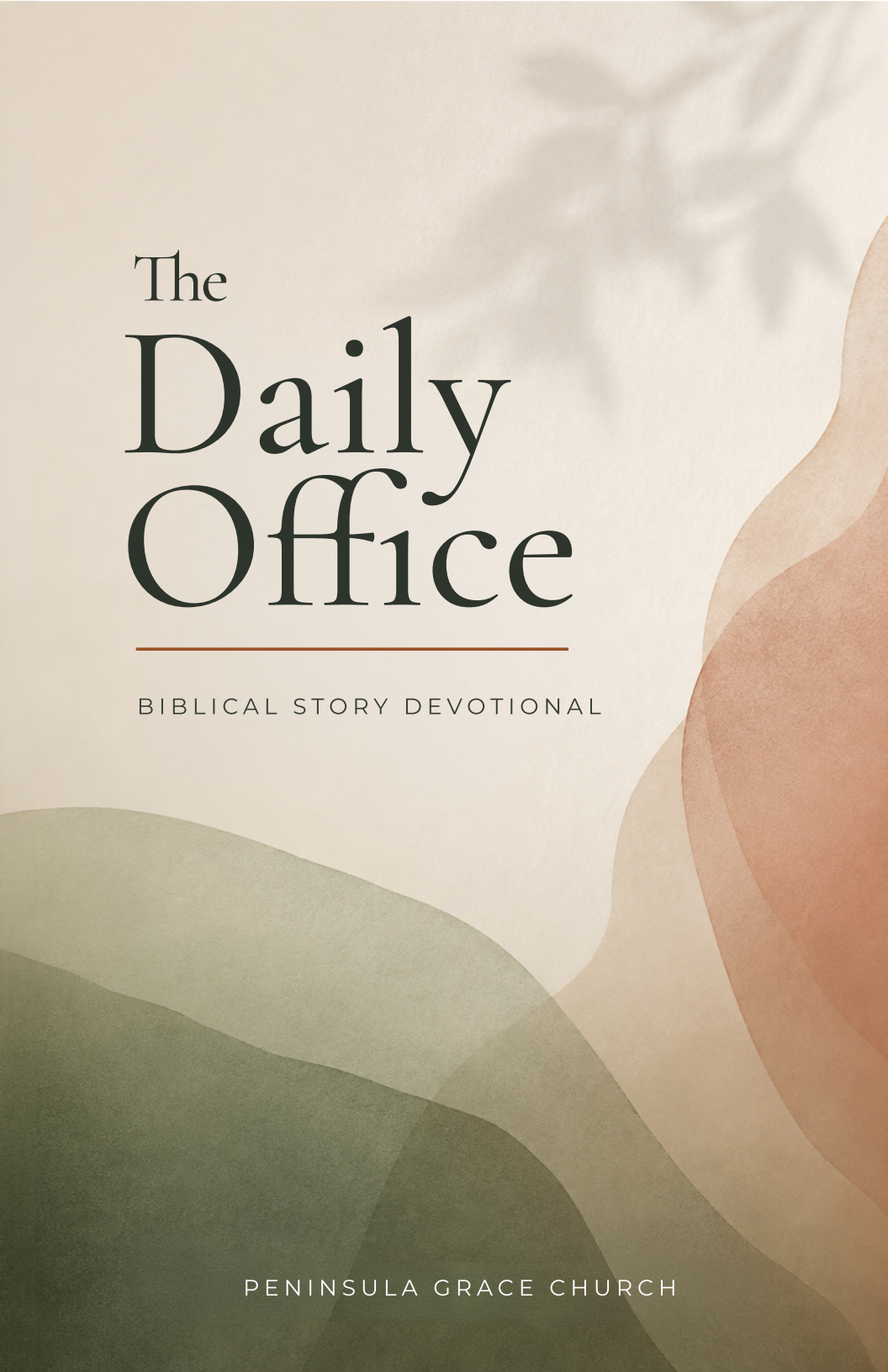




The Daily Office

BIBLICAL STORY DEVOTIONAL

PENINSULA GRACE CHURCH

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Introduction

Throughout Scripture, God's people have ordered their lives around regular rhythms of prayer. Daniel stopped to pray three times each day (Daniel 6:10). Jesus regularly withdrew from the crowds to be alone with the Father (Luke 5:16). The early church devoted themselves to "the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Acts 2:42).

Throughout Church history, Christians have continued this pattern by setting apart regular times to pause, read Scripture, remember God, and pray. These rhythms have often been called the Daily Office. In this guide, a Daily Office simply means an intentional portion of the day set apart to turn our attention toward God.

These rhythms are not attempts to earn God's attention. They are ways of returning our attention to the God who is already present.

The Daily Office is a guide to prayer and practice through the biblical story. It was created as a companion to the Biblical Story Workshop within the Apprentice Track at Peninsula Grace Church.

The purpose of this guide is not simply to help you learn the biblical story, but to help that story shape the way you pray, think, and live. Each week follows passages from the corresponding workshop session and introduces a different practice of prayer. Over five days, you will explore that practice and learn to bring it into your life with God.

We do not practice in order to earn God's love or transform ourselves through effort. The Holy Spirit is the one who forms us into the likeness of Jesus (2 Corinthians 3:18). These practices simply help us become more attentive, receptive, and responsive to His work.

By the end of these eleven weeks, you will have gained more than information. You will also have a small toolbox of prayer practices to draw from in different seasons of life. Some may connect with you immediately. Others may feel unfamiliar or difficult. You are not expected to carry all eleven practices forward. Instead, pay attention to the two or three that most naturally help you remain present and responsive to God.

This guide is designed around one Daily Office, five days each week. That rhythm is meant to create meaningful space with God without becoming spiritually exhausting—the exact opposite of what a prayer guide should accomplish. You may naturally remember God at other moments throughout the day, but receive those moments as invitations rather than additional assignments.

The goal is not to complete every page perfectly. The goal is to become increasingly present to God and increasingly formed into the likeness of Jesus through the story of Scripture.

How to Use

Each week introduces a rhythm of prayer arising from that week's passages. These practices include gratitude, trust and surrender, praying Scripture, listening and discernment, liturgical prayer, Examen, lament, silence, Gospel contemplation, intercession, and hopeful longing for Christ's return.

As a starting point, set aside approximately fifteen to twenty minutes each day. If possible, choose a consistent time and place where you can become still and give God your attention without rushing. Some days may take longer and others may be shorter. The amount of time is less important than your willingness to be present.

Some practices will include a simple physical posture, such as opening your hands, kneeling, sitting in silence, or standing. We pray with our bodies because following Jesus involves the whole person—not only our thoughts. These postures are not meant to manufacture a particular feeling. They simply help our bodies participate in the prayer of our hearts.

Each day follows the same three movements:

1. **Read** — Slowly read the passage, perhaps more than once. Notice what it reveals about God, the world, and the life of faith.
2. **Reflect** — Pay attention to where that same reality appears in your own life. Notice any desire,

resistance, question, or invitation that rises within you.

3. **Practice** — Respond to God through the week's prayer practice.

If you miss a day, do not worry about doubling up, starting over, or turning the day into a backlog that must be cleared. Simply return the next day. The purpose of this guide is not to maintain a perfect record but to help you develop a sustainable rhythm of returning to God.

Some practices may feel natural immediately. Others may feel awkward, distracting, or difficult. That is normal. Prayer practices are not techniques to master or tasks by which we earn God's approval. They are ways of making ourselves available to the God who is already present.

So begin where you are. Bring whatever desire, distraction, faith, doubt, energy, or exhaustion you have with you. Receive what God has for you today. Allow the story of God to become the pattern of your prayers—and, over time, the pattern of your life.

Week 1

Genesis 1-11
Gratitude & Attention

Week 1

Gratitude & Attention

This week, our prayer practice is Gratitude and Attention. As we move through these passages, we will give thanks for what is true and good while turning our attention toward the Creator, whose character remains steady even when our circumstances do not. We are learning to become present to God and the life He has already given us.

Attention is the willingness to slow down and to notice what is actually present before God. Gratitude is our truthful response to the good gifts we receive. Neither practice asks us to pretend everything is fine. Across Genesis 1–11, we encounter creation's goodness, sin's devastation, and God's persistent grace. Mature gratitude learns to hold all three together.

Make intentional space for each reading. Find a quiet room, step outside, or ask someone you live with to help protect this time. Begin by sitting before the Lord for five minutes. Quiet your body, mind, and heart. Read slowly. When you finish, resist the urge to hurry away. Sit with the practice for a few moments, allowing the Spirit to draw your attention back to God's Word and His presence.

Day 1

Read: Genesis 1:1-2:3

Reflect:

The Bible begins not with human need or effort, but with four words: “In the beginning, God”. Before there was light, land, sky, or sea, God was already there. He is not one creature among many, but the Creator who stands before and over all creation, free to bring it into being by his word. Throughout Genesis 1, a rhythm emerges: “God said,” “it was so,” and “God saw that it was good.” These phrases reveal his authority, his faithfulness, and his delight in all he has made.

Creation, then, is received—not achieved. Our breath, relationships, abilities, provisions, and ordinary pleasures are gifts we did not create for ourselves. Gratitude begins when we slow down long enough to recognize the Giver. Even God’s rest in Genesis 2:2–3 is not recovery from exhaustion, but the completion and enjoyment of good work. God stops to delight in what he has made, inviting us to do the same: to receive life with gratitude, notice what is good, and rest in his generous care.

Practice:

Name three concrete gifts in life today. Avoid broad categories. After naming each gift, pause and acknowledge God as its giver. End with a simple prayer of gratitude.

Day 2

Read: Genesis 1:26-28; 2:4-25

Reflect:

Humanity enters the story carrying a dignity that is given, not earned. Every person is made in the image of God and created to reflect his character within the world. The command to exercise dominion is therefore not permission to exploit creation, but a calling to represent the good Creator's rule by caring for what belongs to him. Genesis 2 shows humanity made for relationship—with God, the earth, meaningful work, and one another.

Yet even within this abundant garden, God establishes a limit. The command concerning the tree reminds humanity of a basic truth: God is God, and we are not. This boundary is not cruelty or deprivation, but an invitation to trust the wisdom of the Giver. Gratitude means receiving both God's gifts and his limits—thanking him for what he gives while trusting him with what he withholds. The desire to reject every limit and define good and evil for ourselves prepares the way for the tragedy of Genesis 3.

Practice:

Thank God for the dignity of bearing His image. Reflect on one area you've noticed God's wise and generous rule today. Name one limitation that you are feeling and give to God an act of surrender and trust in Him.

Day 3

Read: Genesis 3:1-24

Reflect:

Genesis 3 begins not with a bite, but with a question: “Did God really say?” The serpent plants suspicion that God’s word cannot be trusted because God’s goodness cannot be trusted. Perhaps he is withholding something. Perhaps His limits are keeping humanity from life. The fruit becomes the outward expression of a deeper rebellion: the desire to determine good and evil for ourselves. What follows is not freedom, but fracture—shame, fear, blame, hostility, pain, hiding, and exile.

Then God enters the garden and asks, “Where are you?” He is not asking for their location; He is inviting them to come out of hiding and tell the truth. Judgment is real, but it is not God’s only word. He promises the serpent’s eventual defeat and clothes the ashamed pair before their exile. Gratitude does not minimize evil or silence grief and confession. It notices that, even east of Eden, God has not abandoned His creation. He still seeks, covers, and promises to rescue.

Practice:

Sit with God’s question, “Where are you?”. Name where fear, shame, control, or blame is leading you to hide. Notice where he is pursuing you, and pray, “Here’s where I am and what I’ve done. Teach me to trust your promise.”

Day 4

Read: Genesis 4:1-16; 6:5-8

Reflect:

Before Cain kills Abel, God comes near with a question and warning. Cain's anger is already shaping him, and sin is crouching at the door, waiting to master him if left unattended. God invites Cain to attend to his inner life, his choices, and the brother beside him. But Cain refuses. He turns from God, then against Abel, and finally denies responsibility. Disordered desire becomes violence, then spreads through the family and human society.

Genesis 5 repeats the same grave refrain, generation after generation: "and he died." Death is tightening its grip. Yet judgment is not the story's only movement. God warns before He judges and marks Cain for protection; later, Noah finds favor in His eyes. Warning and restraint are also forms of mercy. Attention helps us notice what is moving within us while it is still "at the door." Gratitude teaches us to receive warnings, boundaries, interruptions, and correction as gifts of grace—the kindness of God calling us back before desire becomes destruction.

Practice:

Notice a time when desire, fear, anger, envy, or deception crept into your heart. What was God using to warn you in those moments? Respond faithfully and thank Him for restraint, mercy, and ask for courage to receive correction without defensiveness.

Day 5

Read: Genesis 9:8-17; 11:1-9

Reflect:

The flood is one of Scripture's most sobering stories. Human corruption fills the earth with violence, and God's judgment is severe. Yet judgment does not erase mercy. God remembers Noah, preserves his family, and begins again. He sets the rainbow in the clouds as the sign of His covenant with humanity and every living creature. God commits Himself to sustaining the world in which His promise of redemption will unfold.

But when the waters recede, the human heart remains unchanged. A clean landscape cannot produce a clean humanity. At Babel, people gather power, secure their future, and try to "make a name" apart from God. The flood can restrain evil, but it cannot heal its source. The story needs the promised offspring who will defeat the serpent. Genesis 1-11 leaves us waiting: Will God's promise overcome sin, death, and exile? Will humanity live again under His rule and in His presence? The covenant offers hope: God has preserved the world, and His rescue is coming.

Practice:

Look back over the week. Name what was good and what was broken. Where did you see God pursuing, warning, restraining, preserving, or promising? Thank God for one specific good thing that you reflected on.

Week 2

Genesis 12-50
Trust & Surrender

Week 2

Trust & Surrender

Genesis 12 begins God's answer to the problem of Genesis 1–11. God calls Abram and chooses one family—not as an end in itself, but as the means through which every family of the earth will be blessed (Genesis 12:1–3). The covenant gives the story its forward movement: a people, a place, His rule, His presence, and worldwide blessing.

Yet promise does not eliminate waiting. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph live between what God has said and what they can presently see. Their stories move between trust and fear, obedience and control. They are not uncomplicated heroes. Their failures reveal the steadiness of God's grace more than the strength of their faith. Trust rests in God's character when outcomes remain unclear. Surrender releases the outcome without abandoning the responsibility to obey.

This week, our prayer practice is Trust and Surrender. We will also begin paying attention to physical posture, inviting our bodies to participate in prayer. Each day will include a simple posture to help embody the practice. Posture cannot create surrender, but it can help us express with our whole selves what we are offering to God. Before each reading, become still, place your feet on the ground, relax your shoulders, and open your hands before Him.

Day 1

Read: Genesis 12:1-9

Reflect:

God's call to Abram begins with grace, not achievement. Before Abram proves anything, God promises to make him a nation, bless him, and extend that blessing to every family of the earth. After the curse and scattering of Genesis 3–11, blessing becomes the repeated word. God will begin healing the nations through one family. Yet Abram must leave his country, kindred, and father's household for a land God will show him. Trust begins before he knows the route or sees the outcome.

Abram responds by going “as the LORD had told him”. Trust becomes visible through movement and worship as he builds altars along the way. But trust remains unfinished. When famine drives him to Egypt, fear takes over and Abram reaches for control. One courageous decision does not complete a life of trust. Faith is formed through repeated choices to obey what God has said, surrender what we cannot see, and return when fear pulls us off course. God's promise remains steadier than Abram's faith—and ours.

Practice:

Bring to God a situation where your desire for certainty is keeping you from moving forward. Imagine holding it in your hands. Name what you do not know and what you wish He would reveal. Ask Him to give you grace to live obediently without demanding control of the outcome.

Day 2

Read: Genesis 15:1-6, 17-18; 16:1-16

Reflect:

Abram does not hide his confusion. He asks how the promise can be fulfilled while he remains childless. Trust can include honest questions. God meets his fear with His presence: “Do not be afraid... I am your shield”. He leads him outside, points to the stars, and shows that the future exceeds what Abram can see. Then, in the covenant ceremony, God alone passes between the pieces and takes the covenant obligation upon Himself. The promise rests finally upon God’s faithfulness.

Waiting exposes the desire to control. Sarai and Abram try to secure the heir through Hagar, treating a vulnerable woman as a means to an end. Forcing the promise creates suffering. Yet God finds and hears Hagar in the wilderness, revealing Himself as the God who sees her. God’s faithfulness does not make human control harmless, and human failure does not make God absent. We can question honestly without seizing the outcome. The promise remains God’s to fulfill; trust remains ours to practice.

Practice:

Bring one situation you are trying to control before God. Ask whether you are forcing the timing, protecting yourself, or using someone to secure the outcome. Open your hands, choose to trust, and release the result to Him.

Day 3

Read: Genesis 22:1-19

Reflect:

Isaac is not the result of Abraham's control. He arrives after long barrenness as gift and laughter, evidence that God can fulfill what appears impossible. Then Genesis names the command concerning Isaac as a test. Abraham enters a tension he cannot resolve: God promised descendants through Isaac, yet the command seems to threaten that promise. Unable to see how the story will continue, Abraham moves forward trusting God's faithfulness. His words become the center of the scene: "God Himself will provide".

God stops Abraham and provides a ram in Isaac's place. The child of promise is preserved, and the covenant promise is reaffirmed. Abraham need not secure what God has promised. Trust does not require loving God's gifts less. It means refusing to ask a gift to carry what belongs to God alone. No relationship, dream, role, or future can bear the weight of our identity and security. We receive these gifts with open hands, loving them while trusting God with what comes next.

Practice:

Bring to mind one person, gift, hope, role, or future you deeply value. Thank God for it. Then ask, "What does loving, wise, and responsible care for this gift look like today?" Hold it with open hands, receiving it gratefully without asking it to carry your identity or security.

Day 4

Read: Genesis 28:10-17; 32:22-31

Reflect:

Jacob inherits the covenant by God's grace, yet spends his life grasping for what God promised. His deception fractures his family and sends him into exile. Alone outside the promised land, Jacob has nothing left to manage. At Bethel, God meets him and repeats the promises of descendants, land, worldwide blessing, presence, and return. The promise comes before Jacob repairs anything or proves himself. Grace meets him amid the consequences of his actions. God's presence is not reserved for ideal circumstances; He remains near through wandering, conflict, fear, and change.

After twenty years with Laban, Jacob returns home terrified of meeting Esau. At the river, he wrestles through the night, receives a new name, and leaves with both blessing and a limp. He cannot leave the struggle as he entered it. Surrender allows God to confront the identity and strategies we use for protection. Jacob is blessed, but also changed. Sometimes grace loosens our grip, exposes our weakness, and teaches us to walk forward dependent upon the God who remains with us.

Practice:

Try kneeling by your bed or your chair and bring before God one area of life that feels like wandering, exile, or an unfinished journey. Honestly name what you fear if you stop grasping for control. Open your hands and ask for faith to trust Him.

Day 5

Read: Genesis 45:4-8; 50:15-21

Reflect:

Joseph does not control his story. His brothers sell him, Potiphar's wife falsely accuses him, and a fellow prisoner forgets him. Yet Genesis repeats one testimony: "the LORD was with Joseph". God's presence does not spare Joseph from betrayal, injustice, or waiting, but it makes suffering neither empty nor final. Through Joseph, blessing reaches Potiphar's household, the prison, Pharaoh, Egypt, neighboring peoples, and Jacob's family. What others intend to destroy becomes, in God's hands, a means of preserving life.

Joseph does not call his brothers' actions good. He names their intention as evil while recognizing that God was preserving life. Providence does not excuse wrongdoing, erase grief, or explain why particular suffering occurs. It means human evil cannot finally overthrow God's purpose. Joseph rules in Egypt, but the promised royal line will come through Judah. The family survives, yet Genesis closes outside the land and waiting. Abraham's descendants remain marked by failure, but the covenant remains secure—not because they are always faithful, but because God remains faithful.

Practice:

With your hands on your knees, Name before God what you cannot change or control. Slowly turn your palms upward, ask for grace and entrust the situation to Him.

Week 3

Exodus - Deuteronomy
Praying Scripture

Week 3

Praying Scripture

Genesis closes with Abraham's family living in Egypt and still waiting for the fullness of God's promise. Exodus opens generations later. The family has become a great people, but Pharaoh has enslaved them and ordered the death of their sons. God sees their suffering, hears their cries, remembers his covenant, and acts to rescue them.

This movement of the story gives us a natural way to learn the practice of Praying Scripture. Israel does not only receive information from God. God's words become the language by which the people remember salvation, praise their Deliverer, confess sin, ask for his presence, receive blessing, and renew their love and allegiance.

Praying Scripture means allowing the words and movement of a biblical passage to guide our response to God. Instead of beginning with whatever words happen to come to mind, we begin with what God has revealed. We may pray a sentence exactly as it is written, repeat a phrase slowly, paraphrase it as a personal response, or use its structure to shape a longer prayer.

The aim is not to make prayer less honest or personal. Scripture expands our honesty. It gives us language for praise, fear, gratitude, confession, grief, obedience, and hope. It teaches us to pray about realities we might otherwise overlook and helps our prayers become more deeply rooted in God's character and purposes.

Day 1

Read: Exodus 3:1-15

Reflect:

Israel's multiplication in Egypt shows that God has kept His promise to Abraham. Pharaoh sees this blessing as a threat and answers with slavery and death. But God is not distant from suffering. He hears Israel's groaning, remembers His covenant, sees His people, and knows. At the burning bush, He declares that He has seen, heard, and come down to deliver them. Moses removes his sandals before God's holiness, yet this holy God has drawn near in compassion.

God names Himself "I AM" and identifies Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He is not a new or local deity, but the covenant God who has remained present and faithful across generations. Moses' inadequacy is real, and God does not answer by convincing him that he is secretly strong enough. His central promise is simpler: "I will be with you". Israel's rescue will not depend on Moses becoming impressive. It will depend on the presence and power of God.

Practice: Reread and choose one phrase about God—"I have seen," "I have heard," "I know," "I have come down," "I will be with you," or "I AM." Pray slowly, letting it shape gratitude and honesty. Let the prayer rest in God's revealed character rather than trying to create a particular feeling.

Day 2

Read: Exodus 14:10-15:18

Reflect:

The conflict with Pharaoh reveals the LORD as Israel's unrivaled King. Egypt's ruler, power, magicians, and gods cannot prevent Him from keeping His covenant and freeing His people. At Passover, Israel is spared from judgment through the blood of an unblemished lamb. Their hurried meal becomes a lasting act of remembrance: salvation is God's gift, not Israel's achievement. At the sea, they stand trapped and afraid. Moses tells them to see the LORD's salvation, and God opens a path no human strength could create.

Exodus 15 turns rescue into worship. The song names who God is and what He has done before saying anything about Israel's response. Praise keeps salvation from becoming only a past event or an abstract idea; it brings God's saving work into the present through remembrance. The song also looks toward God's dwelling place and everlasting reign. Israel is not simply delivered from Pharaoh. They are being brought into God's presence and kingdom. The King who brought them out is leading them home.

Practice: Reread Exodus 15:1–8 and choose one or two verses that catch your attention. Speak them aloud, keeping the personal language. Name where you presently need help, and let what the passage reveals about God's power, holiness, love, and reign shape your request.

Day 3

Read: Exodus 19:1-8; 20:1-17

Reflect:

At Sinai, God describes salvation relationally: “I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself”. Israel has not merely escaped Pharaoh; they have been brought to God. He calls them His treasured possession, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation, set apart to display the goodness of His reign before the surrounding peoples. Belonging comes before responsibility. Their calling grows from grace already received, not from an anxious effort to earn God’s attention or secure His favor.

The Ten Words begin with rescue: “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt”. Grace precedes command. Israel obeys because God has delivered them, not to earn deliverance. The first commands order worship; the rest shape life with neighbors. Worship cannot be separated from truthful, just, and faithful relationships. Blood and a meal in God’s presence confirm the covenant. Yet Israel’s failure exposes instruction’s limits. Commands can name the good, but they cannot make the human heart faithful. The story waits for transformation.

Practice: Pray Exodus 19:4: “You have carried Your people and brought them to Yourself.” Thank God before self-examination. Read each command slowly, asking what good it protects and what it brings into the light. Respond with brief prayers of adoration, confession, and petition: “You alone are God... Forgive me... Teach me...”

Day 4

Read: Exodus 33:12-17; 34:5-9; 40:34-38

Reflect:

The tabernacle, priesthood, sacrifices, and holiness laws address a gift and a problem: the holy God intends to dwell among sinners. Israel reveals the problem immediately by worshiping the golden calf. Egypt is behind them; sin remains within. Rescue changes their location, not their hearts. Moses understands that the promised land is not enough. "If your presence will not go with us," he prays, "do not bring us up from here". God's gifts cannot replace God Himself. His presence is the center of covenant life.

God proclaims His character: compassionate and gracious, patient, abounding in covenant love and faithfulness, forgiving and just. Prayer begins with the God who reveals Himself, not one we imagine. Moses bows in worship, confesses Israel's sin, and asks God to remain with them. God's self-revelation shapes his prayer. Exodus ends with the LORD's glory filling the tabernacle and guiding Israel's journey. The holy God has come near. His presence is the goal of rescue and the sustaining center of His people.

Practice: Pray Exodus 34:6–7 slowly, phrase by phrase. Praise God for the character He reveals. Remember where you have received His compassion, patience, love, faithfulness, or forgiveness. Confess where your life resists or misrepresents His character. Ask God to remain near and form His character in you and among His people.

Day 5

Read: Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 8:2-18; 26:5-11

Reflect:

At Kadesh-barnea, Israel sees the good land but fears its inhabitants more than its Rescuer. Their refusal means forty years of wandering. Deuteronomy addresses the next generation at this threshold. Moses calls them to hear, remember, love, and obey, lest abundance make them forget God. The Shema declares that the LORD alone is God; Israel responds with wholehearted love. God's words inhabit ordinary life—home, travel, bedtime, morning, hands, eyes, gates, and conversation. Scripture becomes a daily pattern of attention and allegiance.

Deuteronomy 8 interprets the wilderness through dependence. Manna teaches dependence upon God's provision and word; abundance tempts Israel to say, "My power... produced this wealth." Deuteronomy 26 gives Israel a firstfruits prayer: wandering, oppression, crying out, rescue, gift, and shared rejoicing. Retelling ties gift to Giver and identity to God's saving action. Remembering is more than recalling the past. It is worship, renewed allegiance, and a guard against forgetting.

Practice: Read Deuteronomy 8:2-18 slowly. Let its warnings and reminders become your prayer. Ask God to help you remember His faithfulness, confess where you have trusted your own strength, thank Him for one specific provision, and ask Him to teach you to depend upon His Word and provision today.

Week 4

Joshua-1 Samuel 8
Listening Prayer

Week 4

Listening Prayer

Israel stands at the edge of promise. Moses is gone, and Joshua is called to lead with courage rooted in God's presence and His Word. God brings Israel into the land and gives them rest; not one of His promises fails (Joshua 1:1–9; 21:43–45). Yet the gift does not produce faithful hearts. Judges tells of people who stop listening and do what is right in their own eyes (Judges 21:25). Ruth embodies covenant faithfulness through ordinary choices, while Samuel learns to answer, “Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening” (1 Samuel 3:9–10). Israel still demands a king like the nations, trading dependence upon God for visible security (1 Samuel 8:5, 19–20). The story now longs for a faithful King who listens to the Father and brings lasting rest.

This week, our prayer practice is Listening Prayer: becoming quiet and attentive before God with Scripture open and preferred outcomes surrendered. We are not emptying our minds, manufacturing a message, or assuming every impression is God's voice. We begin with what God has revealed, notice what surfaces, and hold it beneath Scripture, Jesus' character, the Spirit's fruit, and wise Christian community. Sometimes clarity comes; sometimes obedience is already clear; sometimes faithfulness means waiting. The goal is not secret knowledge or perfect certainty, but a heart ready to hear, test, and obey.

Day 1

Read: Joshua 1:1-9; 5:13-15; 21:43-45

Reflect:

Joshua begins in the vulnerability of transition. Moses is dead, and Joshua carries a responsibility larger than himself. Yet God's repeated command to "be strong and courageous" is not mere optimism. Courage rests on the promise, "I will be with you". Joshua is not invited to trust his instincts. He must meditate on the Book of the Law day and night, shaping his life around what God has spoken. Listening begins with Scripture, not our impressions.

Near Jericho, Joshua asks the commander of the LORD's army, "Are you for us or for our enemies?" The answer—"No"—disrupts his categories. The better question is not whether God supports Joshua's plans, but "What does my lord say to his servant?" Joshua bows, listens, and removes his sandals on holy ground. The story celebrates God's faithfulness, not Joshua's competence: the LORD gives the land, provides rest, and fulfills every good promise. Listening prayer begins when we stop asking God to join our side and place ourselves under His authority.

Practice: Reread Joshua 5:13-15 slowly. With the day ahead in mind, pray, "Father, what do you have to say to me today?" Sit quietly for a few minutes and write down what comes to mind using the words, "I noticed...". End with a prayer of gratitude for what came to mind or ask for patience rather than forcing an answer.

Day 2

Read: Judges 2:6-19; 17:6; 21:25

Reflect:

Judges begins with a generation that neither knows the LORD nor remembers what He has done. This forgetting is more than failed recall; it is losing the story that gives life its shape. Without remembering God's character and works, Israel becomes vulnerable to surrounding voices. Unfinished obedience becomes accommodation, then worship. The covenant meant to form them is exchanged for the gods and values around them.

Judges 2 names the cycle: rebellion, oppression, crying out, rescue, and rebellion again. But the cycle is not a circle; it is a spiral downward. God continues to raise deliverers, yet the people "did not listen", and even the judges become increasingly compromised. The repeated refrain says everyone did what was right in their own eyes. What feels reasonable, sincere, or culturally normal can still resist God's revealed will. Temporary judges can interrupt Israel's suffering, but they cannot transform Israel's heart. The story leaves us longing for a faithful King who will rule beneath God's Word and lead His people into lasting faithfulness.

Practice: Read Judges 17:6, Pray, "Where might I be confusing what feels right to me with what is faithful to God?" Sit quietly for a few minutes and write down what comes to mind. End with a prayer of confession, surrender and grace to live obediently to His Word.

Day 3

Read: Ruth 1:6-18; 2:10-13

Reflect:

Ruth opens “in the days when the judges ruled,” within personal darkness: famine, displacement, widowhood, and grief. Ruth receives no private message explaining what comes next. She chooses covenant loyalty—to Naomi, Naomi’s people, and the LORD: “Your people shall be my people, and your God my God”. Her guidance comes through existing commitments, ordinary work, God’s provision for the vulnerable, Naomi’s counsel, Boaz’s integrity, and circumstances she cannot arrange.

Boaz recognizes Ruth’s character and blesses her for seeking refuge beneath the LORD’s wings. Through faithful action, he becomes part of God’s shelter. Ruth, Naomi, and Boaz make plans and decisions without seeing the whole story. Their ordinary faithfulness joins God’s larger work, bringing Ruth into the family line of David. Listening prayer does not always produce a new idea or unmistakable sign. Sometimes God has already made the loving and faithful path sufficiently clear. The invitation is not to wait for something dramatic, but to recognize the good before us and walk in it with Him.

Practice: Bring one unresolved question before God and ask whether you are seeking extraordinary guidance to avoid an ordinary act of love. Sit quietly for two minutes, noticing the person, promise, responsibility, or opportunity already before you. Then write, “The next faithful thing may be...”

Day 4

Read: 1 Samuel 1:9-18; 3:1-10

Reflect:

Hannah does not enter God's presence by silencing her grief. She weeps, prays, and "pours out" her soul before the LORD. Listening Prayer begins with truthful presence, not emotional blankness. Eli mistakes her anguish for drunkenness, reminding us that spiritual leaders can misunderstand. Yet Hannah leaves in peace before her circumstances change. Her prayer is not a technique for securing the outcome she wants; it is an act of entrusting her pain to God.

When Samuel hears his name, the word of the LORD is rare, and he does not recognize the voice. Three times he assumes Eli is calling. Discernment develops slowly and with help. Eli eventually recognizes what is happening and gives Samuel words for response: "Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening". Listening is personal, but it need not be private. Trusted community can help us recognize and test what we notice. The goal is not merely to receive information from God, but to become servants ready to hear and obey.

Practice: Spend two minutes pouring out your own soul before God. Name what you desire, fear, resent, grieve, or cannot resolve. Then ask only for enough interior quiet to become attentive and pray slowly: "Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening." Ask one initial question: Does this draw me toward God, or away from Him? Thank God for the time of attention whether clarity came or not.

Day 5

Read: Samuel 8:1-22

Reflect:

Israel's concern is legitimate. Samuel is old, his sons are corrupt, and the nation needs faithful leadership. Kingship itself is not the problem. Deuteronomy anticipates a king chosen by God and living beneath His Word. But Israel wants a king "like all the nations" to lead them and fight their battles. Beneath a reasonable request lies a disordered trust. They want leadership and security without depending upon God as King.

God names the deeper issue: "They have rejected me as their king". Samuel warns them, but they refuse to listen. Consensus and persistence do not make the desire wise. God permits Samuel to give them what they demand. Permission is not endorsement, and an open door is not necessarily God's blessing. Listening Prayer asks us to look beneath what we want. Is this desire rooted in trust and shaped by Scripture, or are we asking God to bless the security, control, and conformity we have already chosen?

Practice: Find a quiet space and bring one desire, decision, or impression from this week before God. Then pray, "Lord, I want your will more than I want a particular answer." Name both the desire and the motive beneath it. Ask: Am I seeking love and faithfulness, or security and control? Pause, listen, and write anything that comes to mind and offer it back to the Lord in prayer.

Week 5

The United Monarchy
Liturgical Prayer

Week 5

Liturgical Prayer

As the time of the judges ends, Israel's longing for stable leadership takes form in Saul, David, and Solomon. Each begins with promise yet reveals the limits of human kingship. Saul's worship separates from obedience. David unites the kingdom and gives Israel prayers of worship, yet abuses his power against Bathsheba and Uriah. Solomon builds the temple and enjoys peace, yet his heart turns toward other gods. At the center, the LORD promises to establish David's house and kingdom forever (2 Samuel 7:11–16). Solomon offers a glimpse of that promise, but his failures leave Israel waiting for the faithful Son of David—Jesus, the King who brings God's people into lasting rest in God's presence.

This era also gives us a treasury of received prayer: David's thanksgiving, confession, and praise; Solomon's temple prayer; the Psalms and blessings that have carried God's people across generations (1 Chronicles 16:4–36; Psalm 51; 1 Kings 8:22–61). This week, our practice is Liturgical Prayer—allowing Scripture and the church's shared prayers to provide an ordered path into God's presence. These prayers give us words when our hearts are full, empty, distracted, or numb. We will bring ourselves into these trustworthy patterns, letting them teach us what to remember, confess, desire, and hope. The goal is not empty repetition, but attentive participation in the prayers of God's people.

Day 1

Read: 1 Samuel 12:20-25; 15:10-23

Reflect:

Saul looks like the king Israel imagined: tall, impressive, and from a wealthy family. Yet his early reluctance foreshadows the insecurity that distorts his reign. God gives Saul authority, His Spirit, and military success. His failure cannot be blamed on lacking grace or opportunity. When pressure rises, Saul reaches for control. He sacrifices unlawfully rather than wait for Samuel, then preserves what God commanded him to destroy.

Saul dresses disobedience in religious language: the animals, he claims, were kept for sacrifice. Samuel answers, “To obey is better than sacrifice”. The problem is not sacrifice itself, which God gave Israel as worship, but using worship to avoid surrender. Saul minimizes, explains, and shifts blame; even his confession remains entangled with concern for public honor. Liturgical Prayer can become a hiding place—beautiful words spoken by an unyielded heart. Its purpose is not to make us sound faithful, but to form us into people who tell the truth, receive correction, and obey God.

Practice: Turn to page 34... for the liturgy reading.

Day 2

Read: 1 Samuel 17:41-50; 1 Chronicles 16:8-13, 23-36

Reflect:

The story of David and Goliath does not promise that God will remove every obstacle. The conflict is larger than David: Goliath has defied the LORD, and David steps forward so “all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel”. The battle belongs to the LORD. David’s victory reveals God’s chosen king acting for the honor of His name, unlike Saul, from whom the Spirit has departed.

David unites Israel and brings the ark to Jerusalem with sacrifice, music, dancing, thanksgiving, and celebration. He gives the people a song holding God’s deeds, covenant, kingship, glory among the nations, creation’s praise, petition, and doxology. “Tell of all his wondrous works” and “Declare his glory among the nations” turn prayer outward. Liturgical prayer rescues us from spirituality confined to our concerns. It gives a community words to remember God’s story and praise with one voice. When the song ends, the people answer together, “Amen,” and praise the LORD.

Practice: Turn to page 35... for the liturgy reading.

Day 3

Read: 2 Samuel 7:1-29

Reflect:

David lives in a cedar house while God's ark remains in a tent. His desire to build a temple seems honorable; Nathan agrees. Yet God redirects the plan. This "no" is not rejection. Before addressing David's plan, the LORD rehearses His grace: taking him from the pasture, giving him victory, making his name great, and providing rest. Grace precedes David's desire and God's promise.

"House" becomes the story's hinge. David wants to build God a house, but God promises to build David a house—an enduring royal dynasty. Solomon will build the temple, but the promise reaches toward the Son of David whose kingdom endures forever. David sits before the LORD in wonder. His prayer remembers grace, praises God's uniqueness, rehearses redemption, and asks God to fulfill what He has promised for the glory of His name. This is the shape of a collect: address, truth, request, and hoped-for result. Received prayer teaches us to begin with His character, grace, and promise—not our plans.

Practice: Turn to page 36... for the liturgy reading.

Day 4

Read: 2 Samuel 11:1-27; 12:1-13

Reflect:

David's sin is not a private mistake or mutual romance. Israel's king uses his power to take Bathsheba, conceal her pregnancy, and arrange Uriah's death. His choices harm Bathsheba, Uriah, his household, and the nation he represents. Scripture gives a direct verdict: "The thing David had done displeased the LORD". Sin protected from exposure only grows.

Nathan's parable slips past David's defenses. David judges the imagined offender before Nathan says, "You are the man". David answers without excuse or blame: "I have sinned against the LORD". Psalm 51's superscription connects the prayer to this confrontation, giving the church language for confession—appealing to mercy, naming guilt, asking for cleansing, and longing for a renewed heart. Forgiveness is real, but it does not erase harm or every consequence. Liturgical confession is no shortcut around accountability. It trains us to step into the light, tell the truth, receive mercy, make repair where possible, and remain dependent upon the God who alone can create a clean heart.

Practice: Turn to page 37... for the liturgy reading.

Day 5

Read: 1 Kings 8:22-30, 54-61

Reflect:

Solomon's temple settles Israel's worship. Its garden imagery, eastward orientation, precious materials, priests, cherubim, and ark echo Eden, where God dwells with humanity. At its dedication, singers praise with one voice: "For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever." The glory of the LORD fills the house. Solomon recognizes the mystery: God meets His people there, though heaven cannot contain Him.

Solomon's prayer reaches across Israel's life—sin, defeat, drought, famine, justice, exile, forgiveness, and even the prayers of foreigners—so that all peoples may know God's name. He blesses the people and calls them to hearts "wholly true" to the LORD. Then comes the tragedy: the king who prayed for wholehearted allegiance allows his own heart to turn toward other gods. Beautiful liturgy cannot form us when we continually refuse to embody its allegiance. The story of temple, rest, and kingship reaches beyond Solomon to Jesus, the faithful Son of David who embodies God's presence and brings His people lasting rest.

Practice: Turn to page 38... for the liturgy reading.

Week 6

The Divided Kingdom
Examen

Week 6

Examen

At Israel's height, everything appears secure: land, temple, prosperity, and peace. Yet after Solomon's death, Rehoboam rejects wise counsel, answers the people harshly, and the kingdom divides (1 Kings 12:1–20). Jeroboam, fearing the loss of his people's allegiance, builds counterfeit worship around new shrines, priests, festivals, and golden calves (1 Kings 12:26–33). The political fracture exposes a deeper one: divided hearts. The kings of Israel and Judah repeatedly turn toward idols, injustice, foreign alliances, and the nations' practices. God sends prophets to interpret their lives beneath the covenant—to remember His gifts, expose destructive patterns, call them home, and announce judgment and hope. Israel falls to Assyria in 722 BC, and Judah to Babylon in 586 BC. Still, God preserves David's line and promises restoration under a greater King.

This week, our practice is the Prayer of Examen: reviewing life with God beneath His gracious and truthful light. We do not inspect the day as anxious judges or assemble a moral scorecard. We begin as people already held in Christ's love. Then we notice gifts, emotions, choices, relationships, and recurring patterns. Where did we receive or reflect God's grace? Where did our loyalties divide, our reactions harm, or our hearts resist? Examen joins gratitude and confession, helping conviction become an invitation to return, repair, receive mercy, and walk more faithfully tomorrow.

Appendix

Liturgies for Week 5

Week 5 - Day 1

A Liturgy for a Willing Heart

Father,

I still myself before you today.
Teach me to fear you rightly,
to worship you faithfully,
and to remember the great things you have done for me.

Be gracious to me according to your faithful love.
Search my heart and reveal where I have resisted your
voice, defended my pride, or withheld obedience.

Lord, I confess where I have ...

Forgive my sins.
Teach me to forgive those who have sinned against me.

Create in me a clean heart,
renew a steadfast spirit,
and restore the joy of your salvation.

You will not forsake me,
for your name is great,
and you delight to make me your own.

Sustain me with a willing spirit
for faithful, humble obedience today.

Amen.

Week 5 - Day 2

A Liturgy for Declaring God's Glory

Creator God,

All creation declares your glory. You keep your covenant through every generation.

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
his steadfast love endures forever.

God of rescue,

You deliver your people and make your name known among the nations. No strength or victory can claim your glory.

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
his steadfast love endures forever.

God of daily mercy,

You provide our bread, sustain your church, and gather us under the reign of Jesus.

I thank you for ...

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
his steadfast love endures forever.

Amen.

Week 5 - Day 3

A Liturgy for Receiving God's Promise

Covenant-keeping God,

Who am I, O Lord GOD? Before I could serve you,
you first showed grace to me.

Your words are true, and you have promised this good
thing.

You are King; none compares with you.

You gave David rest,
appointed Solomon to build,
and fulfilled in Jesus
the house and throne that endure forever.

Your words are true, and you have promised this good
thing.

I surrender my good plans; redirect them by your Word.

Let your kingdom come and your will be done.

Make the presence and rest of Jesus
visible among your people,
that we may live faithfully
and your name be magnified forever.

Your words are true, and you have promised this good
thing.

Amen.

Week 5 - Day 4

A Liturgy for Truthful Confession

Merciful God,

We have sinned against you and harmed those made in your image.

Forgive our misuse of power, concealment of truth, and self-protection at another's expense.

*Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.*

I confess now before you where I have...

Silence.

Give me courage to tell the truth, accept correction without excuse, seek accountability, and repair what I can.

*Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.*

Protect those harmed.

Let mercy lead us, not away from consequences, but toward repentance, repair, and lives renewed by grace.

*Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.*

Amen.

Week 5 - Day 5

A Liturgy for an Undivided Heart

Great God,

Heaven cannot contain you, yet you dwell among your people. Greatness, power, glory, victory, and majesty are yours.

You are good; your steadfast love endures forever. Let our hearts therefore be wholly true to the LORD our God.

Merciful God,

Forgive your church when our hearts are divided. Make us faithful in worship, steadfast in obedience, and generous in mercy.

Let our hearts therefore be wholly true to the LORD our God. Bringing justice, healing, and restoration to our communities. Welcoming outsiders and make your name known among nations.

King Jesus,

Establish your kingdom among us. Let your presence gather all peoples and bring rest. Let our hearts therefore be wholly true to the LORD our God.

Amen.

Lectio Divina

“Lectio Divina”, Latin for “sacred reading,” is an ancient practice of quiet prayer and reflection, reading scripture and listening to the voice of God, dating back to about 300AD. Lectio can be done alone or in a group. There are 4 sections to Lectio which we will follow. The whole process should take about 30-40 minutes.

REMEMBER:

Posture is important. Sit straight up, feet on the floor, hands in your lap or to your sides. This is important to attentive listening. While this process can be restful, it is a time to be attentive to God’s Voice.

This time is your gift to God. It’s not about whether you get something out of it or not. Don’t be discouraged if you don’t “get it.”

Your mind will wander. Recognize that this happens, even to those who practice Lectio often. When you catch yourself, refocus and continue. They don’t call them “spiritual practices” for nothing!

LECTIO – *read (5-7 minutes)*

Scripture passage for today: (For example... Mark 10:46-52. But choose your own!)

1. READ through the passage of scripture two or three times.

2. LISTEN for a specific word or phrase that catches your attention
 3. WRITE down what word or phrase caught your attention
-

MEDITATIO – *think (5-7 minutes)*

“Meditate” literally means “to gnaw”, as a dog gnaws on a bone.

1. Actively think about your word or phrase
 2. Ask: Why is it important? How does it make me feel?
 3. “Shine a spotlight on it” – look at the word or phrase from different angles
 4. Put yourself into the scene. What do you feel and see?
 5. You can write notes below.
-

ORATIO – *pray (8-10 minutes)*

1. Ask, “God, why did you give me this word? Why do I feel this way about this phrase?”
2. Listen for a response. Follow your active thoughts (not your distraction thoughts)
3. Be patient.
4. Move into the heart of the matter. Feel deep feelings. Consider the following questions as you respond to God:
 - a. What do I want to communicate to God?
 - b. What am I longing for in my relationship with God?
 - c. What do I desire in my prayer life?

- d. What secrets of my heart are ready to be expressed? Is there joy? grief? fear? gratitude?
-

CONTEMPLATIO – *Live (5-7 minutes)*

1. Rest in the love and presence of God, feel his closeness
 2. Thank God for this word.
-

ACTIO – *Action (3-5 minutes)*

1. Ask yourself the following questions in utter honesty:
 - a. How is God challenging me?
 - b. Is there a good thing God is calling me to do?
 - c. Is there a harmful thing God wants me to stop doing?
 - d. What is the next step I need to take?
2. Decide on a course of action (large or small). Make the commitment and follow through with your plan.

Examen

RECALL YOU ARE IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD

As you sit in silence, renew your awareness of God's love for you as your one true and perfect Father. Try to make yourself attentive to his presence and ask the Holy Spirit to guide your heart and mind as you pray.

REVIEW YOUR DAY WITH GRATITUDE

This is the central (and longest) part of the prayer. Review your day from beginning to end— identifying and being thankful for God's presence throughout. Process your day's high and low points. Search for encounters and experiences where you showed grace and your heart was at peace, and those where you did not.

Recall things that were life-giving and things that drained you. When were you most joyful? When did you fail to live in the joy of Christ? Were there times where you sensed connection with God? Were there times you did not, or rejected his presence in a situation or relationship?

You may ask questions like:

- For what/who am I most grateful for?
- For what/who was I least grateful for?
- Where did I show God's love and heart to others?
- Where did I fail to show God's love and heart to others?
- What do I need to be thankful for?
- What do I need to repent of?

- What action, mindset, or rhythm should I try to repeat with intention?
- Is there anything, or a relationship with anyone, where I need to take a step toward restoration tomorrow?
- Are there patterns (or habits) that made me more like Christ today?
- Are there patterns (or habits) that made me less like Christ today?
- Is there anything God is asking me to (1) start doing, (2) stop doing, (3) start believing or thinking, (4) stop believing or thinking, (5) to commit to, (6) or to stop committing to? Take time to review your heart and motives. Respond to God in joy for his presence and love for you. Respond in repentance where you have not lived in step with his Spirit.

RENEW THE GOSPEL IN YOUR HEART AND LIFE

As you recall actions you'll find yourself naturally thankful where you have lived a holy life and naturally convicted where you have not. The good news (gospel) is that, although you are guilty and unworthy, through Christ you are fully accepted and loved.

This prayer is not about establishing a “tab” with God where you daily reconcile good and bad to find out if you're ahead or behind. If you have placed your faith in Christ, you're reviewing your life from a place of love and acceptance. In other words, you're not trying to earn his approval or acceptance (and you never could)—but because Christ has gained acceptance for you, you have the pleasure of responding in gratitude to his grace.

LOOK FORWARD WITH THE LORD'S PRAYER

This is how Jesus taught his followers to pray—and in this prayer we join with hundreds and hundreds of years of Christians, from all around the world, together before Christ. Our Father in heaven, holy is your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Prayer Cards

A Simple Practice for Scripture-Shaped Intercession

Prayer cards are a simple way to pray intentionally for people and situations over time. Each card holds one person or concern before God, combining honest requests with Scripture that shapes our hopes. Instead of moving through a long list of unrelated needs, we slow down, attend to one life, and watch the prayer story unfold.

Prayer cards are a tool, not a rule. Scripture is not a formula for securing the outcome we want, and not every verse is a personal promise. Scripture gives us promises, prayers, commands, wisdom, and truths about God's character that can guide our requests. Pray with humility, keep sensitive information private, and remember that the person on the card is someone to love—not a project to improve.

1. Begin in God's Presence

Find a quiet place and allow yourself to settle. Remember that you come before a Father who already knows you, loves you, and welcomes your requests. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you see the people you are praying for with wisdom and compassion.

2. Create a Card

Write one person's name or one concern at the top. Consider what they are facing, what you are thankful for in their life, and what you would love to see the Spirit

form in them. Include immediate needs, but also consider their faith, character, relationships, work, and calling. Use a few short phrases and date time-sensitive requests.

3. Add Scripture

Choose a passage that expresses how you want to pray. You might use Romans 15:13 for hope, Philippians 1:9–11 for love and discernment, Colossians 1:9–12 for wisdom, Psalm 23 for comfort, or Galatians 5:22–23 for spiritual growth. Read the passage in context and allow it to shape your prayer without forcing it to guarantee a particular result.

4. Pray, Watch, and Respond

Hold one card at a time. Read the person's name, the Scripture, and one or two requests, then speak honestly to God. A minute may be enough. Return to the card regularly, noticing changes, new needs, and reasons for thanksgiving. Some prayers will be answered quickly; others will become stories of waiting and perseverance.

Before finishing, ask whether there is a practical way to love the person: an encouraging message, a listening ear, an apology, or an act of service.

Begin with three or four cards. It is better to pray consistently with a few than to create a mighty stack that mostly collects dust.

Adapted from Paul E. Miller, A Praying Life: Connecting with God in a Distracting World, revised edition (NavPress, 2017), chapter 29 and the appendix.

For more Bible Study Resources visit:
<https://www.peninsulagrace.org/study-and-prayer-tools>



For more information about the Apprentice Track at
Peninsula Grace Church or more resources for the
Biblical Story Workshop, visit:
<https://www.peninsulagrace.org/apprentice-track>

