



Prayer

When You Don't Know What To Say

by Rich Cohrs, Wayne Palmer, & Suzie Sallee

Prayer

It was never intended for us to go it alone. In the book of Genesis, this comes through clearly: “*The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him (Genesis 2:18).*” God created us to be in relationships, so He placed us in families and among friends. He has connected us to each other. We need to love and be loved.

Love is a powerful emotion, and the need to be in a loving relationship is one of the strongest needs we have. But our connections need to be strengthened, and that cannot happen unless we make an investment in our relationships. We demonstrate and strengthen our love for family and friends when we listen and speak to one another. Through our conversations we learn more about each other’s true desires, motivations, and priorities in life.

We call our family and friends to spend time with one another. Whether this is done over the phone, sharing a meal, or simply spending time with them, togetherness is the key. We find ourselves sharing the good, the bad, and the ugly events of our lives. We need encouragement, compassion, and validation, and we draw strength from their support and love.

Spending time with God is the ultimate relationship. Prayer is simply communicating with God, both talking and listening to Him. Through His Son Jesus Christ, we are free to come to God to share our deepest and most private joys, pains, thoughts, and feelings, without having to impress someone or be fearful of criticism. And God comes to us in various ways to assure us of His love, peace, and help. Whenever we read or hear the Bible, He reminds us of His great love in sending His Son Jesus Christ to live, suffer, die, and rise again for our salvation. In the waters of Baptism, Jesus washes away the uncleanness of our thoughts, words, and deeds, and adopts us as God’s very own children. In His Holy Supper, Jesus reminds us of the peace He won for us by giving His body up to death and pouring out His blood for our forgiveness.

The Privilege of Prayer

Have you ever been asked this question: If you could talk with anyone in the world, who would that be? Some would say the president. Why? He is a very powerful and influential person. After all, having him listen to your concerns and opinions would be an honor, especially if he could use his power and influence to help solve some of your problems.

If that seems like a true privilege, let me ask you this: Would you like to talk to Someone who has unlimited resources, wisdom, power, and who genuinely cares for you? What would you think about talking to the Creator of the world? He’s the One who created everything out of nothing, who told the ocean waves they can only come this far and no farther, the One who placed each star in the sky. He’s the One who conquered death through His Son Jesus Christ. The awesome thing is God has given you this great privilege; all you have to do is pray.

Each one of us is extended a personal invitation into the very presence of the Creator of all things, the all-powerful God who knows and is with us every step of our lives. It is an honor and privilege to spend time sharing *everything* with God Himself. Over the years movies and novels have portrayed prayer as our last resort: something you try when all else fails. The hero uses all his resources to defeat the villain, but he cannot win. Battered and beaten, he retreats to a solitary place, lifts his eyes heavenward, and begins his prayer, “Lord, it’s been a while since we last talked. I’m not sure if You can help, but I sure could use You by my side right now.” Well, we pretty much know the rest, right? In the next scene, the hero is suddenly filled with power and is able to defeat the evil foes.

Prayer is seen as the “magic bullet” we pull out and use as a last resort. The slogan might sound like this, “When all else fails, try prayer.”

Of course, there’s always the “bargaining” prayer. Finding oneself in trouble, the prayer sounds something like this: “God, I’m in a huge mess. I really need Your help. If You get me out of this, I promise I will” We panic and think if we make God a huge, life-changing promise He’ll be more apt to give us what we want.

Some think God’s really busy, and you have to fight for His attention. He’ll only answer your prayers after you’ve nagged Him enough. It’s as if each prayer is added to the next, so when the scales are tipped, God is prodded into action—and maybe, just maybe—He’ll answer your prayer just to get you “out of His hair.”

These false ideas about prayer misrepresent the Lord terribly. They make Him sound like a God who sees us as a nuisance, not dear children for whom He gave His Son to suffer and die. The truth is God *does* care, and He didn’t mean for prayer to be pulled out as a last resort, or as a means for us to bargain with Him, or to be the chip we add to the pile, hoping it will finally tip the scales in our favor.

What Is Prayer?

Prayer is a natural part of our relationship with God. Our prayers can be thought, spoken, or sung. But however way we pray, we are engaging in a conversation with God. Now talking to God isn’t quite the same as calling, e-mailing, or texting family or friends. They aren’t with us all the time, so we have to spend some of those conversations catching them up on what has been going on in our lives. This is not so when we pray to God.

Jesus said, “*Surely, I am with you always, to the end of the age*” (Matthew 28:20b). God is always with us. He also searches our heart, mind and soul. He knows everything we think, say, and do. He knows exactly what we are going through, and He knows it even better than we do. In our prayers we are never telling God anything He doesn’t already know. Prayer is not an occasional conversation we have with God. It is a constant reminder of the eternal relationship we share with God through His Son Jesus Christ.

But unlike our family and friends, the God to which we pray is almighty and all-powerful. He can do anything we need Him to do. He is also all-knowing. He knows the future and everything that will happen in our lives. Because of His love for us in Jesus Christ He has big plans for our lives—bigger and better than anything we could ever dream up on our own.

When we pray, we want to remember God’s wisdom. It’s too easy to think we know best and expect God to bow to our wishes and give us what we are asking for, i.e. what we think is best for us. That is based on the false notion that God is far away and unaware of everything going on in our lives. Being our loving Father, God cares about everything concerning us, so He answers our prayers in His way. It’s the way He knows is ultimately best for each of us. Of course, when God doesn’t answer our prayers the way we want Him to we often get frustrated. We think He didn’t listen to us very well, or maybe we used the wrong words, or possibly we need to give something up, in order for God to do what we want.

But that is not the case at all. God knows everything about us, and He is perfect in His ability to see around the corners of our lives and into our complete future. He knows how anything we ask will impact us—both immediately and far off in the future. He also knows how those things will impact our family, friends, and neighbors. He knows exactly how they will touch people we can’t possibly even imagine. So He answers our prayers in the way He knows will be best for us individually, and for everyone whose life is impacted by ours.

God Answers All Prayers

God always hears and always answers the prayers of those who pray to Him in faith. But He doesn’t always say, “Yes,” to the things we ask. Sometimes He may say, “No.” And still at other times He says, “Not now.”

It’s Pretty Easy to Recognize God’s “Yes” Answer.

She sat across from the surgeon, still pale and weak from the recent surgery. He saved her life from the stage-four tumor, but the battle wasn’t over. She was still to receive the results from the tests on the lymph nodes he removed. If there was cancer in the nodes, the outlook wasn’t good. She had already resigned herself to the surgeon telling her she has cancer throughout her body, and her days were numbered. For each time she asked him about the nodes, he would turn his eyes

from her and tell her to wait for the results. He couldn't hide his suspicions. Too many times he had removed nodes that looked cancerous. He tried to hold out hope, but nobody really believed it.

The surgeon sat down and opened the thick file that held the news. He bowed his head and closed his eyes as he began to speak, "The tests results are back, and there is no cancer in the nodes." He smiled at her and continued, "I can't explain it, according to what I saw, I should be giving you devastating news; instead, you need some chemo, and the cancer seems to have disappeared."

She looked up and softly responded, "I can explain it. God answered our prayers and removed the cancer."

Hundreds of people around the world had offered prayers on behalf of this young wife, mother, and teacher. Thousands of prayers asking God to touch her with His healing hand were answered with a resounding and positive "Yes!" Science could not explain it, but faith had believed it.

With this healing it was evident God was answering our prayers in the affirmative. In the extra time God gave her on this earth, she was able to share the greatness of God and His power with others.

God can only say yes to our prayers for the sake of His Son Jesus Christ. By our disobedience and selfishness, we deserve to be pushed away, abandoned, and condemned to eternal torments. But God loved us so much He sent Jesus to the cross to take in His body the punishment we deserve. He suffered and died there to save us from eternal death in hell. He rose from the dead to open heaven to us and give eternal life to all who trust in Him, which is God's ultimate yes answer to all our prayers.

It's Just as Easy to Recognize God's "No" Answer.

She had finally landed her "dream job." It was the one she knew would take her clear to retirement. At last she was in that select group of people who actually loved waking up for work. A few years into her dream job she was called into her boss's office. It was a Friday morning two weeks before Christmas. Without any forewarning she was told her job had been cut. To top it off, since she worked for a non-profit, unemployment benefits were unavailable to bring any relief, while searching for another job. She prayed, "God, I love this job. I *need* this job. Could You please make them see they made a mistake?" By the time seven more months rolled by, God's no answer was absolutely clear.

That's when she found a job posted online. She was over-qualified for the position, but she submitted her resume anyway. When interviewed she found herself begging on the inside, explaining to the interviewer, "If you're willing to take a chance on me, you won't be disappointed. I can and will make a difference." The employer took the gamble. Year after year she performed with great efficiency. Along the way she was recognized for her skills and talents and promoted to yet another dream job—one she would have never found on her own.

God holds our future in His hands, and His Word tells us in Jeremiah 29:11, "*I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."* God is encouraging us to move forward but not to do so alone. He is with us on our entire journey in this world. This doesn't mean there won't be bumps in the road, along with boulders, detours, road blocks, and ditches. Nor does it say we will be spared all suffering or pain. God's saying no to one woman's dream job proved to be the event necessary to move her over to an even better dream job.

It's difficult to see at the time, but God only has the best in mind for us when He answers our prayers with a no. When we are thinking of only our lives in this world, we often can't see the good reason why God would seemingly answer no. But God always sees the big picture of our lives. He knows our greatest need is forgiveness, so we can live with Him forever in heaven. That is why He sent His Son Jesus to take our sin and guilt and suffer in our place. As God answers our prayers, He is drawing us closer to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

More important than our list of requests is that we inherit His free gift of eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ. When God sees our urgent prayers may actually harm us or lead us away from His heavenly goal, He may withhold those things from us. For those times of disappointment and confusion, God calls us to join with other believers to hear His Word and receive the assurance of His love in Baptism and Holy Communion.

Then There's the "Not Now" Answer.

For three years he drove the 160-mile roundtrip to work and back home again—five days a week. He didn't just burn a lot of gas; he burned a huge amount of time—three hours each day. He and his wife prayed and asked God to show them what

to do. It was hard to decide whether it would be best to move closer to work or not. Would it be fair to pull their children away from their friends at school? Would they be giving them great opportunities or snatching them away?

Finally, they decided to let God show them the way. They would put their house up for sale and let God guide what would happen. Unfortunately, too, the housing market was horrible, and they would have to ask full price just to make ends meet. It would take a miracle for their house to sell, but they prayed for God to show them the way. If He would provide a buyer, then they would trust He was telling them to make the move closer to work. Within three months the house was sold, and they were packing their things.

He never thought he'd be moving into a rental on his 50th birthday, but after assessing their funds they agreed they weren't ready for another mortgage. The family prayed for a suitable home to come available shortly. The months passed and before they knew it the end of their lease agreement period was upon them. They had been praying for a house; reluctantly, they knew it was likely they would have to sign another year's lease. And they did. At the end of the second year's lease, they signed a third.

Had they made the right decision? It appeared they had. Their new church family was tremendous. The children thrived in school, and God opened amazing opportunities for his wife. Sure, they had to struggle to make ends meet, but God was faithful and provided more than enough for them to get by.

They still wait for God to open doors, so they can finally buy that house, and they are confident it will come in time. They just have to hang on a little longer, until His time is right and everything is ready.

It's tough when God makes you wait, but He always has a good reason, and He can certainly use that time to remind you how reliable He is. After all, since He gave His Son to win eternal life for you, He will most certainly be there to carry you through, when you can't do it yourself.

When Should We Pray?

When you were a kid did you ever wake up screaming from a terrifying nightmare? Did you call for your mom or dad? Maybe you laid there trembling until the morning light. Hopefully, they woke up and came running to your room to calm you down and comfort you. It didn't matter if they were sound asleep. You needed them right then and there—not after their alarm went off at 5:30 a.m., and they drank their first cup of coffee.

But what about God? Is He there when we need Him? God fills the heavens and the earth. We have access to Him through faith in His Son Jesus Christ who brings us to God through His sacrificial death in our place. In the waters of Baptism, Jesus washes away our sin and assures us God has adopted us as His beloved children. In Holy Communion, Jesus joins His body, which He laid down for us on the cross, to the bread we eat, and He joins His blood, poured out in love for us, to the wine we drink. Through our pastors and fellow Christians, Jesus speaks forgiveness and peace, which we can hear with our ears and believe and trust in His continual presence for our good.

God is constantly watching over us and has even numbered the hairs on our heads. He is eager for our communication—asking Him when we need something, thanking Him for His good gifts, praising Him for all He does. Paul wrote, *“Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus”* (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).

What Should We Pray About?

This answer is simple ... *everything!*

Most people have probably not heard of Joseph Scriven. He was born in Dublin in 1820, was a graduate of Trinity College, and moved to Canada at 25. He died in 1886 at the age of 66. Like many of us, this ordinary man had his share of heartache and sorrow.

The night before he was to marry his bride-to-be she accidentally drowned. Later, he moved to Canada and became engaged to another woman. This woman died shortly before their vows were to be taken as well. Without a doubt, these were two monumental events in this man's life.

When Scriven was battling the illness that would ultimately take his life, he thought about his mother, who would live on after his death. He wrote her a poem and left it on the table next to his bed. A neighbor who was sitting with him saw it and asked Joseph if he had authored it. He replied, "The Lord and I did it together."

The poem was later set to music. This familiar song has long been a reminder to those who hear it that we are encouraged to take everything to God in prayer.

What a Friend We Have in Jesus

*What a Friend we have in Jesus,
all our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry,
everything to God in prayer!*

*O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry,
everything to God in prayer.*

*Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged;
take it to the Lord in prayer.*

*Can we find a friend so faithful,
who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness;
take it to the Lord in prayer.*

*Are we weak and heavy laden,
cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Savior, still our refuge,
take it to the Lord in prayer.*

*Do your friends despise, forsake you?
Take it to the Lord in prayer!
In His arms He'll take and shield you;
you will find a solace there.
Blessed Savior, Thou hast promised,
Thou wilt all our burdens bear.
May we ever, Lord, be bringing,
all to Thee in earnest prayer.*

*Soon in glory bright unclouded,
there will be no need for prayer.
Rapture, praise and endless worship
will be our sweet portion there.*

Many times we pray for the things we don't have in life and forget the things God has given us. Not only are we to pray in times of tragedy and sorrow, but also when life is good, praising God for the blessings we receive each and every day. We can give God praise and thanks for life, loved ones, food, shelter, and all the countless things He has given us.

What Words Should I Use?

When you were young, you may have been taught this first prayer:

*Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep.
If I should die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take. Amen.*

When we got a little older, we added our many “God blesses” to the end of the prayer, as in “God bless mommy. God bless daddy. God bless my brother and sister. God bless (our dog, our cat, our hamster). God bless grandpa and grandma, and so on. The number of God blesses at the end of the prayer could ramble on, depending on how long we wanted to stay awake! Then, too, our first meal prayer may have sounded something like this:

*Come, Lord Jesus,
Be our Guest,
And let these gifts to us,
Be blessed. Amen.*

These prayers began as memorized words. As we grew, however, our prayers became more than just repeated words and the ritual our loved ones taught us as kids. The bedtime prayer gave us comfort, knowing that God was watching over us, while the meal prayer encouraged us to invite Jesus to be our Guest, thanking Him for the food and all He has provided for us. When Jesus’ disciples came and asked Him to teach them to pray, He taught them a prayer known today as “The Lord’s Prayer.” It’s comprised of an introduction, seven petitions or requests, and a conclusion. It’s found in Matthew 6:9-13.

INTRODUCTION

Our Father in heaven: We do not deserve the right to call on God in prayer, but through Jesus Christ, God has forgiven our sins and made us His children. He commands us to pray, and He promises to hear us for Jesus’ sake. So we are bold to pray to God as our very own Father who has all power in heaven and on earth to answer our every prayer.

FIRST PETITION

Hallowed be Your Name: God’s Name is His reputation shown in the loving words, deeds, suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus our Lord. In this petition we pray that God would help us know His love and holiness and show it to others in our words and deeds.

SECOND PETITION

Your kingdom come: Our Father is the great King, ruling over everything He has created. To restore lost mankind to that Kingdom, He sent His dear Son Jesus. When the Good News of Jesus’ salvation is shared in the world, God’s kingdom comes. In this petition we pray for God to guard our faith, so we may remain in His kingdom forever, and to bless us to share Jesus’ story, so many others may be part of His eternal kingdom.

THIRD PETITION

Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven: God’s will is to save all people and bring them into His kingdom through faith in Jesus Christ. In this petition we pray God would enable us to remain in faith and show others His love in our words and our living.

FOURTH PETITION

Give us today our daily bread: Our greatest need is to be forgiven our sins, so we can be part of God’s kingdom through faith in Jesus Christ. But God is concerned not only about our spiritual needs, He also cares about our body and its needs in this life. This includes food and drink, house and home, family and friends, peace and safety, good weather and just government. In this petition we ask God to supply all our needs, and to make our hearts thankful for His constant care.

FIFTH PETITION

Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us: Even when we believe God’s promise of forgiveness in Jesus Christ and live as part of God’s kingdom, living under His abiding care, we still stumble into sin. Troubled by our conscience we would not dare ask God for anything unless we were assured of His continuing forgiveness. So in this petition we ask God to forgive our sins. Then, being assured of His undeserved forgiveness, we gladly forgive those who sin against us.

SIXTH PETITION

And lead us not into temptation: Even though we stand in God's forgiveness, we are surrounded by temptations, pressing us to sin. Inside we have our impure desires and selfishness; outside we are surrounded by people and circumstances, driving us to anger and impatience, and then there is always the devil derailing us from God's Word. In this petition we pray God give us power and strength to resist these temptations, so we may not give in to them and fall away from Jesus Christ.

SEVENTH PETITION

But deliver us from evil: In this fallen world we often suffer great difficulties, finding ourselves in disastrous situations, from which we cannot save ourselves by our own might. Jesus reminds us not to face these things on our own strength or wisdom but, instead, we should rely on God to deliver us, especially when death approaches. Since our Father sent His Son to deliver us from the eternal darkness of hell, we can be confident He will deliver us from every evil thing and bring us safely to His never-ending kingdom.

CONCLUSION

For Yours is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen: We close our prayer with the word "Amen" showing our firm confidence that our Father will answer our prayers for the sake of His Son Jesus Christ.

Prayers can sometimes end up sounding like a Christmas list of wants and wishes, which we mindlessly check off one at a time. The Lord's Prayer helps us organize our thoughts and priorities. It gives us a model to frame the needs and requests that lay heavy on our hearts and minds. Prayer is important for us. When we bring our deepest, darkest secrets before God, we are not telling Him anything He does not already know. Prayer doesn't teach God anything new about us; it teaches us about God's love. He gave us prayer to bring us into a closer relationship with Him. He promises to answer all our prayers according to His will, and in confidence He will accept all our prayers for Jesus' sake.

Developing good habits requires practice. It takes our time, commitment, and dedication to make any exercise a regular part of our lives. The more we pray the more comfortable praying becomes. Talking to God daily and reading His Word encourages us to walk closer with Him. Through this practice we understand God's unconditional love more completely, so we may enter His presence knowing He is always there for us, every day!

Here's a prayer you can use:

Lord God, You are amazing. You made the heavens and the earth, and You made me. Thank You for giving me everything I need to live in this world. Most importantly, praise You for giving Your Son to die on the cross that my sins may be forgiven, and I may live with You in heaven forever. Please give me Your Holy Spirit, so I may confidently come before You at all times and in all places. I pray this in Jesus' Name. Amen.

Tips for Prayer: Signs Along the Road

Consider using your daily commute to think about those you want to remember in prayer.

If you think about it, you pass numerous traffic signs, stop signs, and speed-limit signs on your way to work. If you associate a person, place, or event with each sign, it can help you remember to begin your prayer.

For example, the first sign you might encounter is a stop sign. When you stop, offer a short prayer for protection and safety for a friend or family member.

The next sign you might see is a school speed-limit sign. Passing this sign you could offer a prayer for teachers and students, asking God to guard them and give them success.

When passing the sign for the exit to work, offer a prayer that you would be a blessing to those you work with, asking God to remind you that you are the hands and feet of Christ in today's world.

Over time you will associate different signs and landmarks with different prayer needs. The beauty of the work commute is it allows two defined times to offer prayers each day.

Praying Before Events

A good time to offer prayer is before and after a celebration or event.

Birthdays, anniversaries, and other celebrations, when family and friends gather together, are natural times to offer prayers of praise and thanksgiving before festivities begin. When the celebration is over, prayers of thanksgiving and for continued blessings are appropriate.

Before sport teams begin contests is a natural time to offer prayers for protection and safety. After the game is over, prayers of thanks are often spoken.

Pray together. Pray alone. Just pray.

Praying with Others

Don't be afraid to pray with other people. Just be yourself and talk to God. You can pray with your spouse, children, friends, or even people you have just met. Offering prayers for someone carrying a heavy burden can mean a lot to that person. It shows you are listening to them, and you know the one God who can solve any problem they have. Praying together strengthens our relationship with each other—and pulls us all closer to God.

Public Prayer

Praying in public can be intimidating because you may fear offending someone. Of course, you can pray without using the normal signs of folding your hands or bowing your head. (When you are driving in traffic, we would hope you wouldn't fold your hands, bow your head, and close your eyes!) But as we have said, praying behind the wheel works well.

Offering thanks for a meal in a public restaurant is a form of witness. Prayers can be offered in a quiet voice or spoken silently. Sitting with a bowed head and folded hands is universally recognized as a posture of prayer.

But we also need to keep in mind the warning Jesus gave about praying in public. *“And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly, I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you”* (Matthew 6:5-6).

Is Jesus telling us we should never pray in public? No, but He is saying wherever and whenever we pray we must remember we are talking to our Heavenly Father, and that is where our heart and mind must be centered.

I Don't Know What to Say

Sometimes we get caught up in emotions, sorrow, or pain, and we can't find the right words to pray. Sometimes we get intimidated by other people who pray really well. Maybe we are too frightened to pray because we think we have to recite some sort of special formula or God won't answer us—or worse—He will be angry with us.

But God has that covered, too. Paul spoke about the difficulty of praying when you are going through times of suffering. He wrote, *“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God”* (Romans 8:26-27).

What a comfort to realize the all-knowing Holy Spirit is carrying our prayers to God and making sure they are perfectly acceptable to God!

Here are examples of some prayers you can use in various situations:

Thankfulness

Heavenly Father, my heart is filled with joy, and I am overwhelmed by all You have given me. I am thankful for my family and friends, health and home. I am thankful You are always near and love me unconditionally. I thank You for surrounding me with Your protection and love. Most of all, I thank You for giving Your only Son Jesus Christ to pay the price for my sins on the cross. This You have done, so I may live with You forever. Amen.

Heavy Heart

Jesus, today I am struggling with a heavy heart. I feel broken and shattered. Every moment the darkness grows deeper. There are so many stones in my path. I keep stumbling and falling on them and feel the deep sting of shame and failure. Reach out Your precious, nail-scarred hands to pick up the pieces of my life and put them together to make me whole again. I am leaning on Your strength, power, love, and mercy, knowing only You can turn my darkness into light. Hold me in my weakness and surround me with Your love and protection. Wash away my sins in Your precious blood, and bring me through my grief and sorrow. In Your most holy and precious Name I pray. Amen.

Blessed

Lord God, Heavenly Father, I have no words to express how richly You have blessed my life. You have given me more than I deserve, and I am grateful that even though You know my true heart, You don't turn away from me. For Jesus' sake, You have removed my sins and made me pure and spotless by faith. I am blessed from the moment I wake each morning to when I go to bed at night. I don't always see or acknowledge Your blessings in my life, but I rejoice that You remain faithful to love, protect, encourage, and walk with me in my life. Help me recognize Your blessings and bring You my praise and thanksgiving for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Forgiveness

Heavenly Father, forgive me for using words as weapons and not for encouragement. Forgive me all the thoughts, attitudes, words, or actions that have caused You pain and brought shame and dishonor on Your holy Name. Forgive me if I repaid evil for evil instead of doing good to those who hurt me. Thank You Father, for forgiving me, and for washing and cleansing me through the suffering and death of Your Son Jesus Christ. Thank You for claiming me as Your dear child, even when I fall so short of Your glory. Thank You, Lord, for not keeping a record of my sins. Teach me to forgive others and myself, as You have forgiven me. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Dedicating Our Lives

Jesus, You are the Son of God. Your sinless life and sacrificial death on the cross marked the ultimate display of Your love for us, paying for the sins of the whole world. You rose from the dead and now live in heaven with God our Father. Through Your life, death, and resurrection, You offer the gift of eternal life to all sinners. Give me Your Spirit, so I may confess my sins and cling to Your cross where You won complete forgiveness for me. Take Your rightful place in my heart, so I may love You above all things. Teach me to serve You faithfully by serving my family, friends, and neighbors all the days of my life. Amen.

Grief

Lord Jesus Christ, on the cross You were pierced with deep pain, grief, and loss. You were cut off from Your Father because of our sin. As I taste grief and loss in my own life, shine the light of Your love in the anguish of my soul. Help me turn this loss and despair over to You. Free me from this pain; heal my hurting heart, and wipe away every tear from my eyes. As I mourn, comfort me with the assurance You are with me, an ever-present help in my time of trouble. Fix my eyes on the glory that awaits me, on that great Day when You return to judge the world, when You will restore from Your own fullness all that has been taken from me. I pray this in Your holy Name. Amen.

The staff at Lutheran Hour Ministries prays this booklet encourages and guides you to spend time with God in a personal and meaningful way. Prayer has a marvelous way of strengthening our faith, keeping us close to God, and comforting us when we're down. Through it God comes to us and makes Himself known to us.

God bless you and keep you in His loving arms.

Prayers for Others

Prayers for You

This booklet was prepared by three staff members from Lutheran Hour Ministries: Rich Cohrs, former manager of district and congregational relations; Wayne Palmer, former theological writer in U.S. Ministries; and Suzie Sallee, LHM's community facilitator, congregations.



CHRISTIAN FOUNDATIONS

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