the general structure of our life indicates that we always find ourselves in such a state: What is it that assails us so often, what mosquito is this that refuses to let us sleep?

In this fragmentary text, Nietzsche does not tell us what it is that disturbs our rest and what troubling message it seeks to whisper into our ears. The only clue we get is a mysterious reference to our “metaphysical disposition” that nudges us to elevate our “gaze beyond the horizon of the animal.”

The idea of a human “metaphysical disposition” led my thought back across the centuries to Gregory of Nyssa, whom I read in preparation for teaching a class on eschatology. Gregory contrasts the true progress of a soul who seeks the infinite God with the seeming progress of a soul oriented toward finite things. The latter is “like those who scale a sandy slope. Even if they look like they are traversing great tracts of ground on foot, they tire themselves to no avail. Each time the sand slides to the bottom, in such a way that there is a great effort of movement but not progress.”

To use a different metaphor, those who merely seek sensual pleasures, material possessions, or earthly glory are like children whose carefully crafted sandcastles are washed by the waves, like beasts that go in circles with eyes blinkered and necks tethered to the millstone of this life. If human beings seek to hold onto things that are dissolving and flowing away from them, they will end up “swept away by the current of what is unstable.”

The only proper object of human desires is the inexhaustible richness of the eternal God. As Hans Urs von Balthasar puts it in *Presence and Thought*, for Gregory, the created spirit is meant to realize that “paradoxical synthesis of a desire that can only grow in joy, because the infinity of the object loved increases and rejuvenates in it for all eternity an impetus that tends toward an end that cannot be attained.” If Gregory is right, it could be that the “mosquito ... that refuses to let us sleep” and that we are trying to drive away with our frantic activity is none other than the divine Spirit telling us that our ultimate fulfillment is only in the mystery of the infinite God.

Ludwig Feuerbach famously suggested that we project our worldly ideals onto God and then worship them; God’s infinity is the reverse side of human insatiability. But I suspect that we are involved in an inverse projection, by which we infuse the works of our own hands with the spurious ability to satisfy our hunger for the infinite God. The endless stream of new goods and services that keeps us running at “breathless pace” has become for us a cornucopia of mystery, protection, and salvation. It looks utterly worldly, and yet inscribed all over it is a misdirected desire for God.

EVENING PRAYER

Think:

The Ignatian Examen

CONSOLATION The basis for thanks and re-orientation of my life.

- What was life-giving for me today?
- Where/when did I sense God's presence?
- What was nurturing, soothing, refreshing to my soul?
- What drew me closer to God?

DESOLATION The basis for confession, drawing on God, re-orienting my life.

- What was life-draining for me today?
- Where/when did I feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, cold?
- Was there evil or sin— mine or another's?

Treasure:

Read the Evening Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

Dwell in a word, phrase or verse that comforts and encourages your heart.

Thank:

Even difficult situations and challenging relationships have redeeming features. Take time to notice where God prepared, or equipped, or helped you in the midst of your day.

Give thanks for special moments, memories, ideas, assistance, encouragement.

Give thanks for the people who came across your path.

Give thanks for the situations you experienced and what you learned.

Give thanks for what God has taught you through Scripture (today or in the past)

Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him (Matthew 11:28)

Trust:

Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him.

The LORD your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves.

He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing.

Zephaniah 3:17

MORNING PRAYER

INSTRUCTED by the Spirit through the Word

See the explanation on page 6 in the introduction.

- **Encounter**

Sit silently for five minutes

- Try not to let your mind race. Be still. Listen to your breathing. Relax.
- Be open to thoughts and musings that may come from the Holy Spirit.
- Experience your physical environment. Enjoy it.
- Do not think about or plan the specifics of your day.

- **Examine**

Read the Psalm for today (See table p. 7).

- Consider yourself with sober judgment.
- Confess where you have walked contrary to God's will.
- Rejoice where the Spirit is bearing fruit in your life.
- Celebrate forgiveness, blessings, comfort, growth, ...
- Remind yourself of God's goodness and commit your way to him.

- **Explore**

Read the Morning Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

- Notice impressions of **words** or **phrases** that stood out to you. Why?
- Notice impressions of **principles, examples** and **warnings**. What do they imply?
- Notice impressions of **responses** – right and/or wrong. Does this explain anything in your life?
- Notice impressions of **decisions** – made, recommended, condemned. How do you decide?
- Notice impressions of **results** – adversity, success, blessing, release, trouble. A word for you?
- Notice impressions of who/what is **commended** or **censured**. Connections to your life?

Is the Holy Spirit prompting you to repent of, or develop, a habit, attitude, or life practice?

What will you do? (Be specific)

- **Engage**

Enter a time of reflective and contemplative prayer.

- | | |
|------------|---|
| Discern: | Ask God what He is saying to you. |
| Dwell: | Give thanks for resolution, joy. Talk through concerns, fears. |
| Dream: | In your imagination walk and talk with God through a visualized life situation. |
| Discharge: | Find peace, embrace what God has revealed. He is always good. |

- End

Faltering Rulers

Master of the Universe,
 you have made us your servants,
 kings and queens in your world.
 We confess we do not feel much like rulers:
 we are not only incapable of doing what we want,
 we are not even sure what we should or do want.
 We, in short, do not even seem to rule ourselves.
 As a result we fail you,
 our brothers and sisters in Christ,
 our brothers and sisters who are in the world,
 and ourselves.
 Give us the enthusiasm of your Spirit,
 that we may be so filled with your love
 that others will be attracted to your rule.
 As those ruled by you,
 may we witness how service can govern.
*AMEN.*¹⁶

DAILY ACTIVITY – Contemplate a Poem or Hymn

Eternal Power!

Eternal Power, whose high abode
 Becomes the grandeur of a God:
 Infinite lengths beyond the bounds
 Where stars revolve their little rounds:

Thee while the first archangel sings,
 He hides his face behind his wings:
 And ranks of shining thrones around
 Fall worshipping, and spread the ground.

Lord, what shall earth and ashes do?
 We would adore our Maker too;
 From sin and dust to Thee we cry,
 The Great, the Holy, and the High.

Earth, from afar, hath heard Thy fame,
 And worms have learned to lisp Thy Name;

¹⁶ Hauerwas, S. (2003). *Prayers Plainly Spoken* (pp. 21–35). Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers.

But Oh the glories of Thy mind
Leave all our soaring thoughts behind.

God is in heaven, and men below:
Be short our tunes; our words be few:
A solemn reverence checks our songs,
And praise sits silent on our tongues.

ISAAC WATTS, 1674–1748¹⁷

1. Does the writer feel that life has changed or should change? How do you know?
2. What message is the author trying to convey or help you understand?
3. Does it relate to anything in your own life?
4. Does it give you a new way of looking at something?
5. Consider how any figurative language (simile, metaphor, personification, etc.) enlightens you.

EVENING PRAYER

Think:

The Ignatian Examen

CONSOLATION The basis for thanks and re-orientation of my life.

- *What was life-giving for me today?*
- *Where/when did I sense God's presence?*
- *What was nurturing, soothing, refreshing to my soul?*
- *What drew me closer to God?*

DESOLATION The basis for confession, drawing on God, re-orienting my life.

- *What was life-draining for me today?*
- *Where/when did I feel alone, far from God?*
- *What was stressful, joyless, dark, cold?*
- *Was there evil or sin— mine or another's?*

Treasure:

Read the Evening Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

Dwell in a word, phrase or verse that comforts and encourages your heart.

Thank:

Even difficult situations and challenging relationships have redeeming features. Take time to notice where God prepared, or equipped, or helped you in the midst of your day.

Give thanks for special moments, memories, ideas, assistance, encouragement.

Give thanks for the people who came across your path.

Give thanks for the situations you experienced and what you learned.

Give thanks for what God has taught you through Scripture (today or in the past)

Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him (Matthew 11:28)

¹⁷ Tozer, A. W. (1991). *The Christian Book of Mystical Verse* (p. 1). Camp Hill, PA: WingSpread.

Trust:

Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him.

I will heal their waywardness and love them freely, for my anger
has turned away from them.

Hosea 14:4

MORNING PRAYER

INSTRUCTED by the Spirit through the Word

See the explanation on page 6 in the introduction.

- **Encounter**

Sit silently for five minutes

- Try not to let your mind race. Be still. Listen to your breathing. Relax.
- Be open to thoughts and musings that may come from the Holy Spirit.
- Experience your physical environment. Enjoy it.
- Do not think about or plan the specifics of your day.

- **Examine**

Read the Psalm for today (See table p. 7).

- Consider yourself with sober judgment.
- Confess where you have walked contrary to God's will.
- Rejoice where the Spirit is bearing fruit in your life.
- Celebrate forgiveness, blessings, comfort, growth, ...
- Remind yourself of God's goodness and commit your way to him.

- **Explore**

Read the Morning Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

- Notice impressions of **words** or **phrases** that stood out to you. Why?
- Notice impressions of **principles**, **examples** and **warnings**. What do they imply?
- Notice impressions of **responses** – right and/or wrong. Does this explain anything in your life?
- Notice impressions of **decisions** – made, recommended, condemned. How do you decide?
- Notice impressions of **results** – adversity, success, blessing, release, trouble. A word for you?
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Is the Holy Spirit prompting you to repent of, or develop, a habit, attitude, or life practice?

What will you do? (Be specific)

- **Engage**

Enter a time of reflective and contemplative prayer.

- Discern: Ask God what He is saying to you.
- Dwell: Give thanks for resolution, joy. Talk through concerns, fears.
- Dream: In your imagination walk and talk with God through a visualized life situation.
- Discharge: Find peace, embrace what God has revealed. He is always good.

- **End**

Worthy Agents of Your Peace

Saving God,
free us from hardness of heart,
take from us all pride and pretension,
strip us clean of all that makes us incapable
of being witnesses of your gentle love.
Make us worthy agents of your peace,
so that even as we contend with one another
the world may say, "But see how they love one another."
*AMEN.*¹⁸

DAILY ACTIVITY – Lectio Divina

LECTIO DIVINA¹⁹

This is an exercise in letting Scripture speak to you through attentive reading.

- **Preparation:** Sit in silence; Anticipate an encounter with God mediated through the Spirit. Let Him speak through the word and also be aware of what you bring to this encounter. That is, what is in your heart and on your mind? (Note how that changes as you read)

- **Reading:** Read an appointed biblical passage; ideally not more than 3 verses. Use a part of one of the readings from the past week that was special for you (see the lectionary table on p. 7).

Read the verses through slowly. Savour the words. Hear their meaning.
Read them again.

Consider what the passage means at an objective or historical level, what the biblical author intends to say. *The tools of Bible study are applied.* Use all knowledge and understanding to the encounter. This is the first part of discovery – *what does the text mean?*

- **Meditation:** Read the text *aloud* a third time. Attempt to discern meanings at a subjective level: the more particularized or personal meanings of the passage for you in our own time and circumstances. What words, phrases, images stirred something within you? Where is your attention drawn? This is the second part of discovery – *what might the Spirit be saying to you today?*
- **Prayer:** Read the text a fourth time. Consider how the Spirit moves you to pray. Offer the prayers silently or aloud.
- **Contemplation:** Read the text a fifth time. Let your soul rest on aspect/s that have stirred something in you. Like lying in the sun, bask in its truth. This is a time to 'marinate' in what has been revealed to you. Do not explore further – enjoy what you have now.
- **Incarnation:** Apply your discovery to your life and ministry. What would God have you proclaim, en flesh, be, do?

¹⁸ Hauerwas, S. (2003). *Prayers Plainly Spoken* (pp. 21–35). Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers.

¹⁹ Adapted from: Jonathan Linman, *Holy Conversation: Spirituality for Worship*. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2010), p. 35.

EVENING PRAYER

Think:

The Ignatian Examen

CONSOLATION The basis for thanks and re-orientation of my life.

- *What was life-giving for me today?*
- *Where/when did I sense God's presence?*
- *What was nurturing, soothing, refreshing to my soul?*
- *What drew me closer to God?*

DESOLATION The basis for confession, drawing on God, re-orienting my life.

- *What was life-draining for me today?*
- *Where/when did I feel alone, far from God?*
- *What was stressful, joyless, dark, cold?*
- *Was there evil or sin— mine or another's?*

Treasure:

Read the Evening Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

Dwell in a word, phrase or verse that comforts and encourages your heart.

Thank:

Even difficult situations and challenging relationships have redeeming features. Take time to notice where God prepared, or equipped, or helped you in the midst of your day.

Give thanks for special moments, memories, ideas, assistance, encouragement.

Give thanks for the people who came across your path.

Give thanks for the situations you experienced and what you learned.

Give thanks for what God has taught you through Scripture (today or in the past)

Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him (Matthew 11:28)

Trust:

Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him.

On that day the LORD their God will save them, as the flock of his people; for like the jewels of a crown they shall shine on his land.

Zechariah 9:16

Week 3

Sunday March 12 – Saturday March 18

Memory Verse for the Week

If the whole passage is too long, then try to memorize just the bolded verse.
Feel free to use another translation or passage if you prefer.

Romans 5:6–8

(English Standard Version)

⁶ For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ For one will scarcely die for a righteous person— though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—
⁸ **but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**

Planning Ahead – This Week's Events:

Worship Services	Sun Mar 12 – Contemporary worship 10am. Evening Prayer 7pm.
Morning Prayer	Monday, Wednesday (with communion) and Friday, 7.00 – 7.45am.

Whom would you like to serve or spend time with? Plan and arrange the details.

MORNING PRAYER

INSTRUCTED by the Word through the Spirit

See the explanation on page 5 in the introduction.

- **Come**

- Acknowledge your mood and how you feel. (Be open as you dwell with Jesus)
- Affirm His presence: “Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matt 28:20)

- **Confess**

Read the Psalm for today (see table p. 7).

- Take time to confess your sins to God and to seek his gracious forgiveness
- Resolve, with the Spirit’s help, to amend your life.

For this day’s sins, O God, grant us mercy:
for sloth that wasted the hours
for haste which outran its benedictions;
for fear that frustrated bold hopes
for dullness that took everything for granted;
for anger that burst forth destructively
for indifference that smothered the soul;
for suspicion wrongly held
for trust cheaply betrayed;
for indecision which avoided the evil
for compromise which disguised it.

Samuel H. Miller (1900-1968)
*Dean of Harvard Divinity School and Baptist minister*²⁰

- **Consider**

Read the Morning Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

- What have you learned about **God** – Father, Son, Holy Spirit?
- What have you learned about **life** – commands, promises, affirmations, consequences, ... ?
- What have you learned about **people** – encouragements, responses, examples, ... ?
- What have you learned about **yourself** – be attentive to how the Spirit stirs your heart, ... ?

²⁰ Davies, Horton. (1990) *The Communion of Saints*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans.

- **Commit**

What is the Spirit saying to you?

Is there a verse you should carry with you through the day?

What might change in your life?

- **Confide**

Bring what you have learned and the circumstances of life to your gracious heavenly Father.

Chat with God (thanksgiving, discussion, intercession) about:

Your city

Your employer / school

Your church (people and ministries)

Your neighbours and colleagues

Your family and friends

Yourself

A Collect for Strength to Await Christ's Return²¹

O God our King,

by the resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ on the first day of the week,

you conquered sin,

put death to flight,

and gave us the hope of everlasting life:

Redeem all our days by this victory;

forgive our sins,

banish our fears,

make us bold to praise you and to do your will;

and steel us to wait for the consummation of your kingdom on the last great

Day;

through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

DAILY ACTIVITIES

WORSHIP SERVICES – Contemporary worship 10am.
Evening Prayer 7pm.

EVENING PRAYER

Prepare: Review your day being attentive for:

- Something to learn from.
- Something to be thankful for.
- Something to repent of.

²¹ From: *Texts for Common Prayer* of the Anglican Church of North America (2016)

- Something that especially seemed to have God's hand on it.
- Something that is part of a recurring pattern.

Ponder: Read the Evening Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)
Dwell in a word, phrase or verse that comforts or instructs your heart.

Pray: Give thanks for special moments in your day.
Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him (Matthew 11:28)

Presence: That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.
(1 John 1:3)

MORNING PRAYER

INSTRUCTED by the Word through the Spirit

See the explanation on page 5 in the introduction.

- **Come**

- Acknowledge your mood and how you feel. (Be open as you dwell with Jesus)
- Affirm His presence: “Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matt 28:20)

- **Confess**

Read the Psalm for today (see table p. 7).

- Take time to confess your sins to God and to seek his gracious forgiveness
- Resolve, with the Spirit’s help, to amend your life.

Show me, O Lord, your mercy,
and delight my heart with it.
Let me find you whom I so longingly seek.
See, here is the man whom the robbers seized, mishandled,
and left half dead on the road to Jericho.
O kind-hearted Samaritan, come to my aid!
I am the sheep who wandered into the wilderness –
seek after me, and bring me home again to your fold.
Do with me what you will,
that I may stay by you all the days of my life,
and praise you with all those who are with you in heaven for all
eternity.
Amen.

*St. Jerome (c. 347-420)
Biblical scholar and hermit²²*

- **Consider**

Read the Morning Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

- What have you learned about **God** – Father, Son, Holy Spirit?
- What have you learned about **life** – commands, promises, affirmations, consequences, ... ?
- What have you learned about **people** – encouragements, responses, examples, ... ?
- What have you learned about **yourself** – be attentive to how the Spirit stirs your heart, ... ?

- **Commit**

²² Davies, Horton. (1990) *The Communion of Saints*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans.

What is the Spirit saying to you?
Is there a verse you should carry with you through the day?
What might change in your life?

- **Confide**

Bring what you have learned and the circumstances of life to your gracious heavenly Father.
Chat with God (thanksgiving, discussion, intercession) about:

Your city
Your employer / school
Your church (people and ministries)
Your neighbours and colleagues
Your family and friends
Yourself

A Collect for the Renewal of Life²³

O God, the King eternal,
whose light divides the day from the night
and turns the shadow of death into the morning:
Drive far from us all wrong desires,
incline our hearts to keep your law,
and guide our feet into the way of peace;
that, having done your will with cheerfulness during the day,
we may, when night comes, rejoice to give you thanks;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

DAILY ACTIVITY – READING

Kaiser, W. C., Jr. (2004). **Grief and pain in the plan of God: Christian assurance and the message of Lamentations** (pp. 127–136). Fearn, UK: Christian Focus Publications.

SUFFERING IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

‘The Old Testament gives us the most comprehensive survey of the problem of suffering from the standpoint of theistic religion which can be found anywhere.’ Even more amazingly, the Old Testament exceeds our hope for guidance on this subject by indicating that our Lord also suffers along with us, indeed He suffers just as much as we do. His grief comes as a consequence of our sin and our misconduct towards Him. This same principle holds true for a good deal of our own suffering: it arises from improper interaction and a sinful collision of interests between mortals as well as disobedience to God. Because God is so near to His people in the Old Testament He participated in their misery and pain; hence, in ours as well.

²³ From: *Texts for Common Prayer* of the Anglican Church of North America (2016)

But one important point must be made before an improper, unfair, totally destructive conclusion is drawn from our study of suffering in Lamentations. Even though it is clear that this book can point the way in the pastoral task of helping us *cope with grief, take suffering personally, find hope in the face of adversity, put a name to pain, and remember that God is still in charge*, it is not the total deposit of biblical truth on this subject. And since it is not the complete summary of all that the Bible has to say on suffering, neither can it be a complete compendium of all the reasons for suffering found in the Bible. In fact, this book concentrates only on one reason for and one kind of suffering: retributive suffering.

On the contrary, there are at least eight basic kinds of suffering in the Old Testament. Each one has a very special part to play in the program of God and in the formation of godliness in each believer. If the little slogan ‘Be patient with me, God is not finished with me yet’ is true in other areas of life, it is all the more applicable in helping to explain the ways of God to men when the problem of suffering emerges.

One of the harshest acts we mortals inflict on one another is the flippant way in which we automatically assume that any pain, anguish, or suffering visited upon another person *must* be as a result of that person’s sin. Such unilinear thinking inflicts an unusual amount of cruelty where it is often least deserved, and it only adds to the suffering of the afflicted and their friends. It was just such short-sightedness that finally evoked the judgment of God on Job’s well-intentioned but badly-informed friends. Our Lord’s sentence of condemnation needs to be etched in bold letters: ‘My wrath is kindled against you (Eliphaz) and against your two friends; for you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has’ (Job 42:7b, RSV). Therefore, to guard against any over-zealous erection of a monolithic, one-track kind of reductionism based on Lamentations, we feel the reader should be cautioned to put the teaching of this book in its whole canonical context—at least, for the moment, in its whole Old Testament context.

What then are these eight kinds of suffering in the Old Testament? The first and most comprehensive kind is *retributive suffering*. It was given such prominence in the Bible and in Lamentations simply because it is one of the fundamental principles by which God governs the world. Simply stated it is this: If the world is ultimately governed by the one and only God who is righteous and just, then sooner or later in one way or another, man’s righteousness will be rewarded and his unrighteousness punished. The basic choices of life are good or evil, life or death (Deut. 30:19) when the sufferer has failed to live by the existing norms, whether they be of a ritual, ethical, social, or doctrinal nature.

Often in this kind of suffering the misfortune can be calculated from the very beginning of the indulgence in the sin that eventually must call down the judgment of God. H. Wheeler Robinson summarised retributive suffering by saying:

This principle, then, it is not to be dismissed as one that is superseded by the doctrine of divine grace.... However harsh may seem the retributive principle when taken alone, and however untrue to our experience of life when the sole principle for the interpretation of suffering, it remains as much part of the moral order of the universe as does the regularity of Nature, on its lower level.

It is necessary to place alongside retributive suffering the complementary principle of *educational or disciplinary suffering*. While God must often punish His people for their sins, a corollary emerged in the process of divine revelation: God often afflicted His people for the purpose of teaching them. ‘My son’, urged Solomon in Proverbs 3:11, ‘do not despise the chastening (*musar*) of the Lord, do not be weary of His reproof.’ Therefore, the man or woman whom God loved He chastened and corrected often through pain, suffering, and anguish (Prov. 13:24; 15:5).

No portion of God's Word makes this point better than Elihu does in Job 32–37. Relentlessly Elihu applied his case to Job's situation as a divine alternative to the improper suggestion of retributive suffering made by his three hapless predecessors in the argument. It was God, argued Elihu with better insight, who opens our ears to 'instruction' (*musar*) by means of adversity (Job 36:10; cf. 33:16; 36:15). Often the sick are 'chastened with pain upon (their) bed and with continual strife in (their) bones' (Job 33:19, RSV).

Nevertheless, in spite of all the pain it must be admitted that no-one teaches us what we usually would not know better than our God in chastisements (Job 34:31–32; 35:11; 36:22). One whole study has been devoted to this theme alone. Sanders' study of the Hebrew verb *yasar*, from which the noun *musar* is derived, shows that approximately one-third of its occurrences (33 out of 92 instances of the word *yasar*) indicate that God is teaching a lesson through hardship inflicted on the nation or individual.

This principle is repeated in the New Testament. Hebrews 12:7 warns that God deals with us as sons when we are chastened, even though no-one enjoys the lesson while it is being administered. However, when it is over it yields great fruit and peace to those who have been tested.

These two explanations for the problem of suffering lead us to a third. It must be an enigma to many to observe that the Old Testament often portrays the prophet as suffering—especially in his role as the messenger of God. Already we have seen how Jeremiah had such abuse heaped on his head because he delivered God's word without falsehood or adulteration. In Lamentations 3 and in Jeremiah 8:18–21 and 15:15 we have clear evidence of this kind of suffering.

This third kind of suffering is *vicarious suffering*. This principle begins to appear already in the substitutionary nature of the Old Testament sacrifices—especially in the roles given to the two goats on the Day of Atonement in Leviticus 16. All the sin of all the people was ransomed when one goat (in this case involuntarily) gave up his life. The result was that sins were forgiven by a substitute's death and then were forgotten and removed as far as east is from west when the second goat (part two of a single sin offering) was led away, figuratively loaded with all the forgiven sins of the people, to be lost forever in the wilderness.

But an even greater example of the vicarious and substitutionary nature of suffering can be seen in the person of the 'Suffering Servant' of Isaiah 42–53. The suffering of the Servant is primarily directed toward Israel, even though this Servant is Israel and Judah and comes from that nation. That is part of the mystery of His person; He, like the seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15), is at once part of the corporate solidarity of the whole nation and also the nation's representative and substitute par excellence.

But the Servant suffers not for Himself, but for others. There is not a more passionate demonstration of the vicarious, expiatory, atoning function of the Servant of the Lord than in Isaiah 53. 'He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the punishment that made us whole was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed' (Isa. 53:5). This formula of one suffering so that others may be forgiven and freed is also found in Isaiah 42:1–4; 49:4; 50:6; 52:13–53:12. Intimations of God's great atoning act in His Son, our Saviour can already be seen in Genesis 22:12–13 and Exodus 13:13–15.

[Continued in next reading. Explanation of five more kinds of suffering described in Scripture.]

EVENING PRAYER

- Prepare:** Review your day being attentive for:
- Something to learn from.
 - Something to be thankful for.
 - Something to repent of.
 - Something that especially seemed to have God's hand on it.
 - Something that is part of a recurring pattern.
- Ponder:** Read the Evening Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)
Dwell in a word, phrase or verse that comforts or instructs your heart.
- Pray:** Give thanks for special moments in your day.
Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him (Matthew 11:28)
- Presence:**
- For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- (Rom 8:38–39)

MORNING PRAYER

INSTRUCTED by the Word through the Spirit

See the explanation on page 5 in the introduction.

- **Come**

- Acknowledge your mood and how you feel. (Be open as you dwell with Jesus)
- Affirm His presence: “Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matt 28:20)

- **Confess**

Read the Psalm for today (see table p. 7).

- Take time to confess your sins to God and to seek his gracious forgiveness
- Resolve, with the Spirit’s help, to amend your life.

Grant, almighty God,
as no other way of access to you is open for us
except through unfeigned humility,
that we often learn to abase ourselves with feelings of true repentance.
May we be so displeased with ourselves as not to be satisfied
with a single confession of our iniquities.
May we continue to meditate on our sins
until we are more and more penetrated with real grief.
Then may we fly to your mercy,
prostrate ourselves before you in silence
and acknowledge no other hope than your pity,
and the intercession of your only-begotten Son.
May we be reconciled to you,
absolved from our sins,
and governed throughout the whole course of our life by your Holy Spirit.
Let us at length enjoy the victory in every kind of contest,
and arrive at that blessed rest which you have prepared for us by the same,
our Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen.

*John Calvin (1509-1564)
French theologian and reformer in Geneva²⁴*

- **Consider**

Read the Morning Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

²⁴ Davies, Horton. (1990) *The Communion of Saints*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans.

- What have you learned about **God** – Father, Son, Holy Spirit?
- What have you learned about **life** – commands, promises, affirmations, consequences, ... ?
- What have you learned about **people** – encouragements, responses, examples, ... ?
- What have you learned about **yourself** – be attentive to how the Spirit stirs your heart, ... ?

- **Commit**

What is the Spirit saying to you?

Is there a verse you should carry with you through the day?

What might change in your life?

- **Confide**

Bring what you have learned and the circumstances of life to your gracious heavenly Father.

Chat with God (thanksgiving, discussion, intercession) about:

Your city
Your employer / school
Your church (people and ministries)
Your neighbours and colleagues
Your family and friends
Yourself

A Collect for Peace²⁵

O God, the author of peace and lover of concord,
to know you is eternal life
and to serve you is perfect freedom:
Defend us, your humble servants,
in all assaults of our enemies;
that we, surely trusting in your defense,
may not fear the power of any adversaries,
through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

DAILY ACTIVITIES – BIOGRAPHY of a Reformer

Dotterweich, M. H. (2003). Knox, John. In T. Larsen, D. W. Bebbington, M. A. Noll, & S. Carter (Eds.), *Biographical dictionary of evangelicals* (pp. 345–349). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

KNOX, John (c. 1514–1572), Scottish minister and Protestant reformer, was born in Haddington and studied at St Andrews University, perhaps encountering there the conciliarist John Mair. Ordained in 1536, Knox was employed as a notary public; he must have known Latin and some canon law. By the early 1540s, he had become tutor to the sons of some minor landowners near his home, and in 1543 he

²⁵ From: *Texts for Common Prayer* of the Anglican Church of North America (2016)

heard the ex-friar Thomas Gwilliam proclaim solafideism 'without great vehemency against superstition'. Knox's commitment to a Protestant position was more certainly established from December 1545, when he accompanied the itinerant preacher George Wishart on his brief tour around Leith and East Lothian. ... He did, however, emulate the ministry of his mentor in energetic preaching and prophetic declarations, and embraced his scripture principle, sacramental memorialism and belief that the mass, images and other ceremonial activities were idolatrous.

...

Knox's ministry in St Andrews, which culminated with a Reformed service of 'the Lordis Table', was short-lived, as the castle surrendered under a French siege on 31 July 1547. The castilians were taken prisoner aboard the galleys, and as the French did not consider Knox one of the 'principalles', he remained at the oars until his release in early 1549. ...

After his release, Knox went to England, where he was given a small reward and made minister in Berwick and then in Newcastle. During this time he met his future wife, Marjory Bowes, with whom he would have two sons, and to whose mother, Elizabeth, he would offer lengthy pastoral advice. Continuing to preach as he had in St Andrews, Knox had to answer the Council of the North in 1550 for his attacks on the mass. In 1551, supported by the Duke of Northumberland, Knox was appointed a royal chaplain to Edward VI, but continued his ministry in the north until called to London in 1552. Preaching before King and council in September, Knox denounced as idolatry the practice of kneeling at communion, which was about to be established with the publication of the revised Book of Common Prayer. ...

After Edward's death, Knox joined the flight from Mary Tudor, arriving in Dieppe in January 1554. Here he composed the *Admonition or warning*, the first of several epistolary publications written in exile that enjoined the 'small and dispersit flock of Jesus Chryst' to 'flie from idolatrie', meaning principally the mass. ... From Dieppe, Knox went to various Swiss cities to consult with Calvin, Viret and Bullinger about questions of obedience and resistance, which would be the other major theme of his writing in exile. Knox at this stage enjoined patience under a hostile ruler; God would send 'one Jehu or other to execute hys vengeance uppon these bloudde-thyrsty tyrauntes and obstinate idolators'. ...

Knox was finally recalled to his homeland in 1559, after twelve years in exile. The religious and political situation had changed considerably, and shortly after his arrival on 2 May, Knox preached a fiery sermon in Perth that resulted in an iconoclastic riot; he also acted as a liaison officer with the English on behalf of the 'Lords of the Congregation'. In July Knox was appointed minister in Edinburgh with the approval of the town council, a well-paid position he would hold until his death. The following year, with Mary of Guise dead and English and French forces withdrawn, parliament outlawed the mass, abolished papal authority and established the Scots Confession of Faith. This confession was produced by a committee of 'six Johns', including Knox, and its dependence on the confessions of the Genevan students and of the English congregation in Geneva, reveals Knox's guiding hand. The same committee had begun work on the *(First) Book of Discipline* earlier in the year; this likewise reflects some of Knox's theological and ecclesiastical concerns.

These activities placed Knox on the national stage in 1560; in the same year his lengthy treatise on predestination was published, and his 'dear bedfellow' [wife] Marjory died in December. Although Knox saw the national events of 1560 as divinely arranged, he was not satisfied with the resulting situation. Not only was the new kirk [church] not financed according to the programme in the *Book of*

Discipline; the Protestant nobles were proving themselves as unreliable as Bullinger had warned that they might be. Knox did not hesitate to criticize their behaviour, eventually quarrelling even with the Earl of Moray, one of his closest allies.

The national situation deteriorated in Knox's eyes the following year with the return of the young widow Mary, Queen of Scots, from France. Particularly vexing to Knox was the fact that the Queen was allowed to hear mass at Holyrood, and thus idolatry and the right of resistance were central themes of his four heated meetings with her between 1561 and 1563. Knox did not manage to convince Mary to cease her Catholic practice, or the Protestant political leadership to prohibit it. A lengthy debate followed at the 1564 General Assembly regarding the right of the people to revolt against an idolatrous monarch; Knox now saw Scotland as a covenanted nation, and believed that its people could enforce God's laws on the queen. Many of his compatriots in the Protestant ministry disagreed, however, and by this time it was clear that the new kirk was not made purely in Knox's image.

...

Scandal and dissatisfied nobles finally accomplished what Knox could not, and in 1567 the queen was forced to abdicate in favour of her infant son James VI. Knox preached at the coronation of the young king, and in a hopeful sign Moray was appointed regent. Moray's assassination in 1570 discouraged Knox, and he suffered a small stroke later that year. As civil war intensified between the 'king's men' and 'queen's men', Knox had to leave for St Andrews, where although he had to be assisted in ascending to the pulpit, by the end of a sermon 'he was sa active and vigorus that he was lyk to ding that pulpit in blads'. Knox returned to Edinburgh in August 1572, and soon after installing his replacement at St Giles, he was taken ill and died on 24 November.

The degree of Knox's importance in Scotland, England and Geneva has been debated. In his *History* Knox did not hesitate to claim prophetic significance, but some historians have questioned whether he has received greater attention simply because of a lack of sources on other figures. However, Knox was without question regarded as important by his contemporaries. Mary Stewart considered him 'the most dangerous man in all her realm', while a Catholic opponent named him 'principle patriarch of the Calvinian court'...

Knox was not a leading theologian or scholar, as his derivative and unreliable patristic references demonstrate. However, his writings on resistance occupy an important place in the development of resistance theory in the sixteenth century. Perhaps of more lasting significance was Knox's firm stand on the scripture principle and against idolatry, which made him a 'founding father of English Puritanism' as well as an influence on later Scots Protestantism. Knox left a legacy of Reformed theology for the kirk, in his preaching and especially in the liturgical materials he produced. Very few of Knox's sermons have survived, but contemporary accounts liken them to thunder and trumpets.

Often simply caricatured, Knox was nevertheless a complex figure living in complicated times. His context and contacts affected him, and he cannot be understood apart from the immensely varied situations in which he found himself. However, his basic motivations remained fairly consistent: a purified church, dependent on Scripture and eschewing idolatry; a prophetic witness to the governing authorities; and a godly and disciplined society. While Knox has been seen as more English than Scottish, he is perhaps best described as a 'Protestant internationalist'. Knox's writings and personal life have remained controversial, but the site of his grave is marked only with a plain brown tile in the car park behind St Giles, a memorial he would probably have found satisfactory.

EVENING PRAYER

- Prepare:** Review your day being attentive for:
- Something to learn from.
 - Something to be thankful for.
 - Something to repent of.
 - Something that especially seemed to have God's hand on it.
 - Something that is part of a recurring pattern.
- Ponder:** Read the Evening Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)
Dwell in a word, phrase or verse that comforts or instructs your heart.
- Pray:** Give thanks for special moments in your day.
Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him (Matthew 11:28)
- Presence:**
- And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another
Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth.
(John 14:16–17)

MORNING PRAYER

INSTRUCTED by the Word through the Spirit

See the explanation on page 5 in the introduction.

- **Come**

- Acknowledge your mood and how you feel. (Be open as you dwell with Jesus)
- Affirm His presence: "Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matt 28:20)

- **Confess**

Read the Psalm for today (see table p. 7).

- Take time to confess your sins to God and to seek his gracious forgiveness
- Resolve, with the Spirit's help, to amend your life.

My sins, Lord, are dulling my conscience.
 I get used to evil very quickly:
 A little self-indulgence here,
 A small unfaithfulness there,
 An unwise action farther on,
 And my vision becomes obscured;
 I no longer see stumbling-blocks,
 I no longer see other people on my road
 Lord, I beseech you, keep me young in my efforts,
 Spare me the bondage of habit, which lulls to sleep and kills.
 Amen.

*Michel Quoist (1918-1997)²⁶
 Catholic priest, theologian and writer*

- **Consider**

Read the Morning Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

- What have you learned about **God** – Father, Son, Holy Spirit?
- What have you learned about **life** – commands, promises, affirmations, consequences, ... ?
- What have you learned about **people** – encouragements, responses, examples, ... ?
- What have you learned about **yourself** – be attentive to how the Spirit stirs your heart, ... ?

- **Commit**

What is the Spirit saying to you?

Is there a verse you should carry with you through the day?

What might change in your life?

²⁶ Ashwin, Angela. (2002). *The Book of a Thousand Prayers*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan.

- **Confide**

Bring what you have learned and the circumstances of life to your gracious heavenly Father.
Chat with God (thanksgiving, discussion, intercession) about:

Your city
Your employer / school
Your church (people and ministries)
Your neighbours and colleagues
Your family and friends
Yourself

A Collect for Grace²⁷

O Lord, our heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God,
you have brought us safely to the beginning of this day:
Defend us by your mighty power,
that we may not fall into sin
nor run into any danger;
and that guided by your Spirit,
we may do what is righteous in your sight;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

DAILY ACTIVITY - ARTWORK



Father Sieger Köder, *The Washing of the Feet*, oil on canvas, 1975-95

²⁷ From: *Texts for Common Prayer* of the Anglican Church of North America (2016)

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand." "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!" – John 13:6-9

In this portrayal of the washing of Peter's feet, the figure of Christ is bent low and twisted into an awkward position. He is clothed in bright white garments, standing out from Peter and the room around him. Peter resists Christ's actions, leaning in towards his teacher to stop him. Notice the reflection of Jesus' face in the basin of water. In many of Father Köder's paintings, the face of Jesus is only shown in reflections, giving us a glimpse of the long-hidden face of a Holy God.

1. How do you think you would react if Jesus asked to wash your feet? Would you be reluctant, thankful, or something else?
2. This painting shows both the human and the heavenly nature of Jesus: he is human in his bent form and humble posture, and yet heavenly in his white robes and unseen face. What feelings does this representation of Christ evoke in you?
3. Take time to meditate on our God who came down from heaven not to be served but to serve.

EVENING PRAYER

Prepare: Review your day being attentive for:

- Something to learn from.
- Something to be thankful for.
- Something to repent of.
- Something that especially seemed to have God's hand on it.
- Something that is part of a recurring pattern.

Ponder: Read the Evening Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)
Dwell in a word, phrase or verse that comforts or instructs your heart.

Pray: Give thanks for special moments in your day.
Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him (Matthew 11:28)

Presence:

Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him."

(John 14:23)

MORNING PRAYER

INSTRUCTED by the Word through the Spirit

See the explanation on page 5 in the introduction.

- **Come**

- Acknowledge your mood and how you feel. (Be open as you dwell with Jesus)
- Affirm His presence: "Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matt 28:20)

- **Confess**

Read the Psalm for today (see table p. 7).

- Take time to confess your sins to God and to seek his gracious forgiveness
- Resolve, with the Spirit's help, to amend your life.

Forgive me my sins, O Lord;
the sins of my present and the sins of my past,
the sins of my soul and the sins of my body,
the sins which I have done to please myself
and the sins which I have done to please others.
Forgive me my casual sins and my deliberate sins,
and those which I have labored so to hide
that I have hidden them even from myself.
Forgive me, O Lord,
forgive all my sins, for Jesus' sake.

*Thomas Wilson (1663-1775)²⁸
Bishop of Sodor and Man*

- **Consider**

Read the Morning Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

- What have you learned about **God** – Father, Son, Holy Spirit?
- What have you learned about **life** – commands, promises, affirmations, consequences, ... ?
- What have you learned about **people** – encouragements, responses, examples, ... ?
- What have you learned about **yourself** – be attentive to how the Spirit stirs your heart, ... ?

- **Commit**

What is the Spirit saying to you?

Is there a verse you should carry with you through the day?

What might change in your life?

²⁸ Ashwin, Angela. (2002). *The Book of a Thousand Prayers*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan.

- **Confide**

Bring what you have learned and the circumstances of life to your gracious heavenly Father.
Chat with God (thanksgiving, discussion, intercession) about:

Your city
Your employer / school
Your church (people and ministries)
Your neighbours and colleagues
Your family and friends
Yourself

A Collect for Guidance²⁹

Heavenly Father,
in you we live and move and have our being:
We humbly pray you so to guide and govern us
by your Holy Spirit,
that in all the cares and occupations of our life
we may not forget you,
but may remember that we are ever walking in your sight;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

DAILY ACTIVITY – READING

Kaiser, W. C., Jr. (2004). **Grief and pain in the plan of God: Christian assurance and the message of Lamentations** (pp. 127–136). Fearn, UK: Christian Focus Publications.

[Continued from previous reading which covered retributive, disciplinary and vicarious suffering.]

Contrasted with vicarious suffering is *empathetic suffering*. Grief affects more people than the afflicted; it oftentimes enters fully into the lives and feelings of those whom the sufferer loves or knows. Thus empathy with those who suffer produces a new suffering.

This fourth kind of suffering even affects our God. His feelings of ‘compassion’ and ‘remorse’ are aroused because of the plight or sin of His creatures (Gen. 6:5–6; Exod. 32:14; Judg. 2:15; 1 Sam. 15:11) so that He ‘cries out’ (Isa. 42:13–14) or ‘roars’ with threatening judgment (Amos 1:2).

The situation is as Isaiah 63:9 describes it: ‘In all their affliction He was afflicted ... in His love and pity He redeemed them.’ At times, the pain and hurt inflicted by erring humans on their God is almost beyond bearing: ‘Why will you die, O house of Israel? I have no pleasure in the death of any one, says the Lord God; therefore turn and live’ (Ezek. 18:31–32). Again in Hosea 11:8 God spreads forth His hands as if He were a distraught parent and asks: ‘How can I give you up ... how can I treat you like (the destroyed cities of the plain)? I will not ... I will not; for I am God ... , the Holy One in your midst, I will not come to destroy.’

²⁹ From: *Texts for Common Prayer* of the Anglican Church of North America (2016)

Likewise, we are to ‘weep with those who weep’ (Rom. 12:15) and share in others’ afflictions as Paul did ‘out of much suffering and anguish of the heart and with many tears’ (2 Cor. 2:4). Naomi experienced a similar grief when she told her daughters-in-law: ‘No, my daughters; it is more bitter for me because of your sakes, for the Lord’s hand has been against me’ (Ruth 1:13). The sphere of suffering, then, is often much larger than those who are immediately affected.

But beyond ‘feeling along with others’ when they grieve there is a fifth kind of suffering: *doxological suffering*. Often God calls His people to go through this experience in order that His own glory and purpose might be worked out. Here suffering serves a good end and purpose under the guiding hand of God.

The primary example of this experience is Joseph in Genesis 45:4, 5, 7 and 50:20. Whereas Joseph’s brothers had intended only evil against their younger brother, God had allowed his enslavement in order that He might bring about good and enable many people to live during the forthcoming seven years of famine. The text of Genesis 50:20 is explicit: ‘You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good.’

Joseph’s suffering during those years of imprisonment had nothing to do with his own sin, his discipline, or educational growth; it was allowed solely for the glory of God. The same situation occurs in John 9 where the man born blind is declared by Jesus to be in such a state not because of his own or even his parents’ sin; rather it is allowed that the work of God might be displayed through his life (John 9:3).

A sixth way the Old Testament treats this subject is to point to *evidential* or *testimonial suffering*. Clearly the first two chapters of Job are the classic chapters in defining and describing this kind of suffering. Although Job would have dearly loved to know what was going on behind the scenes in heaven (as the reader does) he obviously does not know.

Job in effect was a test case to show Satan (and would-be mockers of true religion) that mortals do serve God out of pure love for His person and not because of what they can get out of their obedience. Satan’s charge had been: ‘No wonder Job serves You; he is Your fair-haired boy; You have prospered him so much and erected such a wall of protection around him that he would be crazy to give up such a good deal.’

Indeed, it was God who had called Satan’s attention to Job in the first place (if only Job had *known* that!). God, not Job, ultimately was the one on trial. It must be demonstrated that men and women will serve God whether they are doing well or not. Therefore, God allowed the devil to test Job’s allegiance by removing all his possessions (Job 1:9–12) and even his health (Job 2:4–6). And Job still loved God!

Another instance of evidential or testimonial suffering can be found in the prophet Habakkuk’s life. When the prophet complained to God about the alarming increase of evil in Judah without any apparent divine judgment, he was informed that God would deal with the problem. Alas, however, the solution was a shocking one: God would bring retribution at the hands of the Babylonians—a feared, pagan national enemy. This led Habakkuk to complain, ‘(can) the wicked swallow up the man more righteous than himself?’ (Hab. 1:13). But there was no answer to the prophet’s complaint—at least not immediately. Instead he learned ‘the just shall live by faith’ (Hab. 2:4). Such endurance at once demonstrated the prophet’s own innocence and also witnessed to the truth for which he stood. Instead of being some kind of exceptional mortal, Habakkuk made it plain that the prospect of Babylonian invasion tore him up inside—from a human standpoint (Hab. 3:16); however, as a man of faith he could confidently assert in the same breath, ‘Nevertheless, I will rejoice in the LORD, I will rejoice in God my Saviour’ (Hab. 3:18).

The presence of this strong ‘nevertheless’ reminds us of another great contrast in that magnificent statement of Psalm 73. The psalmist had almost gone over the brink of despair when he had observed the apparent success and unrelenting prosperity of the wicked. Only when he went into God’s house and considered the end of the wicked did it come to him: ‘Nevertheless, I am continually with you; you uphold me by my right hand. You will guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory’ (Ps. 73:23–24).

In each of those cases a witness, a testimony with strong evidence, was given to the faithfulness of God. Suffering became the tool of our Lord to point to Himself in a way that other kinds of evidence could hardly match.

Suffering can also be used to bring us into a deeper knowledge of our God and the special relationship He has to His men and women. *Revelational suffering* can best be exhibited in the prophets Hosea and Jeremiah.

Hosea’s family life was singularly marked by some of the most severe testing any married person must endure. One needs to exercise very little imagination to depict what the tragedy of that prophet’s domestic life must have done to him personally—especially as he attempted to carry on a ministry in the very locale of those who knew what had happened to him. The cat-calls, insinuations, and slurs about his wife who now gave her love in prostitution to Baal and to all the idolatrous male worshippers must have often interrupted the prophet’s public ministry. But he was more than a match for all such rationalizations and smears. He publicly avowed that he still loved his wife and would take her back home at any time. Furthermore, with a master stroke of pertinency, he pointedly charged that his hecklers were in the very process of committing the same act against God (except they were spiritual adulterers) and God loved them, too. They must repent. No wonder the book of Hosea is known as the book that shows us the heart and holiness of God. If God loves us like Hosea continued to love his unlovely wife, then truly suffering can be revelational.

Likewise, the lengthy story of Jeremiah’s physical, spiritual, and mental sufferings is given, in part, so that all the more convincingly he might know and describe by word and life the suffering Judah was causing for her rejection.

The final kind of suffering is *eschatological* or *apocalyptic suffering*. Key portions of the prophetic text expect that God will permit a period of intense suffering just before the end of this historical eon. Just when it has grown the darkest and men have despaired of all hope, then the kingdom of God will emerge in its most glorious moment ever in the universe. The intense days of Israel’s suffering will climax in a new exodus under a new Moses with a new David in a new Jerusalem with a new heaven and a new earth.

Some of the major Old Testament prophetic sections dealing with this triumphant moment are Isaiah 24–27; Jeremiah 30–33, Ezekiel 33–48, Daniel 2–12, and Zechariah 12–14. The momentary sufferings of Israel will be exchanged for the joy of new birth religiously, nationally, ecologically, and physically. The Protector of Israel will have arrived on the scene once again to comfort His people in their suffering (Jer. 31:16) and to put an end to the shame and misery of that nation (Ezek. 36:3, 6, 22–23). Out of the furnace of affliction will emerge a purified people (Zech. 13:9; Mal. 3:3) ready for a whole new day.

Suffering then is multiplex in its causes, purposes, and explanations. All attempts to reduce the explanation of suffering both in that day and ours to a single reason, such as a retributive suffering, could earn the quick rebuke of God as it did for Job’s three friends. Let us be biblically sensitive and spiritually alert to the wholeness of God’s revelation, and let us be reticent to postulate total patterns based on the presence of a single swallow.

Let us also bow before our Maker and recognise His infinite wisdom in His distinctive and numerous reasons for suffering. And when none of these eight explanations, or any additional reasons that may have eluded us here, seems to fit our own moment of crisis, then let us return to the lodestone and central affirmation of the book of Lamentations: ‘Great is Thy faithfulness.’

EVENING PRAYER

Prepare: Review your day being attentive for:

- Something to learn from.
- Something to be thankful for.
- Something to repent of.
- Something that especially seemed to have God’s hand on it.
- Something that is part of a recurring pattern.

Ponder: Read the Evening Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)
Dwell in a word, phrase or verse that comforts or instructs your heart.

Pray: Give thanks for special moments in your day.
Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him (Matthew 11:28)

Presence:

For he has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”
(Heb 13:5)

MORNING PRAYER

INSTRUCTED by the Word through the Spirit

See the explanation on page 5 in the introduction.

- **Come**

- Acknowledge your mood and how you feel. (Be open as you dwell with Jesus)
- Affirm His presence: "Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matt 28:20)

- **Confess**

Read the Psalm for today (see table p. 7).

- Take time to confess your sins to God and to seek his gracious forgiveness
- Resolve, with the Spirit's help, to amend your life.

God help us to find our confession;
 The truth within us which is hidden from our mind;
 The beauty or the ugliness we see elsewhere
 But never in ourselves;
 The stowaway which has been smuggled
 Into the dark side of the heart,
 Which puts the heart off balance and causes it pain,
 Which wearies and confuses us,
 Which tips us in false directions and inclines us to destruction,
 The load which is not carried squarely
 Because it is carried in ignorance
 God help us to find our confession.
 Help us across the boundary of our understanding.
 Lead us into the darkness that we may find what lies concealed;
 That we may confess it towards the light;
 That we may carry our truth in the centre of our heart;
 That we may carry our cross wisely
 And bring harmony into our life and our world.
 Amen.

Michael Leunig³⁰
Australian artist and cartoonist

- **Consider**

Read the Morning Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

- What have you learned about **God** – Father, Son, Holy Spirit?
- What have you learned about **life** – commands, promises, affirmations, consequences, ... ?

³⁰ Ashwin, Angela. (2002). The Book of a Thousand Prayers. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan.

- What have you learned about **people** – encouragements, responses, examples, ... ?
- What have you learned about **yourself** – be attentive to how the Spirit stirs your heart, ... ?

- **Commit**

What is the Spirit saying to you?

Is there a verse you should carry with you through the day?

What might change in your life?

- **Confide**

Bring what you have learned and the circumstances of life to your gracious heavenly Father.

Chat with God (thanksgiving, discussion, intercession) about:

Your city
Your employer / school
Your church (people and ministries)
Your neighbours and colleagues
Your family and friends
Yourself

A Collect for Endurance³¹

Almighty God,
whose most dear Son went not up to joy
but first he suffered pain,
and entered not into glory
before he was crucified:
Mercifully grant that we,
walking in the way of the cross,
may find it none other than the way of life and peace;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.
Amen.

DAILY ACTIVITY – Contemplate a Poem or Hymn

Royalty

He was a plain man
And learned no Latin

Having left all gold behind
he dealt out peace
to all us wild men
and the weather

³¹ From: *Texts for Common Prayer* of the Anglican Church of North America (2016)

He ate fish, bread,
country wine and God's will

Dust sandalled his feet

He wore purple only once
and that was an irony

Luci Shaw

1. Does the writer feel that life has changed or should change? How do you know?
2. What message is the author trying to convey or help you understand?
3. Does it relate to anything in your own life?
4. Does it give you a new way of looking at something?
5. Consider how any figurative language (simile, metaphor, personification, etc.) enlightens you.

EVENING PRAYER

Prepare:

Review your day being attentive for:

- Something to learn from.
- Something to be thankful for.
- Something to repent of.
- Something that especially seemed to have God's hand on it.
- Something that is part of a recurring pattern.

Ponder:

Read the Evening Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)
Dwell in a word, phrase or verse that comforts or instructs your heart.

Pray:

Give thanks for special moments in your day.
Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him (Matthew 11:28)

Presence:

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they
follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish,
and no one will snatch them out of my hand.

(John 10:27–30)

MORNING PRAYER

INSTRUCTED by the Word through the Spirit

See the explanation on page 5 in the introduction.

- **Come**

- Acknowledge your mood and how you feel. (Be open as you dwell with Jesus)
- Affirm His presence: "Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matt 28:20)

- **Confess**

Read the Psalm for today (see table p. 7).

- Take time to confess your sins to God and to seek his gracious forgiveness
- Resolve, with the Spirit's help, to amend your life.

Holy God,
 we confess that in our lives we do not always choose the way of peace.
 We spread gossip which fans the flames of hatred.
 We are ready to make any sacrifice when the world demands,
 but few when you invite.
 We worship the idol of security.
 We hold out one hand in friendship,
 but keep a weapon in the other behind our back.
 We have divided the people of your body
 into those we trust and those we do not.
 Huge problems challenge us in the world,
 but our greed, fear, and selfishness
 prevent us from uniting to solve them.
 Lord, we need your help and forgiveness,
 your reconciling power.
 Amen.

Rev Pat Vowles³²

United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (U S P G)

- **Consider**

Read the Morning Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

- What have you learned about **God** – Father, Son, Holy Spirit?
- What have you learned about **life** – commands, promises, affirmations, consequences, ... ?
- What have you learned about **people** – encouragements, responses, examples, ... ?
- What have you learned about **yourself** – be attentive to how the Spirit stirs your heart, ... ?

³² Counsell, Michael. (1999) *2000 Years of Prayer*, Harrisburg: PA, Morehouse Publishing.

- **Commit**

What is the Spirit saying to you?

Is there a verse you should carry with you through the day?

What might change in your life?

- **Confide**

Bring what you have learned and the circumstances of life to your gracious heavenly Father.

Chat with God (thanksgiving, discussion, intercession) about:

Your city

Your employer / school

Your church (people and ministries)

Your neighbours and colleagues

Your family and friends

Yourself

A Collect for Sabbath Rest³³

Almighty God,

who after the creation of the world

rested from all your works

and sanctified a day of rest for all your creatures:

Grant that we, putting away all earthly anxieties,

may be duly prepared for the service of your sanctuary,

and that our rest here upon earth may be a preparation

for the eternal rest promised to your people in heaven;

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

DAILY ACTIVITIES – A “Good work” to do

– HOSPITALITY –

Show hospitality to one another without grumbling.

1 Peter 4:9

Identify someone that you could offer hospitality to. It could be coffee with a colleague at work, or a nice dinner at home for people you would like to get to know better. Step outside your usual circle. Pray, and ask God if there is someone you should invite. (If you go to a restaurant ... you pay!)

Do the planning today and figure out what you need to do. Set a few tentative dates that might work for them and contact them to set the day. Pray that it will be a time of deepening relationship and an opportunity to connect spiritually.

³³ From: *Texts for Common Prayer* of the Anglican Church of North America (2016)

*See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always
seek to do good to one another and to everyone.
1 Thessalonians 5:15*

EVENING PRAYER

- Prepare:** Review your day being attentive for:
- Something to learn from.
 - Something to be thankful for.
 - Something to repent of.
 - Something that especially seemed to have God's hand on it.
 - Something that is part of a recurring pattern.
- Ponder:** Read the Evening Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)
Dwell in a word, phrase or verse that comforts or instructs your heart.
- Pray:** Give thanks for special moments in your day.
Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him (Matthew 11:28)
- Presence:** Do you not know that you are God's temple and that
God's Spirit dwells in you?
(1 Cor 3:16)

Week 4

Sunday March 19 – Saturday March 25

Memory Verse for the Week

If the whole passage is too long, then try to memorize just the bolded verse.
Feel free to use another translation or passage if you prefer.

Colossians 1:9–14

(English Standard Version)

⁹ And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, ¹⁰ so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; ¹¹ being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; ¹² giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. ¹³ **He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,** ¹⁴ **in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.**

Planning Ahead – This Week's Events:

Worship Services Sun Mar 19 – Contemporary worship 10am.
– Holy Eucharist with Bishop Trevor Walters 7pm.

Morning Prayer Monday, Wednesday (with communion) and Friday, 7.00 – 7.45am.

Whom would you like to serve or spend time with? Plan and arrange the details.

MORNING PRAYER

INSTRUCTED by the Spirit through the Word

See the explanation on page 6 in the introduction.

- **Encounter**

Sit silently for five minutes

- Try not to let your mind race. Be still. Listen to your breathing. Relax.
- Be open to thoughts and musings that may come from the Holy Spirit.
- Experience your physical environment. Enjoy it.
- Do not think about or plan the specifics of your day.

- **Examine**

Read the Psalm for today (See table p. 7).

- Consider yourself with sober judgment.
- Confess where you have walked contrary to God's will.
- Rejoice where the Spirit is bearing fruit in your life.
- Celebrate forgiveness, blessings, comfort, growth, ...
- Remind yourself of God's goodness and commit your way to him.

- **Explore**

Read the Morning Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

- Notice impressions of **words** or **phrases** that stood out to you. Why?
- Notice impressions of **principles, examples** and **warnings**. What do they imply?
- Notice impressions of **responses** – right and/or wrong. Does this explain anything in your life?
- Notice impressions of **decisions** – made, recommended, condemned. How do you decide?
- Notice impressions of **results** – adversity, success, blessing, release, trouble. A word for you?
- Notice impressions of who/what is **commended** or **censured**. Connections to your life?

Is the Holy Spirit prompting you to repent of, or develop, a habit, attitude, or life practice?

What will you do? (Be specific)

- **Engage**

Enter a time of reflective and contemplative prayer.

Discern: Ask God what He is saying to you.

Dwell: Give thanks for resolution, joy. Talk through concerns, fears.

Dream: In your imagination walk and talk with God through a visualized life situation.

Discharge: Find peace, embrace what God has revealed. He is always good.

- **End**

Reborn and Unafraid

Lord of the Flood,
wash us with your Spirit
that we may be your ark of life,
your peace in the sea of violence.
Water is life; water cleans; water kills.
Frightened, we are tempted to make a permanent home on the ark.
But you force us to seek dry ground.
We can do so only because you have taught us to cling to our baptisms,
where we are drowned and reborn by the water and fire of your Spirit.
So reborn, make us unafraid.
*AMEN.*³⁴

DAILY ACTIVITIES

- WORSHIP SERVICES**
- Contemporary worship 10am.
 - Holy Eucharist with Bishop Trevor Walters 7pm.

EVENING PRAYER

Think:

The Ignatian Examen

CONSOLATION The basis for thanks and re-orientation of my life.

- *What was life-giving for me today?*
- *Where/when did I sense God's presence?*
- *What was nurturing, soothing, refreshing to my soul?*
- *What drew me closer to God?*

DESOLATION The basis for confession, drawing on God, re-orienting my life.

- *What was life-draining for me today?*
- *Where/when did I feel alone, far from God?*
- *What was stressful, joyless, dark, cold?*
- *Was there evil or sin— mine or another's?*

Treasure:

Read the Evening Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)
Dwell in a word, phrase or verse that comforts and encourages your heart.

Thank:

Even difficult situations and challenging relationships have redeeming features. Take time to notice where God prepared, or equipped, or helped you in the midst of your day.

Give thanks for special moments, memories, ideas, assistance, encouragement.
Give thanks for the people who came across your path.
Give thanks for the situations you experienced and what you learned.

³⁴ Hauerwas, S. (2003). *Prayers Plainly Spoken* (pp. 21–35). Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers.

Give thanks for what God has taught you through Scripture (today or in the past)
Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him (Matthew 11:28)

Trust:

Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him.

I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in
righteousness and justice, in love and compassion.

Hosea 2:19

MORNING PRAYER

INSTRUCTED by the Spirit through the Word

See the explanation on page 6 in the introduction.

- **Encounter**

Sit silently for five minutes

- Try not to let your mind race. Be still. Listen to your breathing. Relax.
- Be open to thoughts and musings that may come from the Holy Spirit.
- Experience your physical environment. Enjoy it.
- Do not think about or plan the specifics of your day.

- **Examine**

Read the Psalm for today (See table p. 7).

- Consider yourself with sober judgment.
- Confess where you have walked contrary to God's will.
- Rejoice where the Spirit is bearing fruit in your life.
- Celebrate forgiveness, blessings, comfort, growth, ...
- Remind yourself of God's goodness and commit your way to him.

- **Explore**

Read the Morning Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

- Notice impressions of **words** or **phrases** that stood out to you. Why?
- Notice impressions of **principles, examples** and **warnings**. What do they imply?
- Notice impressions of **responses** – right and/or wrong. Does this explain anything in your life?
- Notice impressions of **decisions** – made, recommended, condemned. How do you decide?
- Notice impressions of **results** – adversity, success, blessing, release, trouble. A word for you?
- Notice impressions of who/what is **commended** or **censured**. Connections to your life?

Is the Holy Spirit prompting you to repent of, or develop, a habit, attitude, or life practice?

What will you do? (Be specific)

- **Engage**

Enter a time of reflective and contemplative prayer.

- Discern: Ask God what He is saying to you.
- Dwell: Give thanks for resolution, joy. Talk through concerns, fears.
- Dream: In your imagination walk and talk with God through a visualized life situation.
- Discharge: Find peace, embrace what God has revealed. He is always good.

- End

Who Am I to Pray?

Gracious God,
we thank you for the gift of prayer.
What an extraordinary thing that we can pray to you,
unburden ourselves before you,
place our cares, woes and joys before you.
I confess I find praying an awkward business.
I keep thinking, *Who am I to pray?*
But I know that to be false humility,
hiding my prideful desire to be my own creator.
So we pray a prayer of joy in prayer,
asking that we become your prayers for one another.
*AMEN.*³⁵

DAILY ACTIVITY – READING

Provan, Iain. (2014). **Seriously Dangerous Religion: What the Old Testament really says and why it Matters** (pp. 68-70). Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press.

GOD IS GOOD – AN ANGRY GOD

One of the aspects of God’s character that renders him “unsafe” in biblical thinking is his *anger*. Abraham fears it in Genesis 18:30, Moses experiences it in Exodus 4:14, and it is unleashed against the Egyptians in the Exodus, consuming them like stubble (Exodus 15:7-8). Later, it burns against God’s own people Israel (Exodus 32:11). It is an often-mentioned reality in the Old Testament. Yet the anger of God is clearly understood by our biblical authors as also being bound up with God’s goodness. How do they describe it?

Anger for Reasons

First, it is an anger that is not a matter of whim or caprice or spite. God does not get angry because his pride is hurt, or because he is envious of human beings. The anger of God is never arbitrary; it is always directed at what is evil. It is the anger of a good person outraged by the corruption of the world, as in Genesis 6:5: “the Lord saw how great man’s wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.” It is the anger of a person who is passionate about justice for those who are oppressed by others: “Do not take advantage of a widow or an orphan. If you do and they cry out to me, I will certainly hear their cry. My anger will be aroused” (Exodus 22:22-24). It is right that God should be angry about such things, our biblical authors believe – just as it is right that *human beings* should be angry about them (e.g. 2 Samuel 12:1-6). It is particularly good news that an *all-powerful* and *sovereign* God is angry about such things, because it gives grounds for hope – hope that justice will be done. God cares enough about his creation to *be* angry about evil-doing and to take action against it. It is good news that he will not “leave the guilty unpunished” (Exodus 34:7) and that even if human beings themselves fail to deliver justice, justice will be done: “With righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the

³⁵ Hauerwas, S. (2003). **Prayers Plainly Spoken** (pp. 21–35). Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers.

earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked” (Isaiah 11:4). This is a wonderful promise.

Anger That Is Slow

Second, God’s anger is not quickly or lightly expressed. It is anger that is slow to arise. It is true that God will not “leave the guilty unpunished” (Exodus 34:7), but it is also true that he is a “compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin” (Exodus 34:6-7). God is for his creation, and his anger is always constrained by his compassion and grace. This is why the world continues on its way at all, for, as the psalmist asks, “If you, O LORD, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?” (Psalm 130:3). All human beings are morally compromised, and if God’s anger were not constrained by anything else, every human being would have a big problem. But as the psalm continues, “with you there is forgiveness” (v. 4). Even when faced with recalcitrant people, Nehemiah 9:17 reminds us that God remains “a forgiving God, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love.” Because he is “compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love... he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities” (Psalm 103:8-10).

It is this very reality – that God’s anger is slow – that becomes a sore point for the prophet Jonah when he is sent to announce God’s judgment to Israel’s hated enemies, the Assyrians. When the people of the capital city of Nineveh hear what God has to say to them, they turn away from their wickedness, and so God does not execute justice upon them. Jonah himself is furious. He already knew that God was “a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity” (Jonah 4:2), but he cannot accept the outcome in the present case. Jonah is angry where God is not. Indeed, God chides him: “Nineveh has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, and many cattle as well. Should I not be concerned about that great city?” (4:11). God is concerned, but Jonah is not. God is slow to anger, but Jonah is quick.

Anger That Relents

Third, there is hope for those who *suffer* God’s anger – and not just for those who wait (like Jonah) for it to fall on others. This is precisely because God’s anger is constrained by God’s love and compassion. There is hope that once an accounting has been made for wrongdoing, there might be a restoration. Thus, the author of the book of Lamentations reminds his readers, “Though [God] brings grief, he will show compassion, so great is his unfailing love. For he does not willingly bring affliction or grief to the children of men” (3:32-33). God is reluctant to bring affliction in the first place, and there is compassion to be found on the other side of it. The book of Isaiah comforts its readers with this thought: “For a brief moment I abandoned you, but with deep compassion I will bring you back. In a surge of anger I hid my face from you for a moment, but with everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you” (Isaiah 54:7-8).

EVENING PRAYER

Think:

The Ignatian Examen

CONSOLATION The basis for thanks and re-orientation of my life.

- What was life-giving for me today?
- Where/when did I sense God's presence?
- What was nurturing, soothing, refreshing to my soul?
- What drew me closer to God?

DESOLATION The basis for confession, drawing on God, re-orienting my life.

- What was life-draining for me today?
- Where/when did I feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, cold?
- Was there evil or sin— mine or another's?

Treasure:

Read the Evening Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

Dwell in a word, phrase or verse that comforts and encourages your heart.

Thank:

Even difficult situations and challenging relationships have redeeming features. Take time to notice where God prepared, or equipped, or helped you in the midst of your day.

Give thanks for special moments, memories, ideas, assistance, encouragement.

Give thanks for the people who came across your path.

Give thanks for the situations you experienced and what you learned.

Give thanks for what God has taught you through Scripture (today or in the past)

Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him (Matthew 11:28)

Trust:

Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him.

He prayed to the LORD, "Isn't this what I said, LORD, when I was still at home? ... I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity."

Jonah 4:2

MORNING PRAYER

INSTRUCTED by the Spirit through the Word

See the explanation on page 6 in the introduction.

- **Encounter**

Sit silently for five minutes

- Try not to let your mind race. Be still. Listen to your breathing. Relax.
- Be open to thoughts and musings that may come from the Holy Spirit.
- Experience your physical environment. Enjoy it.
- Do not think about or plan the specifics of your day.

- **Examine**

Read the Psalm for today (See table p. 7).

- Consider yourself with sober judgment.
- Confess where you have walked contrary to God's will.
- Rejoice where the Spirit is bearing fruit in your life.
- Celebrate forgiveness, blessings, comfort, growth, ...
- Remind yourself of God's goodness and commit your way to him.

- **Explore**

Read the Morning Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

- Notice impressions of **words** or **phrases** that stood out to you. Why?
- Notice impressions of **principles, examples** and **warnings**. What do they imply?
- Notice impressions of **responses** – right and/or wrong. Does this explain anything in your life?
- Notice impressions of **decisions** – made, recommended, condemned. How do you decide?
- Notice impressions of **results** – adversity, success, blessing, release, trouble. A word for you?
- Notice impressions of who/what is **commended** or **censured**. Connections to your life?

Is the Holy Spirit prompting you to repent of, or develop, a habit, attitude, or life practice?

What will you do? (Be specific)

- **Engage**

Enter a time of reflective and contemplative prayer.

- Discern: Ask God what He is saying to you.
- Dwell: Give thanks for resolution, joy. Talk through concerns, fears.
- Dream: In your imagination walk and talk with God through a visualized life situation.
- Discharge: Find peace, embrace what God has revealed. He is always good.

- End

Living Confessions of Love

Lord of All Life,
we come before you not knowing who we are.
We strut our stuff,
trying to impress others with our self-confidence.
In the process we hope to be what we pretend.
Save us from such pretense,
that we might learn who we are through trust in you
to make us more than we can imagine.
Help us, Augustine-like, to reread our lives as confessions of sin
made possible by your love.
Bind up our wounds and our joys
so that our lives finally make sense only as a prayer to you.
*AMEN.*³⁶

DAILY ACTIVITIES – BIOGRAPHY of a Reformer

Wright, D. F. (2003). Calvin, John. In T. Larsen, D. W. Bebbington, M. A. Noll, & S. Carter (Eds.), *Biographical dictionary of evangelicals* (pp. 109–112). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

CALVIN, John (1509–1564), French Protestant Reformer, was the leader of the Reformation in Geneva, fountain-head of the Calvinist tradition of theology and chief source of the Reformed pattern of Protestant Christianity. None of the sixteenth-century Reformers has been as influential as Calvin in the shaping of evangelicalism in the English-speaking world. Lutheranism still displays a special reverence for Luther, but no Reformer is so widely read by pastors and theologians as John Calvin.

Calvin was born at Noyon in Picardy in northern France. During his time at the universities of Paris, Orléans and Bourges (which included a second period at each of the first two), Calvin studied the humanities, theology and law (c. 1523–1533). Several important details of his educational career remain uncertain, especially dates, but it is clear that Calvin was attracted to the new humanist learning, the study both of the classical languages (he also began to study Hebrew) and of the civil law code of the Christian Roman Empire. ...

Overt expressions of Protestantism in Paris from late 1533 provoked increasingly repressive measures. Calvin fled south, spending some months with Louis Du Tillet, a pastor near Angoulême, where he began work on his *Institutes*. He associated with groups of believers around Poitiers, preaching and sharing in a simple Lord's Supper. In late 1534 Calvin and Du Tillet left France via Strasbourg for Basel. During the next eighteen months, Calvin got to know many of the Reformers and teachers in the Swiss cities (and may even have met Erasmus in the Dutchman's last months), issued his first Protestant writing (a foreword to Olivétan's French Bible [June 1535]) and published the first (Latin) edition of his *Institutio* of the Christian religion (March 1536). The book sold quickly, and Calvin soon began work on a revised edition.

After visits to Ferrara in Italy and finally to Paris during a brief amnesty, Calvin had to stay overnight in Geneva unexpectedly, while en route to study in Strasbourg. Here Guillaume Farel, leader since 1532 of a reform movement that had succeeded in persuading the entire Genevan community to vote in May

³⁶ Hauerwas, S. (2003). *Prayers Plainly Spoken* (pp. 21–35). Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers.

1536 to 'live by the gospel', pressurized Calvin into staying to assist the Reformation. In September 1536 Calvin began to lecture on Paul's epistles in Latin, and within weeks he was working as a pastor. The rest of his life, even during his years of exile spent mostly at Strasbourg (1538–1541), was inextricably linked to the sometimes difficult progress of evangelical reform in Geneva. ...

Calvin's renewed commitment to scholarly endeavours was again overborne, this time by Martin Bucer's urgent summons to Strasbourg. There, in September 1538, Calvin assumed charge of a new French refugee congregation, and early in 1539 he began lecturing on the New Testament in the new academy. The Strasbourg years were both productive and formative for Calvin. The second Latin edition of the *Institutes* (1539) and the first French one (1541), his first biblical commentary, on Romans (1540), and an exemplary *Short Treatise on the Lord's Supper* (in French, 1541) were his main publications. In August 1540 he married Idelette de Bure, a widowed ex-Anabaptist with two children, whom Calvin undertook to raise when she died in 1549. Their only child, a son, died soon after birth in 1542.

...

Among Calvin's multifarious activities in Geneva (his legal training, for example, made him useful on diplomatic and constitutional matters), which have bequeathed to later Reformed evangelicalism not only a huge corpus of theological, biblical and controversial writings but also models of public worship, church polity and disciplinary oversight, his fourfold service of the Word of God must hold pride of place. He preached in French, about ten times a fortnight, at least from 1549 when his sermons began to be recorded by one Denis Raguenier and so preserved. The style was that of a homiletic commentary; Calvin worked verse by verse through a biblical book by *lectio continua*, as long as the clock allowed, without notes, extempore, with only the Greek or Hebrew text before him. He employed the same method for the Latin lectures (*praelectiones*), delivered midweek to students and others, especially pastors in training for ministry in France, long before such teaching was formalized in the Academy of Geneva in 1559. From Calvin's lectures came several of his Old Testament commentaries, whereas those on the New Testament were specially written as such.

...

Given the volume and comprehensive biblical coverage of his sermons and commentaries, to say nothing of the range of his individual treatises, from relics to God's eternal election, Calvin has too often been known as 'a man of one book': the *Institutes*. Nevertheless, the significance of this work among Calvin's corpus as a whole and its merits as a magisterial *summa* of Protestant theology are undeniable. It grew from the six chapters of the 1536 edition (basically a catechism with an apologetic preface to the French king Francis I, which made it almost a confession of faith) through four revisions to the massive four books of the definitive 1559 edition. All apart from the first were followed by French editions, which marked an important advance in the development of the language for use in serious works of theology or philosophy.

The *Institutes* grew, and its contents were reordered, in response to many factors, among which Calvin's engagement with Catholics, radicals such as Servetus or supposedly erring mainstream teachers such as Osiander was probably the weightiest. A point would need clarification, or Calvin's knowledge, for example of the early Fathers, or his understanding of a particular theological topic, would expand, perhaps as a result of lecturing or preaching on a part of Scripture. Rarely were the *Institutes* revised because Calvin had changed his mind.

The work is supreme as an ordered, lucid and comprehensive exposition and defence of the evangelical faith, of which the main elements inspired the whole Reformation. Its systematic character

as a tightly and logically regimented presentation in the manner of late medieval scholastic theologies has been grossly exaggerated. Calvin was above all a biblical theologian. ...

Calvin's achievement lay in combining his massive contribution in biblical exposition and theology (which included also the Genevan catechism, and the Reformed order of worship he brought back from Strasbourg to Geneva, which, translated into English and promoted by Knox's Scotland, served the whole Presbyterian tradition) with a firmly ordered church polity (the essence of which was known subsequently as Presbyterianism), as successful an implementation of reform ideals as could be found anywhere in Reformation Europe, and a programme that sought the conformity of all aspects of human life in society to the will of God. With only a degree of exaggeration he has been called the founder of a civilization.

The terms 'Calvinist' and 'Calvinism' are used in a variety of senses, perhaps least often in direct reference to Calvin's own reforming or theological work. The term 'Calvinian' is applied increasingly to Calvin himself, but the Geneva reform movement that he led is often called the 'Calvinist Reformation'. 'Calvinist' and 'Calvinism' are frequently used for later phases of theological traditions, church polities or patterns of Christian society or culture that to different degrees claim inspiration from or fidelity to Calvin. Questions of the continuity between Calvin and later Calvinists remain keenly debated, but the historical Calvin was too complex to serve comfortably as the eponymous patron of most later Calvinisms.

EVENING PRAYER

Think:

The Ignatian Examen

CONSOLATION The basis for thanks and re-orientation of my life.

- *What was life-giving for me today?*
- *Where/when did I sense God's presence?*
- *What was nurturing, soothing, refreshing to my soul?*
- *What drew me closer to God?*

DESOLATION The basis for confession, drawing on God, re-orienting my life.

- *What was life-draining for me today?*
- *Where/when did I feel alone, far from God?*
- *What was stressful, joyless, dark, cold?*
- *Was there evil or sin— mine or another's?*

Treasure:

Read the Evening Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

Dwell in a word, phrase or verse that comforts and encourages your heart.

Thank:

Even difficult situations and challenging relationships have redeeming features. Take time to notice where God prepared, or equipped, or helped you in the midst of your day.

Give thanks for special moments, memories, ideas, assistance, encouragement.

Give thanks for the people who came across your path.

Give thanks for the situations you experienced and what you learned.

Give thanks for what God has taught you through Scripture (today or in the past)

Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him (Matthew 11:28)

Trust:

Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him.

I led them with cords of human kindness, with ties of love. To them I was like one who lifts a little child to the cheek, and I bent down to feed them.

Hosea 11:4

MORNING PRAYER

INSTRUCTED by the Spirit through the Word

See the explanation on page 6 in the introduction.

- **Encounter**

Sit silently for five minutes

- Try not to let your mind race. Be still. Listen to your breathing. Relax.
- Be open to thoughts and musings that may come from the Holy Spirit.
- Experience your physical environment. Enjoy it.
- Do not think about or plan the specifics of your day.

- **Examine**

Read the Psalm for today (See table p. 7).

- Consider yourself with sober judgment.
- Confess where you have walked contrary to God's will.
- Rejoice where the Spirit is bearing fruit in your life.
- Celebrate forgiveness, blessings, comfort, growth, ...
- Remind yourself of God's goodness and commit your way to him.

- **Explore**

Read the Morning Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

- Notice impressions of **words** or **phrases** that stood out to you. Why?
- Notice impressions of **principles**, **examples** and **warnings**. What do they imply?
- Notice impressions of **responses** – right and/or wrong. Does this explain anything in your life?
- Notice impressions of **decisions** – made, recommended, condemned. How do you decide?
- Notice impressions of **results** – adversity, success, blessing, release, trouble. A word for you?
- Notice impressions of who/what is **commended** or **censured**. Connections to your life?

Is the Holy Spirit prompting you to repent of, or develop, a habit, attitude, or life practice?
What will you do? (Be specific)

- **Engage**

Enter a time of reflective and contemplative prayer.

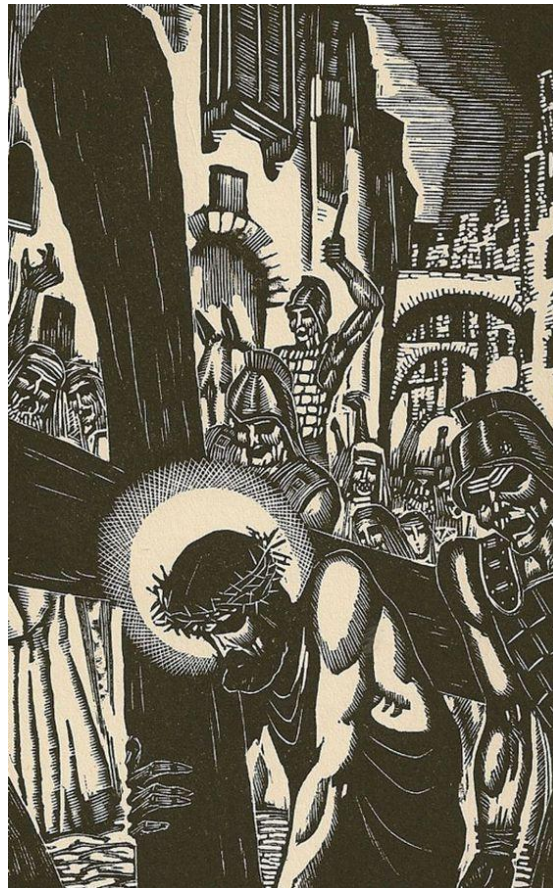
- Discern: Ask God what He is saying to you.
- Dwell: Give thanks for resolution, joy. Talk through concerns, fears.
- Dream: In your imagination walk and talk with God through a visualized life situation.
- Discharge: Find peace, embrace what God has revealed. He is always good.

- End

Give Us the Sight of Children

Light of True Light, true God from true God,
 give us clear sight,
 courage to see your sinful, rebellious, dreadful world as it is,
 not as we want it to be.
 Save us from narcissistic fascinations
 that cloud our understanding with our unknowings.
 Give us clear and innocent sight,
 the sight of children,
 capable of seeing beauty in a common rock.
 Your creation glows with your fiery glory.
 Draw us to the fire,
 consume us with your glory,
 that we may glow with your salvation,
 your light for the world.
 AMEN.³⁷

DAILY ACTIVITY – ARTWORK



James Reid, *Third Station of the Cross*, woodcut, c. 1930

³⁷ Hauerwas, S. (2003). *Prayers Plainly Spoken* (pp. 21–35). Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers.

After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him. – Matthew 27:31

In this oppressive scene, figures crowd all around Jesus, leering, jeering, dominating. Notice how most figures are depicted as skeletons. In the midst of a crowded and rather dark scene, the figure of Christ stands out as bright and healthy, with a halo radiating around his head and skin that seems to glow. Yet the hand that Jesus has wrapped around the cross looks skeletal, perhaps alluding to his impending death.

1. Why do you think the artist has depicted the soldiers and others in the crowd as skeletons? What impact does this have on you as the viewer?
2. Look at Jesus' face. It reveals many emotions: sadness, resignation, strength. What else do you see?
3. Jesus calls us to pick up our 'cross' and follow him. How does your life resemble that of the Suffering Servant?

EVENING PRAYER

Think:

The Ignatian Examen

CONSOLATION The basis for thanks and re-orientation of my life.

- *What was life-giving for me today?*
- *Where/when did I sense God's presence?*
- *What was nurturing, soothing, refreshing to my soul?*
- *What drew me closer to God?*

DESOLATION The basis for confession, drawing on God, re-orienting my life.

- *What was life-draining for me today?*
- *Where/when did I feel alone, far from God?*
- *What was stressful, joyless, dark, cold?*
- *Was there evil or sin— mine or another's?*

Treasure:

Read the Evening Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

Dwell in a word, phrase or verse that comforts and encourages your heart.

Thank:

Even difficult situations and challenging relationships have redeeming features. Take time to notice where God prepared, or equipped, or helped you in the midst of your day.

Give thanks for special moments, memories, ideas, assistance, encouragement.

Give thanks for the people who came across your path.

Give thanks for the situations you experienced and what you learned.

Give thanks for what God has taught you through Scripture (today or in the past)

Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him (Matthew 11:28)

Trust:

Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him.

The LORD is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him.

Nahum 1:7

MORNING PRAYER

INSTRUCTED by the Spirit through the Word

See the explanation on page 6 in the introduction.

• **Encounter**

Sit silently for five minutes

- Try not to let your mind race. Be still. Listen to your breathing. Relax.
- Be open to thoughts and musings that may come from the Holy Spirit.
- Experience your physical environment. Enjoy it.
- Do not think about or plan the specifics of your day.

• **Examine**

Read the Psalm for today (See table p. 7).

- Consider yourself with sober judgment.
- Confess where you have walked contrary to God's will.
- Rejoice where the Spirit is bearing fruit in your life.
- Celebrate forgiveness, blessings, comfort, growth, ...
- Remind yourself of God's goodness and commit your way to him.

• **Explore**

Read the Morning Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

- Notice impressions of **words** or **phrases** that stood out to you. Why?
- Notice impressions of **principles, examples** and **warnings**. What do they imply?
- Notice impressions of **responses** – right and/or wrong. Does this explain anything in your life?
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- Notice impressions of **results** – adversity, success, blessing, release, trouble. A word for you?
- Notice impressions of who/what is **commended** or **censured**. Connections to your life?

Is the Holy Spirit prompting you to repent of, or develop, a habit, attitude, or life practice?
What will you do? (Be specific)

• **Engage**

Enter a time of reflective and contemplative prayer.

- | | |
|------------|---|
| Discern: | Ask God what He is saying to you. |
| Dwell: | Give thanks for resolution, joy. Talk through concerns, fears. |
| Dream: | In your imagination walk and talk with God through a visualized life situation. |
| Discharge: | Find peace, embrace what God has revealed. He is always good. |

- End

Free Us from Self-Fascination

Lord Almighty,
 we say we want to serve you,
 we say we want to help others less fortunate than ourselves,
 we say we want justice.
 But the truth is, we want power and status
 because we so desperately need to be loved.
 Free us from our self-fascination
 and the anxious activity it breeds,
 so that we might be what we say we want to be—
 loved by you and thus capable of unselfish service.
 AMEN.³⁸

DAILY ACTIVITY – READING

Wright, Tom. (1997). **For All God's Worth** (pp. 23–30). London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

The God I want?

A few years ago I was browsing in a second-hand bookshop when I came across a book with a title that still makes me think. I confess I didn't buy the book, and haven't read it, so I don't know if I am misjudging it and its author; but the title sums up a particular attitude shared by many people, including many Christians, today. The title was *The God I Want*. I remember thinking then, and I still think now, that that title was silly, and ultimately self-defeating.

The God I Want? Left to myself, the god I want is a god who will give me what I want. He—or more likely it—will be a projection of my desires. At the grosser level, this will lead me to one of the more obvious pagan gods or goddesses, who offer their devotees money, or sex, or power (as Marx, Freud and Nietzsche pointed out). All idols started out life as the god somebody wanted.

At the more sophisticated level, the god I want will be a god who lives up to my intellectual expectations: a god of whom I can approve rationally, judiciously, after due consideration and weighing up of theological probabilities. I want this god because he, or it, will underwrite my intellectual arrogance. He will boost my sense of being a refined modern thinker. The net result is that I become god; and this god I've made becomes my puppet. Nobody falls down on their face before the god they wanted. Nobody trembles at the word of a home-made god. Nobody goes out with fire in their belly to heal the sick, to clothe the naked, to teach the ignorant, to feed the hungry, because of the god they wanted. They are more likely to stay at home with their feet up.

But on one particular day in the year we celebrate the God whom we didn't want—how could we have ever dreamed of it?—but who, amazingly, wanted us. In the church's year, Trinity Sunday is the day when we stand back from the extraordinary sequence of events that we've been celebrating for the previous five months—Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Good Friday, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost—and when we rub the sleep from our eyes and discover what the word 'god' might actually mean. These events function as a sequence of well-aimed hammer-blows which knock at the clay jars of the gods we want, the gods who reinforce our own pride or prejudice, until they fall away and reveal

³⁸ Hauerwas, S. (2003). **Prayers Plainly Spoken** (pp. 21–35). Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers.

instead a very different god, a dangerous god, a subversive god, a god who comes to us like a blind beggar with wounds in his hands, a god who comes to us in wind and fire, in bread and wine, in flesh and blood: a god who says to us, 'You did not choose me; I chose you.'

You see, the doctrine of the Trinity, properly understood, is as much a way of saying 'we don't know' as of saying 'we do know'. To say that the true God is Three and One is to recognize that if there is a God then of course we shouldn't expect him to fit neatly into our little categories. If he did, he wouldn't be God at all, merely a god, a god we might perhaps have wanted. The Trinity is not something that the clever theologian comes up with as a result of hours spent in the theological laboratory, after which he or she can return to announce that they've got God worked out now, the analysis is complete, and here is God neatly laid out on a slab. The only time they laid God out on a slab he rose again three days afterwards. On the contrary: the doctrine of the Trinity is, if you like, a signpost pointing ahead into the dark, saying: 'Trust me; follow me; my love will keep you safe.' Or, perhaps better, the doctrine of the Trinity is a signpost pointing into a light which gets brighter and brighter until we are dazzled and blinded, but which says: 'Come, and I will make you children of light.' The doctrine of the Trinity affirms the lightness, the propriety, of speaking intelligently about the true God, while at the same time affirming intelligently that the true God must always transcend our grasp of him, even our most intelligent grasp of him. As St Paul says, what matters isn't so much our knowledge of God as God's knowledge of us; not, as it were, the god we want but the God who wants us. God help us, we don't understand ourselves; how can we expect to understand that Self which stands beside our selves like Niagara beside a trickling tap?

All of this leaves me with two questions. First, do we then need to say anything at all? Isn't it enough just to acknowledge that the whole thing is extremely mysterious and puzzling and leave it at that? Mightn't we just as well say that god is five and one, or fifteen and one, as that God is Three and One? Second, and most important, what difference does it make in what we please to call 'the real world'?

These two questions are in fact intimately linked. We can make 'intelligent' missiles that can make war on one particular building hundreds of miles away, but we don't have an equivalent one that can make peace. Might that be because we have worshipped the gods of war, but have forgotten about worshipping the prince of peace? We can put a few men on the moon, but the few men who were standing between the Tutsis and the Hutus in Rwanda in 1994 had to be withdrawn for lack of funds and political will. Might that be because we have worshipped the gods of technology, the gods who boost our own national security—the gods we have wanted, in other words—and have forgotten the god who asked Cain, 'Where is Abel your brother?'

You see, what you believe about God makes a difference to the way you respond to this god, and at the same time to the way you are in the world. Let's look at the options. For most people in the Western world today, the word 'god' refers to a distant, remote being. We can't and don't know very much about this being. He may or may not have made the world, though if we say he did we have an uncomfortable feeling that the scientists are going to challenge us (despite people like John Polkinghorne in Cambridge, one of the finest scientists of our generation and also a leading Christian theologian). This god may or may not intervene from time to time in the world, though he usually doesn't. He has, in fact, left us to muddle through as best we can; which usually means looking after our own interests, carving up the world, and perhaps each other, in our own way. The cat's asleep upstairs, and the mice—and perhaps the rats—are organising the world downstairs.

That's why this remote 'god' is the god that the Western world decided it wanted in the eighteenth century: a god to be coolly acknowledged for an hour or so on Sunday mornings, and ignored for the

other hundred and sixty-seven hours in the week. No wonder, when they did a survey not long ago, the great majority of people in the United Kingdom said they believed in ‘god’, but only a small minority regularly go to church. If that’s what you believe about ‘god’—and it’s what a lot of our society still does believe, including (alas) some within the church—then any sense of worship or religious celebration becomes a vague ritual, a meaningless noise, which merely makes us feel a bit better about ourselves. Is it any wonder that the rats are eating the dead after yet another massacre, and the dove is still locked up in the ark? Can such a god really be God?

The problem is that when you banish what you call ‘god’ up into the remote stratosphere, other gods come clamouring for attention from closer at hand. There are very few out-and-out atheists in the world; those who claim to disbelieve often merely disbelieve in the old high-and-dry god, while happily serving other gods of whom they may be quite unaware, and doing so not just for one hour in the week but with total energy and commitment. I have spoken of the gods of war, of money, of sex. The appalling genocide that still continues in our contemporary world, even within supposedly ‘civilized’ parts of it, are evidence that millions still give allegiance to gods of blood and soil, of tribe and race. Sometimes they try to invoke parts of Christian tradition to support this; but the fact that they go on killing each other shows clearly enough that it isn’t Jesus whom they are worshipping. Christian doctrine isn’t a matter of intellectual algebra. It is directly integrated with the way people behave. If the gods you want, and worship, are the gods from below, the local tribal gods, the gods of power and wealth and pleasure, you will destroy yourself and everyone who gets in the way.

EVENING PRAYER

Think:

The Ignatian Examen

CONSOLATION The basis for thanks and re-orientation of my life.

- *What was life-giving for me today?*
- *Where/when did I sense God’s presence?*
- *What was nurturing, soothing, refreshing to my soul?*
- *What drew me closer to God?*

DESOLATION The basis for confession, drawing on God, re-orienting my life.

- *What was life-draining for me today?*
- *Where/when did I feel alone, far from God?*
- *What was stressful, joyless, dark, cold?*
- *Was there evil or sin— mine or another’s?*

Treasure:

Read the Evening Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

Dwell in a word, phrase or verse that comforts and encourages your heart.

Thank:

Even difficult situations and challenging relationships have redeeming features. Take time to notice where God prepared, or equipped, or helped you in the midst of your day.

Give thanks for special moments, memories, ideas, assistance, encouragement.

Give thanks for the people who came across your path.

Give thanks for the situations you experienced and what you learned.
Give thanks for what God has taught you through Scripture (today or in the past)
Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him (Matthew 11:28)

Trust:

Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him.

The LORD your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves.
He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer
rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing.

Zephaniah 3:17

MORNING PRAYER

INSTRUCTED by the Spirit through the Word

See the explanation on page 6 in the introduction.

- **Encounter**

Sit silently for five minutes

- Try not to let your mind race. Be still. Listen to your breathing. Relax.
- Be open to thoughts and musings that may come from the Holy Spirit.
- Experience your physical environment. Enjoy it.
- Do not think about or plan the specifics of your day.

- **Examine**

Read the Psalm for today (See table p. 7).

- Consider yourself with sober judgment.
- Confess where you have walked contrary to God's will.
- Rejoice where the Spirit is bearing fruit in your life.
- Celebrate forgiveness, blessings, comfort, growth, ...
- Remind yourself of God's goodness and commit your way to him.

- **Explore**

Read the Morning Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

- Notice impressions of **words** or **phrases** that stood out to you. Why?
- Notice impressions of **principles**, **examples** and **warnings**. What do they imply?
- Notice impressions of **responses** – right and/or wrong. Does this explain anything in your life?
- Notice impressions of **decisions** – made, recommended, condemned. How do you decide?
- Notice impressions of **results** – adversity, success, blessing, release, trouble. A word for you?
- Notice impressions of who/what is **commended** or **censured**. Connections to your life?

Is the Holy Spirit prompting you to repent of, or develop, a habit, attitude, or life practice?
What will you do? (Be specific)

- **Engage**

Enter a time of reflective and contemplative prayer.

- Discern: Ask God what He is saying to you.
- Dwell: Give thanks for resolution, joy. Talk through concerns, fears.
- Dream: In your imagination walk and talk with God through a visualized life situation.
- Discharge: Find peace, embrace what God has revealed. He is always good.

- End

Faltering Rulers

Master of the Universe,
 you have made us your servants,
 kings and queens in your world.
 We confess we do not feel much like rulers:
 we are not only incapable of doing what we want,
 we are not even sure what we should or do want.
 We, in short, do not even seem to rule ourselves.
 As a result we fail you,
 our brothers and sisters in Christ,
 our brothers and sisters who are in the world,
 and ourselves.
 Give us the enthusiasm of your Spirit,
 that we may be so filled with your love
 that others will be attracted to your rule.
 As those ruled by you,
 may we witness how service can govern.
 AMEN.³⁹

DAILY ACTIVITY – Contemplate a Poem or Hymn

Sweet the Moments, Rich In Blessing

Sweet the moments, rich in blessing,
 Which before the Cross I spend;
 Life and health and peace possessing
 From the sinner's dying Friend.

Truly blessed is this station,
 Low before His Cross to lie;
 While I see divine compassion
 Beaming in His languid eye.

Love and grief my heart dividing,
 With my tears His feet I'll bathe;
 Constant still in faith abiding,
 Life deriving from His death.

³⁹ Hauerwas, S. (2003). **Prayers Plainly Spoken** (pp. 21–35). Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers.

For Thy sorrows we adore Thee
For the griefs that wrought our peace
Gracious Saviour! we implore Thee,
In our hearts Thy love increase.

WALTER SHELLEY et al., 1725–1786⁴⁰

1. Does the writer feel that life has changed or should change? How do you know?
2. What message is the author trying to convey or help you understand?
3. Does it relate to anything in your own life?
4. Does it give you a new way of looking at something?
5. Consider how any figurative language (simile, metaphor, personification, etc.) enlightens you.

EVENING PRAYER

Think:

The Ignatian Examen

CONSOLATION The basis for thanks and re-orientation of my life.

- What was life-giving for me today?
- Where/when did I sense God's presence?
- What was nurturing, soothing, refreshing to my soul?
- What drew me closer to God?

DESOLATION The basis for confession, drawing on God, re-orienting my life.

- What was life-draining for me today?
- Where/when did I feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, cold?
- Was there evil or sin— mine or another's?

Treasure:

Read the Evening Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)
Dwell in a word, phrase or verse that comforts and encourages your heart.

Thank:

Even difficult situations and challenging relationships have redeeming features. Take time to notice where God prepared, or equipped, or helped you in the midst of your day.

Give thanks for special moments, memories, ideas, assistance, encouragement.

Give thanks for the people who came across your path.

Give thanks for the situations you experienced and what you learned.

Give thanks for what God has taught you through Scripture (today or in the past)

Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him (Matthew 11:28)

Trust:

Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him.

I will heal their waywardness and love them freely, for my
anger has turned away from them.

Hosea 14:4

⁴⁰ Tozer, A. W. (1991). *The Christian Book of Mystical Verse* (p. 29). Camp Hill, PA: WingSpread.

MORNING PRAYER

INSTRUCTED by the Spirit through the Word

See the explanation on page 6 in the introduction.

- **Encounter**

Sit silently for five minutes

- Try not to let your mind race. Be still. Listen to your breathing. Relax.
- Be open to thoughts and musings that may come from the Holy Spirit.
- Experience your physical environment. Enjoy it.
- Do not think about or plan the specifics of your day.

- **Examine**

Read the Psalm for today (See table p. 7).

- Consider yourself with sober judgment.
- Confess where you have walked contrary to God's will.
- Rejoice where the Spirit is bearing fruit in your life.
- Celebrate forgiveness, blessings, comfort, growth, ...
- Remind yourself of God's goodness and commit your way to him.

- **Explore**

Read the Morning Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

- Notice impressions of **words** or **phrases** that stood out to you. Why?
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- Notice impressions of who/what is **commended** or **censured**. Connections to your life?

Is the Holy Spirit prompting you to repent of, or develop, a habit, attitude, or life practice?

What will you do? (Be specific)

- **Engage**

Enter a time of reflective and contemplative prayer.

- | | |
|------------|---|
| Discern: | Ask God what He is saying to you. |
| Dwell: | Give thanks for resolution, joy. Talk through concerns, fears. |
| Dream: | In your imagination walk and talk with God through a visualized life situation. |
| Discharge: | Find peace, embrace what God has revealed. He is always good. |

- End

Worthy Agents of Your Peace

Saving God,
 free us from hardness of heart,
 take from us all pride and pretension,
 strip us clean of all that makes us incapable
 of being witnesses of your gentle love.
 Make us worthy agents of your peace,
 so that even as we contend with one another
 the world may say, "But see how they love one another."
 AMEN.⁴¹

DAILY ACTIVITY – Lectio Divina

LECTIO DIVINA⁴²

This is an exercise in letting Scripture speak to you through attentive reading.

- **Preparation:** Sit in silence; Anticipate an encounter with God mediated through the Spirit. Let Him speak through the word and also be aware of what you bring to this encounter. That is, what is in your heart and on your mind? (Note how that changes as you read)
- **Reading:** Read an appointed biblical passage; ideally not more than 3 verses. Use a part of one of the readings from the past week that was special for you (see the lectionary table on p. 7).
 Read the verses through slowly. Savour the words. Hear their meaning.
 Read them again.
 Consider what the passage means at an objective or historical level, what the biblical author intends to say. *The tools of Bible study are applied.* Use all knowledge and understanding to the encounter. This is the first part of discovery – *what does the text mean?*
- **Meditation:** Read the text *aloud* a third time. Attempt to discern meanings at a subjective level: the more particularized or personal meanings of the passage for you in our own time and circumstances. What words, phrases, images stirred something within you? Where is your attention drawn? This is the second part of discovery – *what might the Spirit be saying to you today?*
- **Prayer:** Read the text a fourth time. Consider how the Spirit moves you to pray. Offer the prayers silently or aloud.
- **Contemplation:** Read the text a fifth time. Let your soul rest on aspect/s that have stirred something in you. Like lying in the sun, bask in its truth. This is a time to 'marinate' in what has been revealed to

⁴¹ Hauerwas, S. (2003). *Prayers Plainly Spoken* (pp. 21–35). Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers.

⁴² Adapted from: Jonathan Linman, *Holy Conversation: Spirituality for Worship*. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2010), p. 35.

you. Do not explore further – enjoy what you have now.

- ***Incarnation:*** Apply your discovery to your life and ministry. What would God have you proclaim, enflesh, be, do?

EVENING PRAYER

Think:

The Ignatian Examen

CONSOLATION The basis for thanks and re-orientation of my life.

- *What was life-giving for me today?*
- *Where/when did I sense God's presence?*
- *What was nurturing, soothing, refreshing to my soul?*
- *What drew me closer to God?*

DESOLATION The basis for confession, drawing on God, re-orienting my life.

- *What was life-draining for me today?*
- *Where/when did I feel alone, far from God?*
- *What was stressful, joyless, dark, cold?*
- *Was there evil or sin– mine or another's?*

Treasure:

Read the Evening Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

Dwell in a word, phrase or verse that comforts and encourages your heart.

Thank:

Even difficult situations and challenging relationships have redeeming features. Take time to notice where God prepared, or equipped, or helped you in the midst of your day.

Give thanks for special moments, memories, ideas, assistance, encouragement.

Give thanks for the people who came across your path.

Give thanks for the situations you experienced and what you learned.

Give thanks for what God has taught you through Scripture (today or in the past)

Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him (Matthew 11:28)

Trust:

Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him.

On that day the LORD their God will save them, as the flock of his people; for like the jewels of a crown they shall shine on his land.

Zechariah 9:16

Week 5

Sunday March 26 – Saturday April 1

Memory Verse for the Week

If the whole passage is too long, then try to memorize just the bolded verse.

Feel free to use another translation or passage if you prefer.

John 10:14–16

(English Standard Version)

¹⁴ **I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me,** ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶ And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.

Planning Ahead – This Week's Events:

Worship Services Sun Mar 26 – Contemporary worship 10am.
– Evensong worship service 7pm.

Morning Prayer Monday, Wednesday (with communion) and Friday, 7.00 – 7.45am.

Whom would you like to serve or spend time with? Plan and arrange the details.

MORNING PRAYER

INSTRUCTED by the Word through the Spirit

See the explanation on page 5 in the introduction.

- **Come**

- Acknowledge your mood and how you feel. (Be open as you dwell with Jesus)
- Affirm His presence: “Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matt 28:20)

- **Confess**

Read the Psalm for today (see table p. 7).

- Take time to confess your sins to God and to seek his gracious forgiveness
- Resolve, with the Spirit’s help, to amend your life.

God help us to find our confession;
 The truth within us which is hidden from our mind;
 The beauty or the ugliness we see elsewhere
 But never in ourselves;
 The stowaway which has been smuggled
 Into the dark side of the heart,
 Which puts the heart off balance and causes it pain,
 Which wearies and confuses us,
 Which tips us in false directions and inclines us to destruction,
 The load which is not carried squarely
 Because it is carried in ignorance
 God help us to find our confession.
 Help us across the boundary of our understanding.
 Lead us into the darkness that we may find what lies concealed;
 That we may confess it towards the light;
 That we may carry our truth in the centre of our heart;
 That we may carry our cross wisely
 And bring harmony into our life and our world.
 Amen.

*Michael Leunig⁴³
 Australian artist and cartoonist*

- **Consider**

Read the Morning Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

- What have you learned about **God** – Father, Son, Holy Spirit?

⁴³ Ashwin, Angela. (2002). *The Book of a Thousand Prayers*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan.

- What have you learned about **life** – commands, promises, affirmations, consequences, ... ?
- What have you learned about **people** – encouragements, responses, examples, ... ?
- What have you learned about **yourself** – be attentive to how the Spirit stirs your heart, ... ?

- **Commit**

What is the Spirit saying to you?

Is there a verse you should carry with you through the day?

What might change in your life?

- **Confide**

Bring what you have learned and the circumstances of life to your gracious heavenly Father.

Chat with God (thanksgiving, discussion, intercession) about:

Your city
Your employer / school
Your church (people and ministries)
Your neighbours and colleagues
Your family and friends
Yourself

A Collect for Strength to Await Christ's Return⁴⁴

O God our King,
by the resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ on the first day of the week,
you conquered sin,
put death to flight,
and gave us the hope of everlasting life:
Redeem all our days by this victory;
forgive our sins,
banish our fears,
make us bold to praise you and to do your will;
and steel us to wait for the consummation of your kingdom on the last great
Day;
through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

DAILY ACTIVITIES

- WORSHIP SERVICES**
- Contemporary worship 10am.
 - Evensong worship service 7pm.

⁴⁴ From: *Texts for Common Prayer* of the Anglican Church of North America (2016)

EVENING PRAYER

- Prepare:*** Review your day being attentive for:
- Something to learn from.
 - Something to be thankful for.
 - Something to repent of.
 - Something that especially seemed to have God's hand on it.
 - Something that is part of a recurring pattern.
- Ponder:*** Read the Evening Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)
Dwell in a word, phrase or verse that comforts or instructs your heart.
- Pray:*** Give thanks for special moments in your day.
Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him (Matthew 11:28)
- Presence:***
- That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.
(1 John 1:3)

MORNING PRAYER

INSTRUCTED by the Word through the Spirit

See the explanation on page 5 in the introduction.

- **Come**

- Acknowledge your mood and how you feel. (Be open as you dwell with Jesus)
- Affirm His presence: “Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matt 28:20)

- **Confess**

Read the Psalm for today (see table p. 7).

- Take time to confess your sins to God and to seek his gracious forgiveness
- Resolve, with the Spirit’s help, to amend your life.

For this day’s sins, O God, grant us mercy:
 for sloth that wasted the hours
 for haste which outran its benedictions;
 for fear that frustrated bold hopes
 for dullness that took everything for granted;
 for anger that burst forth destructively
 for indifference that smothered the soul;
 for suspicion wrongly held
 for trust cheaply betrayed;
 for indecision which avoided the evil
 for compromise which disguised it.

Samuel H. Miller (1900-1968)
Dean of Harvard Divinity School and Baptist minister⁴⁵

- **Consider**

Read the Morning Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

- What have you learned about **God** – Father, Son, Holy Spirit?
- What have you learned about **life** – commands, promises, affirmations, consequences, ... ?
- What have you learned about **people** – encouragements, responses, examples, ... ?
- What have you learned about **yourself** – be attentive to how the Spirit stirs your heart, ... ?

- **Commit**

What is the Spirit saying to you?

Is there a verse you should carry with you through the day?

What might change in your life?

⁴⁵ Davies, Horton. (1990) *The Communion of Saints*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans.

- **Confide**

Bring what you have learned and the circumstances of life to your gracious heavenly Father.
Chat with God (thanksgiving, discussion, intercession) about:

Your city
Your employer / school
Your church (people and ministries)
Your neighbours and colleagues
Your family and friends
Yourself

A Collect for the Renewal of Life⁴⁶

O God, the King eternal,
whose light divides the day from the night
and turns the shadow of death into the morning:
Drive far from us all wrong desires,
incline our hearts to keep your law,
and guide our feet into the way of peace;
that, having done your will with cheerfulness during the day,
we may, when night comes, rejoice to give you thanks;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

DAILY ACTIVITY – READING

Stott, J. (2007). **The Living Church: Convictions of a Lifelong Pastor** (pp. 35–47). Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press.

WORSHIP: GLORYING IN GOD’S HOLY NAME

It is often said that the church’s pre-eminent responsibility is evangelism. But this is not so, for at least three reasons. First, evangelism comes under the heading of our duty to our neighbour, whereas worship is our duty to God, and our duty to God must take precedence over our duty to our neighbour.

Secondly, although all of us are expected to share the gospel with others whenever the opportunity presents itself, evangelism is also a spiritual gift or *charisma* (Ephesians 4:11) which is given only to some. Thus not all Christians are evangelists, but all Christians are worshippers, both in private and in public.

Thirdly, evangelism is a temporary activity, which will cease when the Lord Jesus comes to consummate his kingdom. But our worship will continue throughout eternity.

This being so, namely that worship is the church’s pre-eminent duty, we should surely give it our closest attention.

What, however, is worship? Of course, the whole of our life is worship, serving God with all our being. But how shall we define it? Perhaps the best scriptural definition is to be found in Psalm 105:3. To

⁴⁶ From: *Texts for Common Prayer* of the Anglican Church of North America (2016)

worship is to 'glory in God's holy name'. God's name is his revealed character. It is 'holy' because it is unique, set apart from and above all other names. And once we glimpse the holiness of God's great name, we see the fitness of 'glorying' or revelling in it. Indeed, we are to join with all creatures in pronouncing him worthy of our praise, because he is both our Creator and our Redeemer (Revelation 5:9–14). Because of who God is, it is appropriate that we should 'worship at his footstool' (Psalm 99:5).

True worship according to Scripture has four main characteristics.

BIBLICAL WORSHIP

First, true worship is biblical worship, that is to say, it is a response to the biblical revelation. We no doubt remember how the apostle Paul found in Athens an altar inscribed 'to an unknown god'. Paul went on to claim that what the philosophers worshipped as unknown he was going to proclaim to them (Acts 17:23). The truth is that it is impossible to worship an unknown god. For if we do not know him, we cannot worship him, and our so-called worship is bound to degenerate into idolatry.

So Christian worship could be defined as 'a response to revelation'. Hence the reading and preaching of God's word in public worship, far from being alien intrusions into it, are rather indispensable aspects of it. It is the word of God which evokes the worship of God. ...

CONGREGATIONAL WORSHIP

Secondly, true worship is congregational worship. Of course some people still tell us that they find it easier to worship God on their own than in a crowd. And certainly there is a place for private and individual worship, even in the Psalter. But the Psalmist focuses more on corporate worship. For example, 'Praise, O servants of the LORD' (Psalm 113:1) and 'Sing to the LORD a new song, his praise in the assembly of the saints' (Psalm 149:1). And in the New Testament we read this exhortation:

Let us not give up meeting, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching (Hebrews 10:25).

Moreover, the worship which is pleasing to God is offered by his people together, who have assembled in order to do so. ...

Our common congregational worship should clearly express the international, intercultural character of the body of Christ. For example, throughout his Roman letter the apostle was conscious of the tensions which existed in the church between Jews and Gentiles. So in chapter 15 he prayed that God might give them 'a spirit of unity' among themselves, in order that they might engage in the common worship of God 'so that with one heart and mouth' they might glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 15:5–6).

SPIRITUAL WORSHIP

Thirdly, true worship is spiritual worship. Scripture often emphasizes that true worship is not in itself a matter of forms, rituals and ceremonies. We need to listen carefully to the biblical criticism of religion. No book, not even by Marx and his followers, is more scathing of empty religion than the Bible. The prophets of the eighth and seventh century BC were outspoken in their denunciation of the formalism and hypocrisy of Israelite worship. Jesus then applied their critique to the Pharisees of his day: 'These people ... honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me' (Isaiah 29:13; Mark 7:6). ...

The vocation of the church to offer God spiritual worship is of special importance today. For even in the 'secular' west there is a widespread hunger for 'spirituality'. ...

What is needed, then? Here are some suggestions. First, we need such a faithful reading and preaching of God's word that through it his living voice is heard addressing his people again. Secondly, we need such a reverent and expectant administration of the Eucharist or Lord's Supper that (I choose my words carefully) there is a Real Presence of Jesus Christ. His presence is not in the elements, but among his people and at his table, Jesus Christ himself objectively and really present, coming to meet

us, ready to make himself known to us through the breaking of bread, and anxious to give himself to us, so that we may feed on him in our hearts by faith. Thirdly, we need such a sincere offering of praise and prayer, that God's people say with Jacob, 'Surely the LORD is in this place, and I was not aware of it' (Genesis 28:16), and unbelievers present will fall down and worship God, exclaiming 'God is really among you!' (1 Corinthians 14:24–25).

In brief, it is a great tragedy that many of our contemporaries, who are seeking transcendence, turn to drugs, sex, yoga, cults, mysticism, the New Age and science fiction, instead of to the church, in whose worship services true transcendence should always be experienced, and a close encounter with the living God enjoyed.

MORAL WORSHIP

The kind of worship which is pleasing to God has one more major characteristic. True worship is moral worship, that is to say, it must not only express what is in our hearts but also be accompanied by an upright life. Samuel put this beyond doubt in his explicit words to King Saul: 'To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams' (1 Samuel 15:22). ...

EVENING PRAYER

Prepare: Review your day being attentive for:

- Something to learn from.
- Something to be thankful for.
- Something to repent of.
- Something that especially seemed to have God's hand on it.
- Something that is part of a recurring pattern.

Ponder: Read the Evening Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)
Dwell in a word, phrase or verse that comforts or instructs your heart.

Pray: Give thanks for special moments in your day.
Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him (Matthew 11:28)

Presence:

For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

(Rom 8:38–39)

MORNING PRAYER

INSTRUCTED by the Word through the Spirit

See the explanation on page 5 in the introduction.

- **Come**

- Acknowledge your mood and how you feel. (Be open as you dwell with Jesus)
- Affirm His presence: “Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matt 28:20)

- **Confess**

Read the Psalm for today (see table p. 7).

- Take time to confess your sins to God and to seek his gracious forgiveness
- Resolve, with the Spirit’s help, to amend your life.

Show me, O Lord, your mercy,
and delight my heart with it.
Let me find you whom I so longingly seek.
See, here is the man whom the robbers seized, mishandled,
and left half dead on the road to Jericho.
O kind-hearted Samaritan, come to my aid!
I am the sheep who wandered into the wilderness –
seek after me, and bring me home again to your fold.
Do with me what you will,
that I may stay by you all the days of my life,
and praise you with all those who are with you in heaven for all eternity.

*St. Jerome (c. 347-420)
Biblical scholar and hermit⁴⁷*

- **Consider**

Read the Morning Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

- What have you learned about **God** – Father, Son, Holy Spirit?
- What have you learned about **life** – commands, promises, affirmations, consequences, ... ?
- What have you learned about **people** – encouragements, responses, examples, ... ?
- What have you learned about **yourself** – be attentive to how the Spirit stirs your heart, ... ?

- **Commit**

What is the Spirit saying to you?

Is there a verse you should carry with you through the day?

What might change in your life?

⁴⁷ Davies, Horton. (1990) *The Communion of Saints*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans.

- **Confide**

Bring what you have learned and the circumstances of life to your gracious heavenly Father.
Chat with God (thanksgiving, discussion, intercession) about:

Your city
Your employer / school
Your church (people and ministries)
Your neighbours and colleagues
Your family and friends
Yourself

A Collect for Peace⁴⁸

O God, the author of peace and lover of concord,
to know you is eternal life
and to serve you is perfect freedom:
Defend us, your humble servants,
in all assaults of our enemies;
that we, surely trusting in your defense,
may not fear the power of any adversaries,
through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

DAILY ACTIVITIES – BIOGRAPHY of a Reformer

P. C-Lim, H. (2003). Cranmer, Thomas. In T. Larsen, D. W. Bebbington, M. A. Noll, & S. Carter (Eds.), *Biographical dictionary of evangelicals* (pp. 164–166). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

CRANMER, Thomas (1489–1556), English Reformer, was the first Protestant Archbishop of Canterbury during the tumultuous reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, and Mary I.

Born in Aslockton, Nottinghamshire, to Thomas and Agnes Cranmer, the younger Thomas entered Jesus College, Cambridge in 1503 at the age of fourteen; he later received the BA (1511–1512), MA (1515) and DD (1526). Around 1515, shortly after he was appointed to a fellowship at Jesus College, he relinquished it following his marriage. After his wife's death in childbirth, he resumed his fellowship.

At Cambridge Cranmer was trained in Renaissance humanism, which predisposed him to assiduous study of the Bible as well as patristics. No substantial evidence exists to show that Cranmer was influenced by the new, radical, evangelical theology of the 1520s. In fact, the annotations in his copy of John Fisher's confutation of Luther show that he was clearly unconvinced by the German Reformer's attack on the papacy and the doctrine of works. Cranmer was ordained priest in the early 1520s and continued as a reader in divinity at Jesus College as well as a university examiner in divinity until the summer of 1529, when his quiet academic life came to a sudden end.

In 1529 both Oxford and Cambridge universities were involved in legitimating Henry's impending divorce and subsequent second marriage, and Cranmer assured Henry that since Catherine of Aragon was the widow of his older brother, Arthur, his marriage had never been lawfully consummated

⁴⁸ From: *Texts for Common Prayer* of the Anglican Church of North America (2016)

according to canon law. This claim evidently assuaged Henry's apprehensions, and soon Cranmer moved to Durham House, the London home of the Boleyns. In January 1530, at Henry's behest, Cranmer was sent on a diplomatic mission with the Earl of Wiltshire's embassy to Pope Clement VII and to the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V at Regensburg, from which he returned in September 1530. Despite the best efforts of the English to persuade Clement VII to declare Henry's marriage to Catherine invalid, the Pope was understandably reluctant; he was under great political pressure from Charles V, who had not only sacked the papal city of Rome, but was also the favourite nephew of Catherine. Cranmer became archdeacon of Taunton in 1530, and while staying in Nuremberg in 1532, he married Margaret, niece of the famous Lutheran theologian Andreas Osiander. In so doing he broke his priestly vow of celibacy, revealing an inclination towards the Protestant faith. The Cranmers' marriage was to remain a secret for fifteen years.

In 1532 Henry appointed Cranmer, despite his protestations, as Archbishop of Canterbury; he was consecrated on 30 March 1533. His rise to ecclesiastical prominence had been very rapid. One of his earliest tasks as primate of all England was to find theological justification and historical precedents for the rejection of papal jurisdiction and supremacy in England. He adhered strictly to the doctrines of the 'godly prince' and the royal supremacy over both the political and the ecclesiastical realms. His dislike of papal supremacy, which dated from his time in Cambridge, was complemented by his enthusiastic support of Henry's royal supremacy. Cranmer cautiously promoted reform of the Church of England. *The Ten Articles of Faith* (1536) and *Bishops' Book* (1537) resembled the Lutheran Wittenberg Articles; the standards of faith were declared to be the Scriptures and three (not seven) sacraments, and the article on justification affirmed the Lutheran principle of *sola fide*. Cranmer was also convinced of the need for a vernacular Bible in order quickly to disseminate the evangelical faith. *The Great Bible* was published in 1539 and a second edition only a year later.

After the accession of Edward VI in 1547, Cranmer began more freely to express his desire for reform and to implement it more vigorously. He had a leading role in the writing of the first eucharistic liturgy in English (1548), the first two versions of *The Book of Common Prayer* (1549 and 1552), the *Book of Homilies* (1547) and the Forty-Two Articles (1553). His *Defence of the True and Catholic Doctrine of the Sacrament* (1550) was severely criticized by the conservative Bishop of Winchester, Stephen Gardiner, but expressed his mature understanding of this contentious issue. Cranmer first abandoned his belief in transubstantiation in favour of the Lutheran doctrine of real presence, and then embraced the Calvinian doctrine of spiritual presence under the influence of Nicholas Ridley in about 1546; he affirmed this doctrine during the Lords' debate on the sacraments in December 1548. The first Edwardian Prayer Book won measured approbation from Catholic conservatives such as Gardiner but was condemned as a woefully inadequate expression of Protestant religion by evangelicals such as John Hooper, Bishop of Gloucester, Peter Martyr Vermigli and Martin Bucer, who were unhappy with its apparent affirmation of real presence. In the second Edwardian Prayer Book of 1552, the mass was renamed 'Holy Communion', and the orientation of the service became more Protestant.

When Charles V declared the Augsburg Interim in June 1548, it put an end to Martin Bucer's indefatigable efforts for reformation in Strasbourg. Cranmer invited him and his associate Paul Fagius to England, appointing them as Regius Professor of Divinity and Regius Professor of Hebrew at Cambridge during the Michaelmas term of 1549. He also invited the Italian Reformer Peter Martyr Vermigli, whose exegetical works and *Loci Communes* had become prescribed reading for Protestant theological students, to become Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford. Cranmer thus added great theological weight to the two English universities. Moreover, he welcomed many Protestant refugees to London and allowed them to form 'stranger churches', with the Polish Reformer Jan Laski as

superintendent, to the chagrin of the bishop of London, Nicholas Ridley. He was thus hailed by Heinrich Bullinger as ‘the especial patron of the foreigners’.

As the eucharistic debate perpetuated the division between Zwinglians and Lutherans, Protestants were alarmed by the Catholic renewal movement and backlash against Protestantism at the Council of Trent. Cranmer wrote to Bullinger, Zwingli’s successor at Zurich, to Melanchthon, lieutenant of Luther, and to Calvin in 1552, calling for a pan-Protestant synod to promote unity and to reach agreement on the sacrament.

Many of the great hopes of Cranmer and his like-minded colleagues were brought to nothing by the unexpected and premature death of the fifteen-year-old Edward VI, who had made the Church of England more Protestant. After the succession of Mary Tudor to the throne, the mass was re-introduced. On 13 September 1553 Cranmer was imprisoned in the Tower of London because of his denial of a cardinal doctrine of the Queen’s Catholic faith and his attempt to put Lady Jane Grey on the throne immediately after Edward’s death. Tried for treason two months later, he was declared guilty on all counts. In March 1554 the Council ordered Cranmer, Ridley and Latimer to be sent to Oxford. While their execution was delayed due to Mary’s marriage to Philip of Spain and Wyatt’s peasant rebellion in Kent, Cranmer undertook an intensive study of the Eucharist to prepare for his confrontation with Gardiner and his supporters. On 16 April 1554, in what Cranmer had hoped would be a genuine debate, he was instead tried for heresy, convicted and excommunicated. Since he was an archbishop, the English ecclesiastical authorities had to wait for official approval from Rome. Finally, on 4 December 1555, Paul IV excommunicated Cranmer, who was then stripped of his orders. Under intense pressure from Mary’s Commission in February and March 1556, Cranmer temporarily recanted six times his non-Catholic views on the Eucharist and his repudiation of papal supremacy. However, when no pardon was granted, Cranmer went to the flames on 21 March 1556 defying both the Marian and papal authorities. He renounced his earlier recantations, and held his right hand in the fire as a symbol of his rejection of the Marian regime and his own complicity in it.

The verdict of historians on Cranmer has ranged from the very positive to the very negative. But it is beyond doubt that he made a major contribution to the worship and theology of the Church of England, as a liturgist in the writing of the *Book of Common Prayer*, as a supporter of the vernacular Bible, as a proponent of Protestant ecumenism and patron of evangelical refugees, and finally as an adherent to the principle of royal supremacy.

EVENING PRAYER

Prepare:

Review your day being attentive for:

- Something to learn from.
- Something to be thankful for.
- Something to repent of.
- Something that especially seemed to have God’s hand on it.
- Something that is part of a recurring pattern.

Ponder:

Read the Evening Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)
Dwell in a word, phrase or verse that comforts or instructs your heart.

Pray:

Give thanks for special moments in your day.
Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him (Matthew 11:28)

Presence:

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another
Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth.
(John 14:16–17)

MORNING PRAYER

INSTRUCTED by the Word through the Spirit

See the explanation on page 5 in the introduction.

- **Come**

- Acknowledge your mood and how you feel. (Be open as you dwell with Jesus)
- Affirm His presence: “Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matt 28:20)

- **Confess**

Read the Psalm for today (see table p. 7).

- Take time to confess your sins to God and to seek his gracious forgiveness
- Resolve, with the Spirit’s help, to amend your life.

A SERVICE *for* SUCH AS WOULD MAKE *or* RENEW THEIR COVENANT WITH GOD⁴⁹

CONFESSION

[Make this prayer personal by replacing “we” and “us” with “I” and “me” as appropriate]

Preparation:

Let us now examine ourselves before God, humbly confessing our sins and looking for his promised forgiveness, watching our hearts, lest by self-deceit we shut ourselves out from his presence.

Here all shall kneel

O God our Father,
 who has set forth the way of life for us in your beloved Son:
 we confess with shame our slowness to learn of him,
 our reluctance to follow him.
 You have spoken and called, and we have not given heed;
 your beauty has shone forth and we have been blind;
 you have stretched your hands to us through our fellows and we have passed by.
 We have taken great benefits with little thanks;
 we have been unworthy of your changeless love.
Have mercy upon us and forgive us, O Lord.

Forgive us, we beseech you,

⁴⁹ Wesley, J., & Wesley, C. (1981). *John and Charles Wesley: Selected Prayers, Hymns, Journal Notes, Sermons, Letters and Treatises*. (R. J. Payne & F. Whaling, Eds.) (pp. 384–386). Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press.

the poverty of our worship,
the formality and selfishness of our prayers,
our inconstancy and little faith,
our neglect of fellowship,
our hesitating witness for Christ,
our false pretenses
and our willful ignorance of your ways.
Have mercy upon us and forgive us, O Lord.

Forgive us wherein we have wasted our time or abused our gifts.
Forgive us if we have excused our evil-doing or evaded our responsibilities.
Forgive us that we have been unwilling to overcome evil with good,
that we have drawn back from the cross.
Have mercy upon us and forgive us, O Lord.

Forgive us that so little of your love has reached others through us.
We have borne too easily wrongs and sufferings that were not our own.
We have been thoughtless in our judgments,
hasty in condemnation,
grudging in forgiveness.
Forgive us as we forgive others, O Lord.

Most Holy Father, our sins are such as sent our Lord to his cross.
We have no ground where we can stand before you
save the greatness of the mercy revealed in that cross.
*Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling.*

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to your loving kindness;
according to the multitude of your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions.
Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.

[Psalm 51:1, 10]

As the heaven is high above the earth,
so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.
As far as the east is from the west,
so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

[Psalm 103:11-12]

God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.
If we walk in the light as he is in the light,
we have fellowship one with another,
and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.
If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins,
and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness

[1 John 1:5, 7-9]

AMEN.

- **Consider**

Read the Morning Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

- What have you learned about **God** – Father, Son, Holy Spirit?
- What have you learned about **life** – commands, promises, affirmations, consequences, ... ?
- What have you learned about **people** – encouragements, responses, examples, ... ?
- What have you learned about **yourself** – be attentive to how the Spirit stirs your heart, ... ?

- **Commit**

What is the Spirit saying to you?

Is there a verse you should carry with you through the day?

What might change in your life?

- **Confide**

Bring what you have learned and the circumstances of life to your gracious heavenly Father.

Chat with God (thanksgiving, discussion, intercession) about:

Your city

Your employer / school

Your church (people and ministries)

Your neighbours and colleagues

Your family and friends

Yourself

A Collect for Grace⁵⁰

O Lord, our heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God,
you have brought us safely to the beginning of this day:

Defend us by your mighty power,

that we may not fall into sin

nor run into any danger;

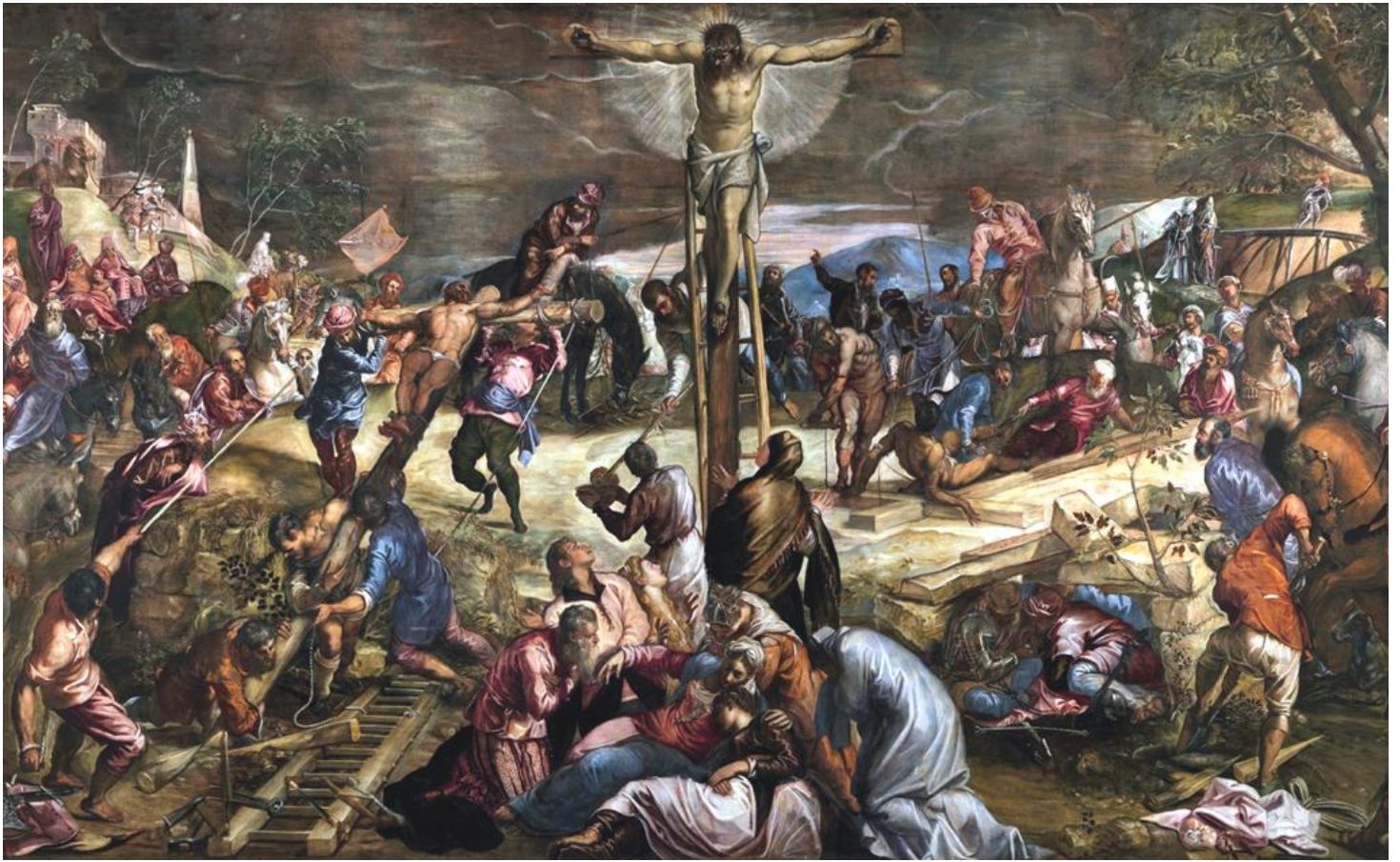
and that guided by your Spirit,

we may do what is righteous in your sight;

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

⁵⁰ From: *Texts for Common Prayer* of the Anglican Church of North America (2016)



Tintoretto, *The Crucifixion* (detail), oil on canvas, 1565

Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” And they divided up his clothes by casting lots. – Luke 23:32-34

This painting depicts a busy scene, full of movement and energy. Figures populate nearly every inch of the canvas, yet the viewer’s eye is always drawn up to Jesus. Notice the lines created by the rope and the thief’s cross to the left of Jesus, and the inclination of heads and bodies on both sides of Christ. All lead to Jesus. In the midst of this chaos, a rather peaceful Jesus watches all. He is engaged with what is happening below him; he knows that all this is ordained by his Heavenly Father.

1. Take time to look through this scene and find depictions of people and occurrences described in the Biblical account. How does this portrayal compare to your understanding of it?
2. Place yourself in this scene. Imagine yourself as the repentant thief, the Roman soldier, the mourner, the scoffer. What do you see and feel?
3. Jesus willingly went to the cross for you. What implication does this have in your life?
- 4.

EVENING PRAYER

- Prepare:** Review your day being attentive for:
- Something to learn from.
 - Something to be thankful for.
 - Something to repent of.
 - Something that especially seemed to have God's hand on it.
 - Something that is part of a recurring pattern.
- Ponder:** Read the Evening Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)
Dwell in a word, phrase or verse that comforts or instructs your heart.
- Pray:** Give thanks for special moments in your day.
Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him (Matthew 11:28)
- Presence:**
- Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him."
- (John 14:23)

MORNING PRAYER

INSTRUCTED by the Word through the Spirit

See the explanation on page 5 in the introduction.

- **Come**

- Acknowledge your mood and how you feel. (Be open as you dwell with Jesus)
- Affirm His presence: “Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matt 28:20)

- **Confess**

Read the Psalm for today (see table p. 7).

- Take time to confess your sins to God and to seek his gracious forgiveness
- Resolve, with the Spirit’s help, to amend your life.

Grant, almighty God,
as no other way of access to you is open for us
except through unfeigned humility,
that we often learn to abase ourselves with feelings of true repentance.
May we be so displeased with ourselves as not to be satisfied
with a single confession of our iniquities.
May we continue to meditate on our sins
until we are more and more penetrated with real grief.
Then may we fly to your mercy,
prostrate ourselves before you in silence
and acknowledge no other hope than your pity,
and the intercession of your only-begotten Son.
May we be reconciled to you,
absolved from our sins,
and governed throughout the whole course of our life by your Holy Spirit.
Let us at length enjoy the victory in every kind of contest,
and arrive at that blessed rest which you have prepared for us by the same,
our Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen.

*John Calvin (1509-1564)
French theologian and reformer in Geneva⁵¹*

- **Consider**

Read the Morning Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

- What have you learned about **God** – Father, Son, Holy Spirit?
- What have you learned about **life** – commands, promises, affirmations, consequences, ... ?
- What have you learned about **people** – encouragements, responses, examples, ... ?

⁵¹ Davies, Horton. (1990) *The Communion of Saints*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans.

- What have you learned about **yourself** – be attentive to how the Spirit stirs your heart, ... ?

- **Commit**

What is the Spirit saying to you?

Is there a verse you should carry with you through the day?

What might change in your life?

- **Confide**

Bring what you have learned and the circumstances of life to your gracious heavenly Father.

Chat with God (thanksgiving, discussion, intercession) about:

Your city
Your employer / school
Your church (people and ministries)
Your neighbours and colleagues
Your family and friends
Yourself

A Collect for Guidance⁵²

Heavenly Father,
in you we live and move and have our being:
We humbly pray you so to guide and govern us
by your Holy Spirit,
that in all the cares and occupations of our life
we may not forget you,
but may remember that we are ever walking in your sight;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

DAILY ACTIVITY – READING

Immink, F. Gerrit. (2014). **The Touch of the Sacred: The Practice, Theology, and Tradition of Christian Worship.** (J. D. Witvliet, Ed., R. Bruinsma, Trans.) (pp. 140–143, 145). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Prayer in Real Life

We must continuously deal with the events that we encounter on our journey through life: in our daily work, in our families, in our immediate social networks, and in all kinds of social and economic situations. We have an *intentional* involvement—mentally, emotionally, spiritually—with the reality that surrounds us. In our hearts and in our minds, we lay plans, we deal with disappointments, we

⁵² From: *Texts for Common Prayer* of the Anglican Church of North America (2016)

celebrate health and worry about disease, we experience joy and sorrow. When we pray, we come to God with all kinds of considerations and concerns. In our prayers we express the inner life (the life of the spirit) as well as the concrete context in which we live. These aspects are indissolubly connected with the praying human being.

In praying and seeking to address God, we live in the awareness that the world is more than a mechanical order, that the history of the world is more than blind fate, and that human life is more than a biological-neurological process. We realize that we participate in life in a feeling, thinking, and willing mode, and that this is how we have an influence on life and on the world. This influence primarily grows out of our ability to want something—for instance, when we make plans, we desire something or want to achieve something (the volitive orientation). When we accentuate this dimension of the will, the *petitionary* element of prayer comes into focus. P. T. Forsyth says, “Prayer is not merely wishing. It is asking—with a will. Our will is involved. It is energy.... We turn to an active Giver; therefore, we go in action.” When we ask things in prayer, we not only put a question before God; we are also prepared to act accordingly.

When we pray to God, we not only draw on our capacity to will something, but we also draw on what we think and feel. Prayer can, for instance, be an expression of thankfulness—or of remorse or distress. In our prayers we can also be focused on particular events or situations, and we can consider these and recall them; thus our more thoughtful and reflective abilities are engaged. We can imagine God, talk to him, and call upon his virtues. In other words: In addition to petitionary prayer, there are other kinds of prayer: prayers of thanksgiving, of praise, of confession of guilt, and of remembrance.

In praying we turn to God on the presupposition that God turns to the world. When we pray, we trust in God as a force of love, as One who can change the world; we trust that the world in which we live can be trusted, since it is God’s creation; and we believe that the world, in the final analysis, is subject to God’s loving will. It is true that these presuppositions often show a certain vagueness (also on the part of those who pray), and may be subject to doubt. But as soon as people pray, these aspects play a role—with varying intensity, depending on whether there is only a vestige of faith or rather a firm conviction. Friedrich Heiler states that prayer is based on two major presuppositions: (1) the belief in the personhood of God, and (2) the certainty of his presence. As a result, prayer is structured as interaction, as communication. In prayer our vivid relationship to God finds expression. It is a personal relationship, a finding of refuge, a discourse, a communion. This vivid communication is anchored in God’s *personhood, which also implies that God as a person is interested in the world, and is actively involved in it.* “Through the act of prayer,” Manfred Josuttis says, “the human need for help and the divine preparedness to provide that help are connected. What was miles apart is linked together with a few sentences.”

The practice of prayer is associated with some basic religious and anthropological presuppositions. Prayer is deeply anchored in the human desire for happiness. People who pray do not simply accept what is given, as if what is can never change. They seek beyond the border of what is seemingly impossible, without giving up hope. In the act of prayer, those who pray recognize that they are expressing their own vulnerability and dependence. Simultaneously, however, prayer is an expression of flexibility and lust for life, and those who pray appeal to the God of life. Prayer, Gert Otto states, is located somewhere between complaint and desire. It often gives expression to people’s deepest hopes and longings. People long for happiness, for instance, but often this happiness remains distant; it frequently is a receding perspective. People also express their sorrows and complaints concerning the

suffering in this world, but they hope to rise above them. And people long for a better life; it has not yet arrived, but it may come.

People talk with God about their concrete experiences of life and of the world around them. “Prayer,” Otto says, “means: giving words to the world and to life.” We may pray a quick prayer quite spontaneously. We may be prompted to pray because of severe experiences. But inexpressible joy may also cause us to pray. According to George Arthur Buttrick, the praxis of prayer carries with it a unique view of life:

Prayer is in its essence neither fear, nor social control, nor autosuggestion, nor rationalization. The certitude abides that it is comradeship with God. We turn, then, to the vast assumptions which Jesus made in prayer—God, man, and the world: the “personality” of God, the real freedom of man, and the faithfulness yet flexibility of the world.

However, the personhood of God, the freedom of humankind, and the faithfulness of the world are not self-evident. Those who do not share in these presuppositions will have another view of prayer. Prayer may also be seen as a way to deal with the insurmountable things of life, as a way to “master” them. Thus prayer can function as a coping mechanism. Josuttis suggests that some people may resort to prayer when other methods and techniques fail. Even those who pray faithfully may know temptation and doubt in their hearts. If I am right, in our current Western culture the absence of prayer is strengthened by three things. First, it is reinforced by the scientific approach to life, which leaves little space for active divine involvement. The space for spirituality tends to be limited to the soft, subjective dimensions of life. Second, it is reinforced by a secular climate in which the human spirit does not so easily find the way to God. The connection with God is not naturally embedded in common cultural or societal value patterns. And third, the absence of prayer is reinforced by the terrors of natural disasters and human tragedies, of political and societal disintegration. These undermine the trust that God is actively involved with the world.

...

Volp continues, “In giving thanks, we pull all situations of life—including the sad and tragic experiences—towards the horizon of the goodness of God that we may enjoy. The model for giving prayerful thanks is the remembrance of Him who, during the night when He was betrayed, broke the bread and gave thanks.” K. H. Miskotte expresses it this way:

The church of Christ is a praying church; in its prayers its response to the word of God, that has created her, is expressed. For that reason prayer as thanksgiving and adoration, as confession and intercession, as repeatedly asking and calling in times of need, as a silent story and as a cry from the deep, is the most *inalienable* aspect of being-church.

EVENING PRAYER

- Prepare:** Review your day being attentive for:
- Something to learn from.
 - Something to be thankful for.
 - Something to repent of.
 - Something that especially seemed to have God’s hand on it.
 - Something that is part of a recurring pattern.

Ponder: Read the Evening Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)
Dwell in a word, phrase or verse that comforts or instructs your heart.

Pray: Give thanks for special moments in your day.
Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him (Matthew 11:28)

Presence: For he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."
(Heb 13:5)

MORNING PRAYER

INSTRUCTED by the Word through the Spirit

See the explanation on page 5 in the introduction.

- **Come**

- Acknowledge your mood and how you feel. (Be open as you dwell with Jesus)
- Affirm His presence: "Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matt 28:20)

- **Confess**

Read the Psalm for today (see table p. 7).

- Take time to confess your sins to God and to seek his gracious forgiveness
- Resolve, with the Spirit's help, to amend your life.

Forgive me my sins, O Lord;
 the sins of my present and the sins of my past,
 the sins of my soul and the sins of my body,
 the sins which I have done to please myself
 and the sins which I have done to please others.
 Forgive me my casual sins and my deliberate sins,
 and those which I have labored so to hide
 that I have hidden them even from myself.
 Forgive me, O Lord,
 forgive all my sins, for Jesus' sake.

*Thomas Wilson (1663-1775)⁵³
 Bishop of Sodor and Man*

- **Consider**

Read the Morning Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

- What have you learned about **God** – Father, Son, Holy Spirit?
- What have you learned about **life** – commands, promises, affirmations, consequences, ... ?
- What have you learned about **people** – encouragements, responses, examples, ... ?
- What have you learned about **yourself** – be attentive to how the Spirit stirs your heart, ... ?

- **Commit**

What is the Spirit saying to you?

Is there a verse you should carry with you through the day?

What might change in your life?

⁵³ Ashwin, Angela. (2002). *The Book of a Thousand Prayers*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan.

- **Confide**

Bring what you have learned and the circumstances of life to your gracious heavenly Father.
Chat with God (thanksgiving, discussion, intercession) about:

Your city
Your employer / school
Your church (people and ministries)
Your neighbours and colleagues
Your family and friends
Yourself

A Collect for Endurance⁵⁴

Almighty God,
whose most dear Son went not up to joy
but first he suffered pain,
and entered not into glory
before he was crucified:
Mercifully grant that we,
walking in the way of the cross,
may find it none other than the way of life and peace;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.
Amen.

DAILY ACTIVITY – Contemplate a Poem or Hymn

He Who Would Be Great Among you

You whose birth broke all the
social & biological rules –
son of the poor who accepted
the worship due a king –
child prodigy debating with
the Temple Th.D.s – you
were the kind who used
new math
to multiply bread, fish, faith.
You practiced a
radical sociology:
rehabilitated con men &
call girls. You valued women
& other minority groups.

⁵⁴ From: *Texts for Common Prayer* of the Anglican Church of North America (2016)

A G.P., you specialized in
heart transplants.
Creator, healer,
shepherd, innovator,
story-teller, weather-maker,
botanist, alchemist,
exorcist, iconoclast,
seeker, seer, motive-sifter,
you were always beyond,
above us. Ahead
of your time, & ours.

And we would like
to be *like* you. Bold
as Boanerges, we hear ourselves
demand: "Admit us
to your avant-garde.
Grant us degree
in all the liberal arts
of heaven."

Why our belligerence
Why does this whiff of fame
and greatness smell so sweet
Why must we compete
to be first? Have we forgotten
how you took, simply, cool water
and a towel for our feet?

Luci Shaw

1. Does the writer feel that life has changed or should change? How do you know?
2. What message is the author trying to convey or help you understand?
3. Does it relate to anything in your own life?
4. Does it give you a new way of looking at something?
5. Consider how any figurative language (simile, metaphor, personification, etc.) enlightens you.

EVENING PRAYER

- Prepare:** Review your day being attentive for:
- Something to learn from.
 - Something to be thankful for.
 - Something to repent of.
 - Something that especially seemed to have God's hand on it.
 - Something that is part of a recurring pattern.
- Ponder:** Read the Evening Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)
Dwell in a word, phrase or verse that comforts or instructs your heart.
- Pray:** Give thanks for special moments in your day.
Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him (Matthew 11:28)
- Presence:**
- My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.
- (John 10:27–30)

MORNING PRAYER

INSTRUCTED by the Word through the Spirit

See the explanation on page 5 in the introduction.

- **Come**

- Acknowledge your mood and how you feel. (Be open as you dwell with Jesus)
- Affirm His presence: "Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matt 28:20)

- **Confess**

Read the Psalm for today (see table p. 7).

- Take time to confess your sins to God and to seek his gracious forgiveness
- Resolve, with the Spirit's help, to amend your life.

PRAYER OF DR MARTIN LUTHER KING⁵⁵

O Thou Eternal God,
 out of whose absolute power and infinite intelligence
 the whole universe has come into being,
 we humbly confess that we have not loved thee with our hearts, souls and minds,
 and we have not loved our neighbors as Christ loved us.
 We have all too often lived by our own selfish impulses
 rather than by the life of sacrificial love as revealed by Christ.
 We often give in order to receive.
 We love our friends and hate our enemies.
 We go the first mile but dare not travel the second.
 We forgive but dare not forget.
 And so as we look within ourselves,
 we are confronted with the appalling fact that the history of our lives
 is the history of an eternal revolt against you.
 But thou, O God, have mercy upon us.
 Forgive us for what we could have been but failed to be.
 Give us the intelligence to know your will.
 Give us the courage to do your will.
 Give us the devotion to love your will.
 In the name and spirit of Jesus we pray.
 AMEN.

⁵⁵ King, Martin, L. (2004) *Thou, Dear God: Prayers That Open Hearts and Spirits*, The Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr., edited by Lewis V. Baldwin (Boston: Beacon Press)

- **Consider**

Read the Morning Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

- What have you learned about **God** – Father, Son, Holy Spirit?
- What have you learned about **life** – commands, promises, affirmations, consequences, ... ?
- What have you learned about **people** – encouragements, responses, examples, ... ?
- What have you learned about **yourself** – be attentive to how the Spirit stirs your heart, ... ?

- **Commit**

What is the Spirit saying to you?

Is there a verse you should carry with you through the day?

What might change in your life?

- **Confide**

Bring what you have learned and the circumstances of life to your gracious heavenly Father.

Chat with God (thanksgiving, discussion, intercession) about:

Your city
Your employer / school
Your church (people and ministries)
Your neighbours and colleagues
Your family and friends
Yourself

A Collect for Sabbath Rest⁵⁶

Almighty God,
who after the creation of the world
rested from all your works
and sanctified a day of rest for all your creatures:
Grant that we, putting away all earthly anxieties,
may be duly prepared for the service of your sanctuary,
and that our rest here upon earth may be a preparation
for the eternal rest promised to your people in heaven;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

⁵⁶ From: *Texts for Common Prayer* of the Anglican Church of North America (2016)

DAILY ACTIVITY – A “Good work” to do

– SERVING –

For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

Galatians 5:13

Acts of service are a significant way that God blesses others through us. It is really the way we are His hands and His feet. Plan over the next two weeks to do an act of service for someone you know. Maybe even ask some people whether there is something you could do for them.

Ideas:

- Offer to babysit for an afternoon or evening.
- Offer to repair something that is broken.
- Help someone do their grocery shopping or run an errand for them.
- Make some frozen meals and drop them off.
- Play taxi and help them get around (or fetch kids from school).

Consider how God has gifted and blessed you to try to get ideas. Make it happen and enjoy the results that flow. You and they will not be the same!

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace.

1 Peter 4:10

EVENING PRAYER

- Prepare:** Review your day being attentive for:
- Something to learn from.
 - Something to be thankful for.
 - Something to repent of.
 - Something that especially seemed to have God’s hand on it.
 - Something that is part of a recurring pattern.
- Ponder:** Read the Evening Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)
Dwell in a word, phrase or verse that comforts or instructs your heart.
- Pray:** Give thanks for special moments in your day.
Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him (Matthew 11:28)

Presence:

Do you not know that you are God's temple and that
God's Spirit dwells in you?

(1 Cor 3:16)

Week 6

Sunday April 2 – Saturday April 8

Memory Verse for the Week

If the whole passage is too long, then try to memorize just the bolded verse. Feel free to use another translation or passage if you prefer.

Hebrews 10:11–14

(English Standard Version)

¹¹ And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹² But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³ waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. ¹⁴ For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

Planning Ahead – This Week’s Events:

Worship Services	Sun Apr 3	- Contemporary worship 10am. - Penitential Holy Eucharist 7pm.
Morning Prayer	Monday, Wednesday (with communion) and Friday, 7.00 – 7.45am	

Whom would you like to serve or spend time with? Plan and arrange the details.

MORNING PRAYER

INSTRUCTED by the Spirit through the Word

See the explanation on page 6 in the introduction.

- **Encounter**

Sit silently for five minutes

- Try not to let your mind race. Be still. Listen to your breathing. Relax.
- Be open to thoughts and musings that may come from the Holy Spirit.
- Experience your physical environment. Enjoy it.
- Do not think about or plan the specifics of your day.

- **Examine**

Read the Psalm for today (See table p. 7).

- Consider yourself with sober judgment.
- Confess where you have walked contrary to God's will.
- Rejoice where the Spirit is bearing fruit in your life.
- Celebrate forgiveness, blessings, comfort, growth, ...
- Remind yourself of God's goodness and commit your way to him.

- **Explore**

Read the Morning Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

- Notice impressions of **words** or **phrases** that stood out to you. Why?
- Notice impressions of **principles, examples** and **warnings**. What do they imply?
- Notice impressions of **responses** – right and/or wrong. Does this explain anything in your life?
- Notice impressions of **decisions** – made, recommended, condemned. How do you decide?
- Notice impressions of **results** – adversity, success, blessing, release, trouble. A word for you?
- Notice impressions of who/what is **commended** or **censured**. Connections to your life?

Is the Holy Spirit prompting you to repent of, or develop, a habit, attitude, or life practice?

What will you do? (Be specific)

- **Engage**

Enter a time of reflective and contemplative prayer.

Discern: Ask God what He is saying to you.

Dwell: Give thanks for resolution, joy. Talk through concerns, fears.

Dream: In your imagination walk and talk with God through a visualized life situation.

Discharge: Find peace, embrace what God has revealed. He is always good.

- End

Reborn and Unafraid

Lord of the Flood,
 wash us with your Spirit
 that we may be your ark of life,
 your peace in the sea of violence.
 Water is life; water cleans; water kills.
 Frightened, we are tempted to make a permanent home on the ark.
 But you force us to seek dry ground.
 We can do so only because you have taught us to cling to our baptisms,
 where we are drowned and reborn by the water and fire of your Spirit.
 So reborn, make us unafraid.
 AMEN.⁵⁷

DAILY ACTIVITIES

- WORSHIP SERVICES**
- Contemporary worship 10am.
 - Penitential Holy Eucharist 7pm

EVENING PRAYER

Think: The Ignatian Examen
CONSOLATION The basis for thanks and re-orientation of my life.

- What was life-giving for me today?
- Where/when did I sense God's presence?
- What was nurturing, soothing, refreshing to my soul?
- What drew me closer to God?

DESOLATION The basis for confession, drawing on God, re-orienting my life.

- What was life-draining for me today?
- Where/when did I feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, cold?
- Was there evil or sin— mine or another's?

Treasure: Read the Evening Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)
 Dwell in a word, phrase or verse that comforts and encourages your heart.

Thank: *Even difficult situations and challenging relationships have redeeming features. Take time to notice where God prepared, or equipped, or helped you in the midst of your day.*

Give thanks for special moments, memories, ideas, assistance, encouragement.
 Give thanks for the people who came across your path.

⁵⁷ Hauerwas, S. (2003). *Prayers Plainly Spoken* (pp. 21–35). Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers.

Give thanks for the situations you experienced and what you learned.
Give thanks for what God has taught you through Scripture (today or in the past)
Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him (Matthew 11:28)

Trust:

Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him.

I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in
righteousness and justice, in love and compassion.

Hosea 2:19

MORNING PRAYER

INSTRUCTED by the Spirit through the Word

See the explanation on page 6 in the introduction.

- **Encounter**

Sit silently for five minutes

- Try not to let your mind race. Be still. Listen to your breathing. Relax.
- Be open to thoughts and musings that may come from the Holy Spirit.
- Experience your physical environment. Enjoy it.
- Do not think about or plan the specifics of your day.

- **Examine**

Read the Psalm for today (See table p. 7).

- Consider yourself with sober judgment.
- Confess where you have walked contrary to God's will.
- Rejoice where the Spirit is bearing fruit in your life.
- Celebrate forgiveness, blessings, comfort, growth, ...
- Remind yourself of God's goodness and commit your way to him.

- **Explore**

Read the Morning Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

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- Notice impressions of who/what is **commended** or **censured**. Connections to your life?

Is the Holy Spirit prompting you to repent of, or develop, a habit, attitude, or life practice?
What will you do? (Be specific)

- **Engage**

Enter a time of reflective and contemplative prayer.

- Discern: Ask God what He is saying to you.
- Dwell: Give thanks for resolution, joy. Talk through concerns, fears.
- Dream: In your imagination walk and talk with God through a visualized life situation.
- Discharge: Find peace, embrace what God has revealed. He is always good.

- End

Who Am I to Pray?

Gracious God,
 we thank you for the gift of prayer.
 What an extraordinary thing that we can pray to you,
 unburden ourselves before you,
 place our cares, woes and joys before you.
 I confess I find praying an awkward business.
 I keep thinking, *Who am I to pray?*
 But I know that to be false humility,
 hiding my prideful desire to be my own creator.
 So we pray a prayer of joy in prayer,
 asking that we become your prayers for one another.
 AMEN.⁵⁸

DAILY ACTIVITY – READING

Hinson, E. Glenn. (1988). *The Contemplative View*. In D. L. Alexander (Ed.), **Christian Spirituality: Five Views of Sanctification** (pp. 171–174). Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic.

The Contemplative View [of sanctification]

Thomas Kelly has reminded us that we may all live life on two levels. One is the level of activities. Some people live life only on this level. They run breathlessly and frantically through crowded calendars of appointments, caught up in activities for activities' sake. No voice speaks from the depths to challenge and inform what they are doing.

But there is another level on which we may live life. That is the level of the interior life—where we commune, communicate, converse with God. When we first become serious about our relationship with God, Kelly says, we may alternate between these two levels. Now we engage in activities; now in communion, communication, conversation with God. But as we grow and develop in our relationship with God, we may do these simultaneously. Not now one and now the other, but rather while we engage in our activities, at the same time, quietly behind the scenes, we carry on our secret communion. In this way our relationship with God transfuses and informs everything we are doing.

Seventeenth-century Carmelite Brother Lawrence wrote of “the practice of the presence of God.” While cooking and washing dishes in the monastery kitchen, which he did for about forty years, he learned he could “talk to the God of pots and pans” all the time. Brother Lawrence’s “method” entailed a “simple attentiveness, an habitual, loving turning of [his] eyes to God” at all times. The longer I have studied his conversations and letters, the more convinced I have become that his “secret” was simply to fall head over heels in love with God and let that transfuse and transform everything he was doing. In all he was doing, he says, he tried to maintain a “passionate regard” for God. “I turn my little omelette in the pan for love of God.”

⁵⁸ Hauerwas, S. (2003). **Prayers Plainly Spoken** (pp. 21–35). Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers.

You know what happens when you fall head over heels in love with someone. You can't get the beloved out of your mind. The beloved is present in every thought, shaping and directing every action.

The question is: How do we fall head over heels in love with God, the unseen-yet-everpresent One? Brother Lawrence reminds us that real love won't happen automatically. Infatuations may occur at first sight, but love that lasts will not. Lasting love requires attention to another. "We must know before we love, and to know God we must often think of him," says Brother Lawrence. "And when we love him we shall think of him all the more, for our heart is where our treasure is."

What Is Contemplation?

Contemplation has to do with this loving attentiveness to God. It is based on the premise that God is immanent [near] in the created order, particularly in the human order. Psalm 19 describes this:

The heavens are telling the glory of God;
and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.
Day to day pours forth speech,
and night to night declares knowledge.

Yet the psalmist recognized that it is not a matter of physical sound.

There is no speech, nor are there words;
their voice is not heard;
yet their voice goes out through all the earth,
and their words to the end of the world. (Ps 19:1–4 RSV)

Psalm 139 is a hymn about God's inescapable nearness. God knows us better than we know ourselves, the Psalmist exults in the first part (vv. 1–6). God is, and God will be wherever we are. There is nowhere God is not. Verse eight tells all:

If I ascend to heaven, thou art there!
If I make my bed in Sheol, thou art there! (RSV)

We expect God to be in heaven, of course. What knocks us over is the discovery that God is in the depths, in hell, in Sheol, even if we *make* our bed there. The psalmist doesn't say, "If I trip and fall in"; he says, "If I *make* my bed there." And Sheol is by definition where God is not. There is nowhere we human beings go where the hound of heaven will not track us.

Is this not what the cross affirms? Our God has so fallen in love with us, he allows himself to be "edged out on a Cross" with us and for us. As Bonhoeffer phrased it, "God is beyond in the midst of our life." God shares our powerlessness and helplessness even to the point of dying our death. The great fourteenth-century "social mystic" Catherine of Siena discovered that the "fiery abyss of charity" needed her as much as she needed him, for he acted as if he could not live without her, despite the fact that God is Life itself. The cross proves this. How else could one explain it? Only in this way—by recognizing that the Mad Lover has fallen in love with what he has made!

Catherine's comment calls to our attention the most basic premise underlying contemplation. What Rufus Jones has described as a "double search" goes on endlessly. Of necessity and by nature

we seek the living God. “As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God” (Ps 42:1–2). Is it not true, as Augustine prayed in his *Confessions*, “Thou hast made us for Thyself, to praise Thee, and our hearts are restless until they find rest in Thee”? “The human heart is sensitive to God as the retina is to light waves,” Rufus Jones wrote. “The soul possesses a native yearning for intercourse and companionship which takes it to God as naturally as the home instinct of the pigeon takes it to the place of its birth.”⁷

At the same time God seeks us. Love never lets us go. It never gives up (see 1 Cor 13:8). The human will can shut the door and bar the windows and God will not knock the door down. God respects the freedom he has created us to enjoy. Nevertheless, he does not relent in his search. Is not the key point of our Lord’s parable that the Father is watching? The Prodigal broke off all ties. He did not even dare, when he came to himself and decided to return home, to ask again to be received as a son. No, he would beg to be taken back as a hired hand. Yet, our Lord notes, “while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him” (Lk 15:20). The father saw him from afar. He had never stopped watching. Day and night he had kept looking down the road, waiting, hoping, praying. So God does for all his errant ones.

Protestants have sometimes shunned the contemplative tradition as “works-righteousness.” Contemplatives, they judge, try to “earn” salvation or make their own way to heaven. Nothing could be further from the truth. Over and over, the great spiritual guides will tirelessly remind you that contemplation depends on grace. We are respondents. We do not create the love or the grace by which we grow and develop. In the words of Jan Ruysbroeck, another of the brilliant fourteenth-century mystics, God’s grace “pours into us in the unity of our higher powers and of our spirit” and, thus filled, “the higher powers flow out to become active in all virtues.” Our task is to open ourselves to God’s gracious energies.

EVENING PRAYER

Think:

The Ignatian Examen

CONSOLATION The basis for thanks and re-orientation of my life.

- What was life-giving for me today?
- Where/when did I sense God’s presence?
- What was nurturing, soothing, refreshing to my soul?
- What drew me closer to God?

DESOLATION The basis for confession, drawing on God, re-orienting my life.

- What was life-draining for me today?
- Where/when did I feel alone, far from God?
- What was stressful, joyless, dark, cold?
- Was there evil or sin— mine or another’s?

Treasure:

Read the Evening Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

Dwell in a word, phrase or verse that comforts and encourages your heart.

Thank: *Even difficult situations and challenging relationships have redeeming features. Take time to notice where God prepared, or equipped, or helped you in the midst of your day.*

Give thanks for special moments, memories, ideas, assistance, encouragement.

Give thanks for the people who came across your path.

Give thanks for the situations you experienced and what you learned.

Give thanks for what God has taught you through Scripture (today or in the past)

Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him (Matthew 11:28)

Trust: Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him.

He prayed to the LORD, "Isn't this what I said, LORD, when I was still at home? ... I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity."

Jonah 4:2

MORNING PRAYER

INSTRUCTED by the Spirit through the Word

See the explanation on page 6 in the introduction.

- **Encounter**

Sit silently for five minutes

- Try not to let your mind race. Be still. Listen to your breathing. Relax.
- Be open to thoughts and musings that may come from the Holy Spirit.
- Experience your physical environment. Enjoy it.
- Do not think about or plan the specifics of your day.

- **Examine**

Read the Psalm for today (See table p. 7).

- Consider yourself with sober judgment.
- Confess where you have walked contrary to God's will.
- Rejoice where the Spirit is bearing fruit in your life.
- Celebrate forgiveness, blessings, comfort, growth, ...
- Remind yourself of God's goodness and commit your way to him.

- **Explore**

Read the Morning Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

- Notice impressions of **words** or **phrases** that stood out to you. Why?
- Notice impressions of **principles, examples** and **warnings**. What do they imply?
- Notice impressions of **responses** – right and/or wrong. Does this explain anything in your life?
- Notice impressions of **decisions** – made, recommended, condemned. How do you decide?
- Notice impressions of **results** – adversity, success, blessing, release, trouble. A word for you?
- Notice impressions of who/what is **commended** or **censured**. Connections to your life?

Is the Holy Spirit prompting you to repent of, or develop, a habit, attitude, or life practice?

What will you do? (Be specific)

- **Engage**

Enter a time of reflective and contemplative prayer.

- Discern: Ask God what He is saying to you.
- Dwell: Give thanks for resolution, joy. Talk through concerns, fears.
- Dream: In your imagination walk and talk with God through a visualized life situation.
- Discharge: Find peace, embrace what God has revealed. He is always good.

- End

Living Confessions of Love

Lord of All Life,
 we come before you not knowing who we are.
 We strut our stuff,
 trying to impress others with our self-confidence.
 In the process we hope to be what we pretend.
 Save us from such pretense,
 that we might learn who we are through trust in you
 to make us more than we can imagine.
 Help us, Augustine-like, to reread our lives as confessions of sin
 made possible by your love.
 Bind up our wounds and our joys
 so that our lives finally make sense only as a prayer to you.
 AMEN.⁵⁹

DAILY ACTIVITIES – BIOGRAPHY of a Reformer

Lane, A. N. S. (2003). Zwingli, Ulrich (or Huldrych). In T. Larsen, D. W. Bebbington, M. A. Noll, & S. Carter (Eds.), *Biographical dictionary of evangelicals* (pp. 761–763). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

ZWINGLI, Ulrich (or Huldrych) (1484–1531), Swiss Reformer, was the founder of Reformed Protestantism. He was born on New Year's Day 1484, a mere fifty-two days after Luther, at Wildhaus, some forty miles from Zurich. He matriculated at the University of Vienna in 1498 but for some reason left. In 1502 he matriculated at the University of Basel, where he was taught by the reform-minded Thomas Wyttenbach, becoming Bachelor of Arts in 1504 and Master of Arts in 1506. That year he was appointed parish priest of the town of Glarus and so was ordained in September, a few months short of the canonical age of twenty-three.

Swiss soldiers were in great demand as mercenaries; such service was a lucrative source of income. Zwingli served for a time as an army chaplain, but his attitude changed after he witnessed the disastrous Battle of Marignano in 1515, in which over 6,000 Swiss soldiers were killed, and he came to regard the mercenary trade as immoral. His preaching against it was not well received at Glarus, so in 1516 Zwingli moved to become parish priest at Einsiedeln, then as now a popular centre of Marian devotion. While at Glarus and Einsiedeln Zwingli read widely, and it was during this time that the foundations of his Reformed beliefs were laid. In particular, he came to believe in the supreme and final role of Scripture. In 1518 Zwingli became parish priest at the Grossmünster (Great Cathedral) at Zurich. There, on his thirty-fifth birthday, he began to preach systematically through whole books of the Bible, starting with Matthew. This practice was common in the early church, but in Zwingli's time it was a radical innovation. Soon after his arrival at Zurich there was a severe outbreak of the plague, which killed nearly a third of the population. Zwingli stayed to minister to the sick and himself caught the plague, nearly dying. In 1522 he secretly married Anna Reinhart, having failed to get permission to marry from the bishop of Konstanz. Two years later their marriage was made public. They had four children.

⁵⁹ Hauerwas, S. (2003). *Prayers Plainly Spoken* (pp. 21–35). Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers.

Zwingli reached Protestant convictions at about the same time as Luther, largely independently of him. Their backgrounds were different. Luther was taught the 'modern way' by the disciples of Gabriel Biel, while Zwingli was trained in the 'old way' of Thomas Aquinas. Zwingli was also strongly influenced by the humanism of Erasmus, more so than Luther. As a result of these educational differences, Luther and Zwingli approached theology differently. In particular, Zwingli felt that no doctrine should be contrary to reason, while Luther allowed considerably less role for reason in theology. This difference was seen especially in their respective attitudes towards the presence of Jesus Christ in the Lord's Supper.

At Zurich Zwingli gradually introduced reform, at first with the approval of the Roman Catholic authorities. As late as 1523 he received a warm letter from the pope! In 1522 he produced the first of his many Reformation writings, which helped to spread his ideas widely in Switzerland. In 1523 there were two public disputations at Zurich; as a result the city council gave its support to the evangelical cause. At the first of these disputations Zwingli put forward sixty-seven theses, on which he also wrote a *Commentary*. The following year all statues and pictures were removed from the churches, as were organs. The Reformation in Zurich was largely complete by 1525, when the mass was abolished, being replaced by a simple communion service. That year Zwingli composed a *Commentary on True and False Religion*, dedicated to King Francis I of France, in which he contrasts his understanding of biblical truth with the alleged errors of the Roman church. Other Swiss cantons also decided for the reform, and Zwingli's goal of a united evangelical Switzerland looked to be attainable. To this end he formed an alliance of evangelical cantons, but the Roman Catholic cantons felt threatened and formed a rival alliance. The outcome was war in 1529. After a lull, fighting broke out again in 1531, and Zwingli was killed on the battlefield on 11 October at Kappel.

One of Zwingli's first writings was his *The Clarity and Certainty of God's Word*, published in 1522, in which he affirmed the final authority of Scripture. God's word is certain and also clear, though it can be misunderstood. But when God speaks to his children his word brings its own clarity with it, and it can be understood without human instruction because the Holy Spirit illuminates us and enables us to see God's word in its own light. The word of God must not be subjected to an infallible human interpreter such as the pope or a council. Certainty comes not from human learning, nor from church authority, but from humbly listening to God himself.

Zwingli discovered in practice that sincerely seeking to hear God's word did not necessarily end all disagreement. He found himself engaged in controversy with two other reform groups over the nature of the sacraments. First, there were those at Zurich, led by Conrad Grebel and Felix Mantz, who wanted a more radical reform. They were not satisfied with a Reformed state church but wanted a voluntary church of committed Christians, to be entered by adult baptism. At first Zwingli and these radicals had much in common, but by 1525 they were quarrelling. There was a public disputation, and the city council decided against the radicals, who then rebaptized those of their number who had been baptized as babies. The city council exiled them, but Mantz returned and was executed by drowning in 1527. In 1525 Zwingli wrote his *Baptism, Rebaptism and the Baptism of Infants*, in which he defended infant baptism, arguing that baptism is the sign of the covenant and the covenant embraces the whole family and not just the individual. But while he maintained the practice of infant baptism, Zwingli (unlike Luther) abandoned the Catholic belief that baptism bestows (even on infants) new birth and the forgiveness of sins. He came to see baptism as primarily an outward sign of faith.

The second controversy was with Luther, over the presence of Jesus Christ in the Lord's Supper. Luther rejected the Roman doctrine of transubstantiation, but continued to believe in the real presence of Christ's body and blood 'in, with and under' the bread and the wine. Zwingli was

persuaded to abandon this belief in 1524 by the Dutchman Cornelius Hoen. From then on he rejected the doctrine of real presence and maintained that the bread and the wine are merely symbols of Christ's body and blood. The Lord's Supper is a thanksgiving memorial in which we look back to the work of Jesus Christ on the cross. It is also a fellowship meal in which the body of Christ is present in the form of the congregation. These views Zwingli set out in his *Clear Exposition of Christ's Last Supper* (1526). Luther and Zwingli met together with others at the Marburg Colloquy in October 1529 in an attempt to resolve their differences, but without success. Zwingli maintained his views to the end, reaffirming them in his last writing, a brief *Exposition of the Faith* written in the (vain) hope of winning Francis I for the Reformed faith.

Zwingli met an early death on the battlefield. There was no time for his thought to mature or for him to write a systematic exposition of Reformed theology. This task was left to Calvin, with the result that Reformed Protestantism is known as Calvinism, not Zwinglianism. But if the building was left to others and if Zwingli was to a large extent forgotten, the fact remains that it was he who laid the foundations of Swiss Protestantism and Reformed theology.

EVENING PRAYER

Think:

The Ignatian Examen

CONSOLATION The basis for thanks and re-orientation of my life.

- *What was life-giving for me today?*
- *Where/when did I sense God's presence?*
- *What was nurturing, soothing, refreshing to my soul?*
- *What drew me closer to God?*

DESOLATION The basis for confession, drawing on God, re-orienting my life.

- *What was life-draining for me today?*
- *Where/when did I feel alone, far from God?*
- *What was stressful, joyless, dark, cold?*
- *Was there evil or sin— mine or another's?*

Treasure:

Read the Evening Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

Dwell in a word, phrase or verse that comforts and encourages your heart.

Thank:

Even difficult situations and challenging relationships have redeeming features. Take time to notice where God prepared, or equipped, or helped you in the midst of your day.

Give thanks for special moments, memories, ideas, assistance, encouragement.

Give thanks for the people who came across your path.

Give thanks for the situations you experienced and what you learned.

Give thanks for what God has taught you through Scripture (today or in the past)

Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him (Matthew 11:28)

Trust:

Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him.

I led them with cords of human kindness, with ties of love. To them I was like one who lifts a little child to the cheek, and I bent down to feed them.

Hosea 11:4

MORNING PRAYER

INSTRUCTED by the Spirit through the Word

See the explanation on page 6 in the introduction.

- **Encounter**

Sit silently for five minutes

- Try not to let your mind race. Be still. Listen to your breathing. Relax.
- Be open to thoughts and musings that may come from the Holy Spirit.
- Experience your physical environment. Enjoy it.
- Do not think about or plan the specifics of your day.

- **Examine**

Read the Psalm for today (See table p. 7).

- Consider yourself with sober judgment.
- Confess where you have walked contrary to God's will.
- Rejoice where the Spirit is bearing fruit in your life.
- Celebrate forgiveness, blessings, comfort, growth, ...
- Remind yourself of God's goodness and commit your way to him.

- **Explore**

Read the Morning Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

- Notice impressions of **words** or **phrases** that stood out to you. Why?
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- Notice impressions of **results** – adversity, success, blessing, release, trouble. A word for you?
- Notice impressions of who/what is **commended** or **censured**. Connections to your life?

Is the Holy Spirit prompting you to repent of, or develop, a habit, attitude, or life practice?

What will you do? (Be specific)

- **Engage**

Enter a time of reflective and contemplative prayer.

- Discern: Ask God what He is saying to you.
- Dwell: Give thanks for resolution, joy. Talk through concerns, fears.
- Dream: In your imagination walk and talk with God through a visualized life situation.
- Discharge: Find peace, embrace what God has revealed. He is always good.

- End

Give Us the Sight of Children

Light of True Light, true God from true God,
 give us clear sight,
 courage to see your sinful, rebellious, dreadful world as it is,
 not as we want it to be.
 Save us from narcissistic fascinations
 that cloud our understanding with our unknowings.
 Give us clear and innocent sight,
 the sight of children,
 capable of seeing beauty in a common rock.
 Your creation glows with your fiery glory.
 Draw us to the fire,
 consume us with your glory,
 that we may glow with your salvation,
 your light for the world.
 AMEN.⁶⁰

DAILY ACTIVITY - ARTWORK



R.O. Hodgell, *Death, Where is thy Victory? (II)*, ink, c. 1960

⁶⁰ Hauerwas, S. (2003). *Prayers Plainly Spoken* (pp. 21–35). Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers.

When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." "Where, O Death, is your victory? Where, O Death, is your sting?" – 1 Corinthians 15: 54-55

This image is striking in its simplicity, comprised solely of the cross and the figure of death. The cross is stark, conspicuously empty, with nails bearing witness to its previous occupant. At its base lies a skeletal figure dressed in the armour of a Roman soldier, the artist's rendition of death. This figure appears to have been cast down on the ground, and shakes a spear futilely at the empty cross – there is no one there to claim. Christ has defeated death.

1. This image shows how death has been defeated through the work on the cross. How does this portrayal change the way you understand your redemption?
2. Take time to meditate on the immense gift of salvation that is offered to us by God, and the sacrifice he made for us.
3. Hodgell depicts the figure of death as defeated, yet still vigilant. What point do you think he is making?

EVENING PRAYER

Think:

The Ignatian Examen

CONSOLATION The basis for thanks and re-orientation of my life.

- *What was life-giving for me today?*
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- *Where/when did I feel alone, far from God?*
- *What was stressful, joyless, dark, cold?*
- *Was there evil or sin— mine or another's?*

Treasure:

Read the Evening Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

Dwell in a word, phrase or verse that comforts and encourages your heart.

Thank:

Even difficult situations and challenging relationships have redeeming features. Take time to notice where God prepared, or equipped, or helped you in the midst of your day.

Give thanks for special moments, memories, ideas, assistance, encouragement.

Give thanks for the people who came across your path.

Give thanks for the situations you experienced and what you learned.

Give thanks for what God has taught you through Scripture (today or in the past)

Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him (Matthew 11:28)

Trust:

Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him.

The LORD is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him.

Nahum 1:7

MORNING PRAYER

INSTRUCTED by the Spirit through the Word

See the explanation on page 6 in the introduction.

• **Encounter**

Sit silently for five minutes

- Try not to let your mind race. Be still. Listen to your breathing. Relax.
- Be open to thoughts and musings that may come from the Holy Spirit.
- Experience your physical environment. Enjoy it.
- Do not think about or plan the specifics of your day.

• **Examine**

Read the Psalm for today (See table p. 7).

- Consider yourself with sober judgment.
- Confess where you have walked contrary to God's will.
- Rejoice where the Spirit is bearing fruit in your life.
- Celebrate forgiveness, blessings, comfort, growth, ...
- Remind yourself of God's goodness and commit your way to him.

• **Explore**

Read the Morning Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

- Notice impressions of **words** or **phrases** that stood out to you. Why?
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What will you do? (Be specific)

• **Engage**

Enter a time of reflective and contemplative prayer.

- | | |
|------------|---|
| Discern: | Ask God what He is saying to you. |
| Dwell: | Give thanks for resolution, joy. Talk through concerns, fears. |
| Dream: | In your imagination walk and talk with God through a visualized life situation. |
| Discharge: | Find peace, embrace what God has revealed. He is always good. |

- End

Free Us from Self-Fascination

Lord Almighty,
 we say we want to serve you,
 we say we want to help others less fortunate than ourselves,
 we say we want justice.
 But the truth is, we want power and status
 because we so desperately need to be loved.
 Free us from our self-fascination
 and the anxious activity it breeds,
 so that we might be what we say we want to be—
 loved by you and thus capable of unselfish service.
 AMEN.⁶¹

DAILY ACTIVITY – READING

Bridges, J. (1983). *The practice of godliness* (pp. 32–44). Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress.

Train Yourself to Be Godly

*Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives’
 tales; rather, train yourself to be godly.*

1 Timothy 4:7

The apostle Paul did not take for granted the godliness of his spiritual son Timothy. Though Timothy had been his companion and co-laborer for a number of years, Paul still felt it necessary to write to him, “train yourself to be godly.” And if Timothy needed this encouragement, then surely we also need it today.

In urging Timothy to train himself in godliness, Paul borrowed a term from the realm of athletics. The verb which is variously translated in different versions of the Bible as “exercise,” “discipline,” or “train” originally referred to the training of young athletes for participation in the competitive games of the day. Then it took on a more general meaning of training or discipline of either the body or the mind in a particular skill.

PRINCIPLES FOR TRAINING

There are several principles in Paul’s exhortation to Timothy to train himself to be godly that are applicable to us today. The first is **personal responsibility**. Paul said, “Train yourself.”

Timothy was personally responsible for his progress in godliness. He was not to trust the Lord for that progress and then relax, though he certainly understood that any progress he made was only through divine enablement. He would have understood that he was to work out this particular aspect of his salvation in confidence that God was at work in him. But he would get Paul’s message that he must work at this matter of godliness; he must pursue it.

⁶¹ Hauerwas, S. (2003). *Prayers Plainly Spoken* (pp. 21–35). Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers.

We Christians may be very disciplined and industrious in our business, our studies, our home, or even our ministry, but we tend to be lazy when it comes to exercise in our own spiritual lives. We would much rather pray, “Lord, make me godly,” and expect Him to “pour” some godliness into our souls in some mysterious way. God does in fact work in a mysterious way to make us godly, but He does not do this apart from the fulfillment of our own personal responsibility. The second principle in Paul’s exhortation is that **the object of this training was growth** in Timothy’s personal spiritual life. Elsewhere Paul encourages Timothy to progress in his ministry, but the objective here is Timothy’s own devotion to God and the conduct arising from that devotion. Even though he was an experienced, well-qualified Christian minister, Timothy still needed to grow in the essential areas of godliness—the fear of God, the comprehension of the love of God, and the desire for the presence and fellowship of God.

I have been in a full-time Christian ministry for well over twenty-five years and have served both overseas and in the United States. During this time I have met many talented and capable Christians, but I think I have met fewer godly Christians. The emphasis of our age is on serving God, accomplishing things for God. Enoch was a preacher of righteousness in a day of gross ungodliness, but God saw fit that the brief account of his life emphasized that he walked with God. What are we training ourselves for? Are we training ourselves only in Christian activity, as good as that may be, or are we training ourselves first of all in godliness? The third principle in Paul’s words of exhortation to Timothy is the importance of **minimum characteristics necessary for training**. Many of us have watched various Olympic competitions on television, and as the commentators have given us the backgrounds of the various athletes, we become aware of certain irreducible minimums in the training of all Olympic competitors. It is very likely that Paul had these minimum characteristics in mind as he compared physical training with training in godliness.

THE COST OF COMMITMENT

The first of these irreducible minimums is *commitment*. No one makes it to the level of Olympic, or even national, competition without a commitment to pay the price of rigorous, daily training. And similarly, no one ever becomes godly without a commitment to pay the price of the daily spiritual training which God has designed for our growth in godliness. ...

There is a price to godliness, and godliness is never on sale. It never comes cheaply or easily. The verb *train*, which Paul deliberately chose, implies persevering, painstaking, diligent effort. He was well aware of the total commitment those young athletes made to win a crown that would not last. And as he thought of the crown that would last—the godliness that has value for all things, both in the present life and the life to come—he urged Timothy, and he urges us today, to make the kind of commitment necessary to train ourselves to be godly.

LEARNING FROM A SKILLED TEACHER

The second irreducible minimum in training is *a competent teacher or coach*. No athlete, regardless of how much natural ability he has, can make it to the Olympics without a skillful coach who holds him to the highest standard of excellence and sees and corrects every minor fault. In the same way we cannot train ourselves to be godly without the teaching and training ministry of the Holy Spirit. He holds us to the highest standard of spiritual excellence as He teaches, rebukes, corrects, and trains us.

But He teaches and trains us through His word. Therefore we must consistently expose ourselves to the teaching of the word of God if we are to grow in godliness. ...

PRACTICE, AND MORE PRACTICE

The third irreducible minimum in the training process is *practice*. It is practice that puts feet to the commitment and applies the teaching of the coach. It is practice, where the skill is developed, that makes the athlete competitive in his sport. And it is the practice of godliness that enables us to become godly Christians. There is no shortcut to Olympiclevel skill, there is no shortcut to godliness. It is the day in and day out faithfulness to the means which God has appointed and which the Holy Spirit uses that will enable us to grow in godliness. We must *practice* godliness, just as the athlete practices his particular sport.

USING THE WORD OF GOD

It is evident that the word of God plays a crucial role in our growth in godliness. A prominent part of our practice of godliness, therefore, will be our time in the word of God. How we spend that time varies according to the method of intake. The Navigators use the five fingers of the hand as mental pegs on which to hang the five methods of intake of the word of God—hearing, reading, studying, memorizing, and meditating. These methods are important for godliness and need to be considered one by one. ...

THE NATURE OF TRAINING

Paul said, “Train yourself to be godly.” You and I are responsible to train ourselves. We are dependent upon God for His divine enablement, but we are responsible; we are not passive in this process. Our objective in this process is godliness—not proficiency in ministry, but God-centered devotion and Godlike character. We do want to develop proficiency in ministry, but for training in godliness we want to focus on our relationship with God.

Training in godliness requires commitment, the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit through His word, and practice on our part. Are we prepared to accept our responsibility and make that commitment? As we ponder that question let us remember, “Godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come,” and “Godliness with contentment is great gain” (1 Timothy 4:8 and 6:6).

EVENING PRAYER

Think:

The Ignatian Examen

CONSOLATION The basis for thanks and re-orientation of my life.

- *What was life-giving for me today?*
- *Where/when did I sense God’s presence?*
- *What was nurturing, soothing, refreshing to my soul?*
- *What drew me closer to God?*

DESOLATION The basis for confession, drawing on God, re-orienting my life.

- *What was life-draining for me today?*
- *Where/when did I feel alone, far from God?*
- *What was stressful, joyless, dark, cold?*
- *Was there evil or sin— mine or another's?*

Treasure: Read the Evening Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)
Dwell in a word, phrase or verse that comforts and encourages your heart.

Thank: *Even difficult situations and challenging relationships have redeeming features. Take time to notice where God prepared, or equipped, or helped you in the midst of your day.*

Give thanks for special moments, memories, ideas, assistance, encouragement.

Give thanks for the people who came across your path.

Give thanks for the situations you experienced and what you learned.

Give thanks for what God has taught you through Scripture (today or in the past)

Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him (Matthew 11:28)

Trust: Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him.

The LORD your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who
saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no
longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing.

Zephaniah 3:17

MORNING PRAYER

INSTRUCTED by the Spirit through the Word

See the explanation on page 6 in the introduction.

- **Encounter**

Sit silently for five minutes

- Try not to let your mind race. Be still. Listen to your breathing. Relax.
- Be open to thoughts and musings that may come from the Holy Spirit.
- Experience your physical environment. Enjoy it.
- Do not think about or plan the specifics of your day.

- **Examine**

Read the Psalm for today (See table p. 7).

- Consider yourself with sober judgment.
- Confess where you have walked contrary to God's will.
- Rejoice where the Spirit is bearing fruit in your life.
- Celebrate forgiveness, blessings, comfort, growth, ...
- Remind yourself of God's goodness and commit your way to him.

- **Explore**

Read the Morning Prayer Bible lessons for today. (See table p. 7)

- Notice impressions of **words** or **phrases** that stood out to you. Why?
- Notice impressions of **principles, examples** and **warnings**. What do they imply?
- Notice impressions of **responses** – right and/or wrong. Does this explain anything in your life?
- Notice impressions of **decisions** – made, recommended, condemned. How do you decide?
- Notice impressions of **results** – adversity, success, blessing, release, trouble. A word for you?
- Notice impressions of who/what is **commended** or **censured**. Connections to your life?

Is the Holy Spirit prompting you to repent of, or develop, a habit, attitude, or life practice?

What will you do? (Be specific)

- **Engage**

Enter a time of reflective and contemplative prayer.

- | | |
|------------|---|
| Discern: | Ask God what He is saying to you. |
| Dwell: | Give thanks for resolution, joy. Talk through concerns, fears. |
| Dream: | In your imagination walk and talk with God through a visualized life situation. |
| Discharge: | Find peace, embrace what God has revealed. He is always good. |

- End

Faltering Rulers

Master of the Universe,
 you have made us your servants,
 kings and queens in your world.
 We confess we do not feel much like rulers:
 we are not only incapable of doing what we want,
 we are not even sure what we should or do want.
 We, in short, do not even seem to rule ourselves.
 As a result we fail you,
 our brothers and sisters in Christ,
 our brothers and sisters who are in the world,
 and ourselves.
 Give us the enthusiasm of your Spirit,
 that we may be so filled with your love
 that others will be attracted to your rule.
 As those ruled by you,
 may we witness how service can govern.
*AMEN.*⁶²

DAILY ACTIVITY – Contemplate a Poem or Hymn

Zion, City of Our God

ISA. 33:20, 21.

Glorious things of thee are spoken,
 Zion, city of our God!
 He, whose word cannot be broken,
 Formed thee for his own abode:
 On the Rock of Ages founded,
 What can shake thy sure repose?
 With salvation's wall surrounded,
 Thou may'st smile at all thy foes.

See, the streams of living waters,
 Springing from eternal love,
 Well supply thy sons and daughters,
 And all fears of want remove:
 Who can faint while such a river
 Ever flows their thirst t'assuage?

⁶² Hauerwas, S. (2003). *Prayers Plainly Spoken* (pp. 21–35). Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers.

Grace, which like the Lord, the giver,
 Never fails from age to age.

Round each habitation hovering,
 See the cloud and fire appear,
 For a glory and a covering,
 Showing that the Lord is near.

Thus deriving from their banner
 Light by night, and shade by day,
 Safe they feed upon the manna
 Which he gives them when they pray.

Blest inhabitants of Zion,
 Washed in the Redeemer's blood!
 Jesus, whom their souls rely on,
 Makes them kings and priests to God.

'Tis his love his people raises
 Over self to reign as kings,
 And as priests, his solemn praises
 Each for a thank-offering brings.

Saviour, if of Zion's city
 I through grace a member am,
 Let the world deride or pity,
 I will glory in thy name.

Fading is the worldling's pleasure,
 All his boasted pomp and show;
 Solid joys and lasting treasure
 None but Zion's children know.

John Newton (1725-1807)⁶³

1. Does the writer feel that life has changed or should change? How do you know?
2. What message is the author trying to convey or help you understand?
3. Does it relate to anything in your own life?
4. Does it give you a new way of looking at something?
5. Consider how any figurative language (simile, metaphor, personification, etc.) enlightens you.

⁶³ Jeffrey, D. L. (Ed.). (1987). *A Burning and a Shining Light: English Spirituality in the Age of Wesley* (pp. 445–446). Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

EVENING PRAYER

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Give thanks for what God has taught you through Scripture (today or in the past)

Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him (Matthew 11:28)

Trust:

Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him.

will heal their waywardness and love them freely, for my
anger has turned away from them.

Hosea 14:4

MORNING PRAYER

INSTRUCTED by the Spirit through the Word

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- **Encounter**

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| Discharge: | Find peace, embrace what God has revealed. He is always good. |

- End

Worthy Agents of Your Peace

Saving God,
 free us from hardness of heart,
 take from us all pride and pretension,
 strip us clean of all that makes us incapable
 of being witnesses of your gentle love.
 Make us worthy agents of your peace,
 so that even as we contend with one another
 the world may say, "But see how they love one another."
 AMEN.⁶⁴

DAILY ACTIVITY – Lectio Divina

LECTIO DIVINA⁶⁵

This is an exercise in letting Scripture speak to you through attentive reading.

- **Preparation:** Sit in silence; Anticipate an encounter with God mediated through the Spirit. Let Him speak through the word and also be aware of what you bring to this encounter. That is, what is in your heart and on your mind? (Note how that changes as you read)
- **Reading:** Read an appointed biblical passage; ideally not more than 3 verses. Use a part of one of the readings from the past week that was special for you (see the lectionary table on p. 7).
 Read the verses through slowly. Savour the words. Hear their meaning.
 Read them again.
 Consider what the passage means at an objective or historical level, what the biblical author intends to say. *The tools of Bible study are applied.* Use all knowledge and understanding to the encounter. This is the first part of discovery – *what does the text mean?*
- **Meditation:** Read the text *aloud* a third time. Attempt to discern meanings at a subjective level: the more particularized or personal meanings of the passage for you in our own time and circumstances. What words, phrases, images stirred something within you? Where is your attention drawn? This is the second part of discovery – *what might the Spirit be saying to you today?*
- **Prayer:** Read the text a fourth time. Consider how the Spirit moves you to pray. Offer the prayers silently or aloud.
- **Contemplation:** Read the text a fifth time. Let your soul rest on aspect/s that have stirred something in you. Like lying in the sun, bask in its truth. This is a time to 'marinate' in what has been revealed to you. Do not explore further – enjoy what you have now.

⁶⁴ Hauerwas, S. (2003). *Prayers Plainly Spoken* (pp. 21–35). Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers.

⁶⁵ Adapted from: Jonathan Linman, *Holy Conversation: Spirituality for Worship*. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2010), p. 35.

- **Incarnation:** Apply your discovery to your life and ministry. What would God have you proclaim, enflesh, be, do?

EVENING PRAYER

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Give thanks for the situations you experienced and what you learned.

Give thanks for what God has taught you through Scripture (today or in the past)

Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him (Matthew 11:28)

Trust:

Give tomorrow to the Lord and rest in Him.

On that day the LORD their God will save them, as the flock of his people; for like the jewels of a crown they shall shine on his land.

Zechariah 9:16

Holy Week

Palm Sunday

Sunday April 9

Pot-Luck Lunch, 12:00pm – Let's celebrate the end of the season of Lent and enter into Holy Week with a feast! Please bring a food item to share that will feed approximately six people.

Holy Week Readings – Pick up Holy Week readings from church.

Maundy Thursday

Thursday April 13

Tenebrae Service, 8:00pm – Using music, art and the movement from light to darkness, this powerful "Service of the Shadows" takes us through Jesus' last hours before he faces the cross.

Good Friday

Friday April 14

Stations of the Cross, 10:00am – In an ancient and deeply contemplative service we will walk through Jesus' suffering on the day he died, with images, readings and prayers. The service ends with Holy Communion. Led by Sojourn.

Easter Sunday

Sunday April 16

Worship Services, 10:00am & 7:00pm – Join us for a service celebrating the fact that Jesus Christ has risen from the dead, and that He offers grace and peace to us all! Hallelujah! He is risen.