

A Rhythm of Prayer

For Jesus and his disciples, prayer marked the passage of time and anchored their days. They had a rhythm of life that intentionally kept God before their minds and hearts, arranging their days based on being in the presence of God. Nothing was more necessary or desirable than cultivating a rhythm of communing with the Lord!

Early Christian tradition models a daily prayer rhythm. They paused and prayed each morning, midday, and evening. Just as we see this in the life of Jesus and the apostles in the early church, our desire as a pastoral team is to invite us, collectively, to recover this sacred practice.

Each morning we want to begin the day by praying the Lord's Prayer as a framework. What if the opening movements of our day were grounded in the movements of how Jesus communed with the Father? When we pray The Lord's Prayer, we submit to the leadership of Jesus, allowing his prayers to guide our prayers.

Each midday we want to create time to pray for the lost. What if every day we escaped the work flow for just a few moments and re-center our attention on Jesus, the Good Shepherd who seeks after just one lost sheep, and call out by name those who are far from God, but close to us? We want to ask the Spirit to bring to mind people who are far from Him, and ask God to draw them to his fold, bringing them salvation.

Each evening we want to end our day in gratitude to God. What if we learned a rhythm of recounting God's kindness and faithfulness to us throughout that day? As you review your day, from morning to evening, give thanks to God for anything and everything for which you are grateful.

Morning - The Lord's Prayer as a Framework

"Our Father in Heaven..."

Begin with prayers of adoration. In the way Jesus addresses God, he reminds us of three holy realities: God's majesty, approachability, and restoration. God is "in heaven," holy and other. He is incomprehensibly powerful and the true source and satisfaction of every human desire. God is also "Father," inviting us to come before Him not merely as beggars but as children and heirs to His Kingdom. Through Jesus, God is more than just my Father but "Our Father." He desires to make everyone—my family, friends, co-workers, even strangers and passers-by—into sister and brother.

"Hallowed be your name..."

To hallow means to set aside as holy. Spend a moment recognizing God as holy - as the unique one worthy of your affection. You may want to recognize and name the blessings in your life, connecting the gifts back to the giver. You could recite a Psalm, sing a worship anthem, or sit in silence, savoring the presence of God over all and in all.

"Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven..."

Spend a few minutes asking for God's will to be done in your life. This part of the prayer is about releasing control. What are you currently wrestling for control over—something you've never released to God or find yourself grabbing back from him? Name it and release it to God. You may want to repeatedly pray, "Your will be done," a few times. Releasing your own control, ask for God's Kingdom in our midst. Simply, clearly, and specifically ask that God's Kingdom would come where it lacks. Think of friends outside of relationship with Jesus, needs in our city and world, situations (*professional, social, and personal*), and even emotions within yourself. Anywhere and everywhere you know God's Kingdom of love and peace is lacking, ask for Jesus to come.

“Give us today our daily bread...”

Now spend a few minutes praying for specific needs and wants in your life and that of your community – a job, healing, or wisdom to make a decision.

“Forgive us our debts, as we have also forgiven our debtors...”

Ask God for forgiveness for specific areas in your life, and releasing others to forgiveness. You may just want to pray aloud the short phrase, “Father, forgive me” or “Father, help me forgive.”

“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil...”

Finally, spend a few minutes praying against temptation—this word can also be translated as *trouble*—in your life. Pray against any kind of evil—spiritual evil, human evil or oppression, natural disasters, systemic injustice, etc. Pray against evil things in your life and community, and ask for God’s blessing into your life and community.

Midday - My Circle Prayer (Praying for the lost by name)

Ask the Spirit to bring to mind people who are far from God, people who do not know his love for them. As faces and names come to mind, pray for them. Ask God, as their Good Shepherd, to go after these lost ones, to restore them to his fold, and to bring them salvation.

Evening - Gratitude

‘Rejoice in the Lord always, again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.’

Philippians 4:4-6

The evening is a time for resting and presence. In the evening, we are tired from the events of the day, and the greatest gift we can give one another is undivided presence with other tired people in need of rest in each other's company. However, we often litter our homes, dinner tables, and relationships with the clutter we carry home from the day. In order to be present to one another at the close of the day, we must first become present to God at the close of the day.

Review the events of the day: the people, tasks, messages, meals, demands, and surprises. Remember all of it. As you make your way back through the day from morning to evening, give thanks to God for anything and everything you have to be grateful for.