

## THE PRACTICE OF PRAYER

The Practice of Prayer simply means to spend time with God. Sometimes we talk; sometimes we listen; sometimes we seek; sometimes we rest—all are actions of practicing prayer. Throughout the scriptures, we have examples of varying forms of prayer, from Abraham stargazing with God; to David worshipping, lamenting, and grieving, and then praising God again; to Elijah in a cave listening for God; to Jesus himself giving us the words to pray. The Bible shows us time and again that God desires time and conversation with us.

This week, you will be invited into various forms of prayer, with the simple task of sitting with God. Set aside a period of time each day and designate a place that will be devoted to your prayer practice. Make this an intentional, set-apart time just for you and God to spend some time together.

**Day 1:** *Settle into a quiet space, and turn off your phone. Sit for a moment in silence, and center your thoughts and your heart on drawing near to God. Once you are settled, set an intention of simply sitting in the presence of God. When tasks or worries or even fears come into your mind, acknowledge them before God, and ask God to hold them in God's hands. Pay attention to what messages God might have for you—words to bring you comfort or encouragement or maybe even just a feeling of peace or mercy. This practice of prayer requires no words or striving; this is simply a time for you to sit with God and to let your thoughts and feelings come and go. When you are ready, end your prayer time by praying The Lord's Prayer.*

**Day 2:** *For your prayer practice today, you are invited to write a letter to God. Consider that God invites us into friendship. Friends have regular conversations, sharing hopes and fears, dreams and trials. Sit down with a piece of paper and a pen today, and write a letter to God, your friend. Share all that is going on in your life right now, what is on your mind, what is going on with your family, what are you struggling with, what you are grateful for—everything that you would share with your very best friend.*

**Day 3:** *Today, you are invited to make silence your friend. Set aside some time to block out any noise and create an opportunity to listen for the still, small voice of a loving God. Let your thoughts float away like clouds, and let the silence clear your heart and mind. Don't strive or try to achieve in these moments. Simply sit in God's presence and be still.*

**Day 4:** *Sometimes life comes at us, and before we know it, our hearts are overcome with worry, fear, and anxious thoughts. Trials and suffering can make us feel like there is nothing good about our lives or that we'll never experience joy again. The Psalms teach us how to praise God, even in our suffering. David lays out all his feeling before God—anger, uncertainty, fear, defeat, sadness, depression—but he circles back to his love for God and finds a way to “yet praise,” even when he faces trials. Name before God your fears and worries, your trials and anxious thoughts. Then, close your prayer with words of praise, and set your heart to praise.*

**Day 5:** *Practice prayer today by looking for God everywhere. Keep your eyes and ears open to notice the beauty of creation, encouraging words from a friend, the wind blowing across your face. Notice the goodness of God all around you, and get caught in it. Set your heart on seeking God, on looking for God's movement and listening for God's voice all day long.*

**Day 6:** *Today, align your prayer with your breath by practicing a breath prayer. Throughout the day, as often as you can, let your heart whisper as you inhale, “Lord, Jesus Christ”; and as you exhale, “have mercy on me, a sinner.”*

**Day 7:** *How is it with your soul right now? Ask God to reveal the places in your life that are thriving, and then ask God to show you the places that need new life. Pray for a clean heart and a renewed spirit.*