

# Practicing Prayer

## Prayer at the End of the Day for Advent

### Week 1: Contemplative Prayer

The spirituality of contemplation includes patterns of silence, meditation, repetitive prayer, and other practices. Mary contemplated all things in her heart. We conform ourselves to her way of prayer.

#### OPENING

You speak to us in silence.

**Open our hearts to your still, small voice.**

Your word is inscribed on our hearts.

**Remind us of the prayers we have learned by heart.**

You are the Lord of time and space.

**Give us patience to listen on your time, not ours.**

#### LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH

We praise you, O God, for this evergreen crown that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the first candle on this wreath, rouse us from sleep, that we may be ready to greet our Lord when he comes with all the saints and angels. Enlighten us with your grace, and prepare our hearts to welcome him with joy. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near. **Amen.**

*Refrain*



Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the  
dark - ness. Christ, be our light! Shine in your  
church gath - ered to - day.

#### READING

"But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart." (Luke 2:19)

#### REFLECTION

The Greek word translated *treasured up* or *kept* can mean preserved (to keep from perishing), protected, treasured up, and kept within oneself. The Greek word translated *pondered* means to mull over, or to turn over in one's mind.

Have there been moments you've wanted to "treasure up"? What were they? What happened? What do you think can happen when we take time to *ponder*? What might happen if you ponder about something specific or something in general? How can God be a part of it?

#### HYMN

"Light Dawns on a Weary World"



1 Light dawns on a wea - ry world when eyes be - gin to  
2 Love grows in a wea - ry world when hun - gry hearts find  
3 Hope blooms in a wea - ry world when crea - tures, once for -



see all peo - ple's dig - ni - ty. Light dawns on a  
bread and chil - dren's dreams are fed. Love grows in a  
lorn, find wil - der - ness re - born. Hope blooms in a



wea - ry world: the prom - ised day of jus - tice comes.  
wea - ry world: the prom - ised feast of plen - ty comes.  
wea - ry world: the prom - ised green of E - den comes.

*Refrain*



The trees shall clap their hands; the dry lands, gush with springs;



the hills and moun - tains shall break forth with sing - ing!



We shall go out in joy, and be led forth in peace,



### CANTICLE FOR COMPLINE *(Chanted by the Cantor)*

*Guide us waking, O Lord, and guard us sleeping; that awake we may watch with Christ and asleep we may rest in peace. Now, Lord, you let your servant go in peace: your word has been fulfilled. My own eyes have seen the salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of every people: a light to reveal you to the nations and the glory of your people Israel.*

### PRAYERS

Eternal God, the hours both of day and night are yours, and to you the darkness is no threat. Be present, we pray, with those who labor in these hours of night, especially those who watch and work on behalf of others. Grant them diligence in their watching, faithfulness in their service, courage in danger, and competence in emergencies. Help them to meet the needs of others with confidence and compassion; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray  
**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

### BLESSING & PEACE

Let us bless the Lord!

#### **Thanks be to God!**

Almighty and merciful God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless, preserve, and keep us, this night and forevermore.

#### **Amen.**

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

#### **And also with you.**

*You are invited to safely share the peace  
with a neighbor—near or far!*

## Week 2: Embodied Prayer

*Prayer is more than just a practice of the mind and spirit. It includes physical postures that pray with the whole body. Solomon prayed before the altar of the Lord with his whole body, and so we do likewise.*

### OPENING

We stand to honor you. *(Stand as you are able.)*

We kneel to adore you. *(Kneel as you are able.)*

We raise our hands to worship you. *(Raise hands as you are able.)*

We close our eyes to see you. *(Close eyes.)*

We sit to hear you. *(Sit.)*

### LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH

We praise you, O God, for this circle of light that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the candles on this wreath, kindle within us the fire of your Spirit, that we may be light shining in the darkness. Enlighten us with your grace, that we may welcome others as you have welcomed us. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near. **Amen.**



### READING

“Now when Solomon finished offering all this prayer and this plea to the Lord, he arose from facing the altar of the Lord, where he had knelt with hands outstretched toward heaven.” (1 Kings 8:54)

### REFLECTION

In her book *Embodied Prayer: Toward a Wholeness of Body, Mind, and Soul*, Celeste Snowber writes, “Our bodies have too long been in exile. We listen or pray with our hearts and minds but ignore

much of our bodies; we become 'disembodied.'" Have you ever felt that way? What was happening in your life at that time?

Embodied prayer invites you towards wholeness of body, mind, and soul: walking meditation, prayer with hands raised in the air, and prayer where one kneels. The posture and the positions seem to speak for themselves as much as any words.

In what ways might your body be affecting your praying? Could trying a different position or posture reveal another kind of prayer experience with God?

## **HYMN**

"We Fall Down"

**Verse**            We fall down  
                         We lay our crowns  
                         at the feet of Jesus.  
                         The greatness of mercy and love  
                         at the feet of Jesus.

**Chorus**            And we cry holy, holy, holy  
                         And we cry holy, holy, holy,  
                         And we cry holy, holy, holy is the Lamb

## **CANTICLE FOR COMPLINE** (*Chanted by the Cantor*)

*Guide us waking, O Lord, and guard us sleeping; that awake we may watch with Christ and asleep we may rest in peace. Now, Lord, you let your servant go in peace: your word has been fulfilled. My own eyes have seen the salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of every people: a light to reveal you to the nations and the glory of your people Israel.*

## **PRAYERS**

Eternal God, the hours both of day and night are yours, and to you the darkness is no threat. Be present, we pray, with those who labor in these hours of night, especially those who watch and work on behalf of others. Grant them diligence in their watching, faithfulness in their service, courage in danger, and competence in emergencies. Help them to meet the needs of others with confidence and compassion; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray  
**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

## **BLESSING & PEACE**

Let us bless the Lord!

**Thanks be to God!**

Almighty and merciful God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless, preserve, and keep us, this night and forevermore.

**Amen.**

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**And also with you.**

*You are invited to safely share the peace  
with a neighbor—near or far!*

## Week 3: Neighborhood Prayer

Prayer takes place in a specific place, among specific people. James encouraged his community to trust that their prayers were effective and brought healing within the community and extending out from it.

### OPENING

O God, you have called us to love our neighbors as ourselves.

**Help us to see you in our neighbors.**

Some of our neighbors' needs are unknown to us.

**Forgive us our failure to inquire.**

We have done more for our neighbors than we realize.

**Help us to see your goodness and mercy shining through our actions.**

We desire to pray for the good of our neighborhood.

**Lord, bless and keep all who live and move around this church.**

### LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH

We praise you, O God, for this victory wreath that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the candles on this wreath, strengthen our hearts as we await the Lord's coming in glory. Enlighten us with your grace, that we may serve our neighbors in need. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near. **Amen.**

*Refrain*



Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the  
dark - ness. Christ, be our light! Shine in your  
church gath - ered to - day.

### READING

"Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective." (James 5:16)

### REFLECTION

James 5:16 is really about relationships, and inviting those relationships to be deeper. While this verse was originally referring to a Christian community, it can be brought to our neighbors. Shelley Stott wrote: "Prayer walking is exactly what the words imply: walking and praying. Prayer walking has been described as 'praying on site with insight.'" When you hear the sounds and see the sights of a particular place, you understand better how to pray for the people in that location.

Do you have anyone with whom you can "confess your sins" and/or "pray for one another"? How did that relationship evolve? What suggestions would you give for someone seeking that kind of relationship? Why do you think James links being healed with mutual confession and prayer? Do you think that could be applied to neighborhood walks? If yes, how?

### HYMN

"Jesus, Jesus, Fill Us with Your Love"

*Refrain*



Je - su, Je - su, fill us with your love, show  
us how to serve the neigh-bors we have from you.

1 Kneels at the feet of his friends, si - lent - ly wash - es their feet,  
2 Neigh-bors are wealth - y and poor, var - ied in col - or and race,  
3 These are the ones we will serve, these are the ones we will love;  
4 Kneel at the feet of our friends, si - lent - ly wash - ing their feet:

*Refrain*

mas - ter who acts as a slave to them.  
neigh-bors are near - by and far a - way.  
all these are neigh - bors to us and you.  
this is the way we will live with you.

## CANTICLE FOR COMPLINE *(Chanted by the Cantor)*

Guide us waking, O Lord, and guard us sleeping; that awake we may watch with Christ and asleep we may rest in peace. Now, Lord, you let your servant go in peace: your word has been fulfilled. My own eyes have seen the salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of every people: a light to reveal you to the nations and the glory of your people Israel.

## PRAYERS

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## BLESSING & PEACE

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### Thanks be to God!

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### Amen.

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## Week 4: Praying the Hours

One of the most ancient patterns for prayer is the daily prayer cycle. Paul encouraged his communities to pray in the Spirit at all times. Praying the daily hours is patterned after this encouragement.

## OPENING

Lord, you are with us in the morning.

### Let our first thoughts and words be a prayer to you.

Lord, you are with us in the midday.

### Keep us mindful of you as we work and play.

Lord, you are with us in the evening.

### Prepare us for the night watches.

Lord, you are with us in the nighttime.

### We commend our bodies and souls into your care.

## LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH

We praise you, O God, for this wheel of time that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the candles on this wreath, open our eyes to see your presence in the lowly ones of this earth. Enlighten us with your grace, that we may sing of your advent among us in the Word made flesh. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near.  
**Amen.**

*Refrain*

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dark - ness. Christ, be our light! Shine in your  
church gath - ered to - day.

## READING

“Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints.” (Ephesians 6:18)

## REFLECTION

The Greek word translated *supplication* means a deeply felt need. Keep in mind that according to Scripture, *saint* refers to those following Jesus and includes those living among us. The deeper the relationship, the more opportunity for supplications.

How do you pray throughout the day? Do you set aside time for prayer? How can setting particular times for prayer in your day have a positive effect on you?

## HYMN

“Lord of All Hopefulness”



1 Lord of all hope - ful - ness, Lord of all joy,  
2 Lord of all ea - ger - ness, Lord of all faith,  
3 Lord of all kind - li - ness, Lord of all grace,  
4 Lord of all gen - tle - ness, Lord of all calm,



whose trust, ev - er child - like, no cares could de - stroy:  
whose strong hands were skilled at the plane and the lathe:  
your hands swift to wel - come, your arms to em - brace:  
whose voice is con - tent - ment, whose pres - ence is balm:



be there at our wak - ing, and give us, we pray,  
be there at our la - bors, and give us, we pray,  
be there at our hom - ing, and give us, we pray,  
be there at our sleep - ing, and give us, we pray,



your bliss in our hearts, Lord, at the break of the day.  
your strength in our hearts, Lord, at the noon of the day.  
your love in our hearts, Lord, at the eve of the day.  
your peace in our hearts, Lord, at the end of the day.

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