

THE BRIDGE

MORNING PRAYERS

Here are some ways to pray. Morning prayers is an opportunity for us to meet with God and each other in the power of the Spirit.

It is good to pray in different ways, each of us will have our preferred styles, however, it is good to try different things as a community of people and be open to how God wants us to pray and meet with him.

Each day we will continue to read the TOM readings but alongside this, rather than defaulting to a Bible study each morning, these different ways to pray are ideas for you to draw from and adapt as you prepare morning prayer. You may want to try more than one idea on a morning ie a time of **Bible Focussed** morning prayer may lead into a time of **Confession**, or a time of **Testimony** may lead into some sung **Worship**. These ideas aren't to constrict us but to give us freedom and enjoy coming to God afresh each day. They will hopefully also limit your preparation time as you can pick which ever prayer approach works best with the reading.

My prayer is that God will meet and speak to us this term as we follow Him.

CONTENTS

Mission 3

 Prayer walk 3

 People of Peace 5

Worship..... 6

Thanksgiving..... 9

Contemplation 11

 Spiritual Journey..... 11

 Centering Prayer 12

 Praying with the natural world 14

 Gospel Contemplation 16

Confession 18

Bible Focussed 20

 Discovery Bible..... 20

 Dwelling in the Word..... 21

 Lectio Divina..... 22

Intercession 23

 Petitioning Prayers 23

 Teaspoon Prayers 23

 Liturgical Prayer..... 24

MISSION

Prayer Walk

Why?

"There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry, 'Mine!'" Abraham Kuyper

Bible Reference:

"I am giving you every square inch of the land you set your foot on." Joshua 1:3

Invite God's presence into your local area by walking around it, and praying at the same time.

Go in pairs

Jesus sent his disciples out in pairs. It's not intimidating or as conspicuous as a large group, and it is safer than people going on their own. A larger group breaking into pairs can also help to cover more ground.

Pray positively

Even (and especially) in areas that are considered 'dark' or 'desperate', pray blessings on the area. Focus on God's plan, purpose and destiny for the place and the people that live there. "Your Kingdom come, your will be done..." is an excellent start.

One of the most effective forms of spiritual warfare is prayer-walking.

Inspired by God's promise to Joshua, we can walk the victory of Jesus into every part of our neighbourhoods, cities and nations.

In faith we walk, believing that as the soles of our feet hit the ground, we are appropriating the work of Jesus over the principalities and powers influencing the atmosphere and shaping the narratives of our city.

Each step we take in Jesus' name, we weaken something of the enemy's grip in the Heavenly realms and subvert the systems of evil and injustice.

While we walk in victory, and therefore pray in victory, let us remember the way that victory was won – sacrificial, self-emptying, love.

This uses **W.A.L.K.** as an acronym, and contains 4 simple steps:

W – Worship

As you set off walking begin with your eyes on Jesus. Say the name of Jesus; recite a Psalm; hum a worship song; speak quietly in tongues – basically anything that helps declare the Lordship of Jesus over the streets you walk on.

A – Ask

Flowing from your worship begin petitioning God for His Spirit to fall on the streets you walk on, the homes, businesses, schools and other churches you walk past. Begin to get specific and pray for people and situations, the 'people of peace' you know God has brought you into contact with, who are opening up doors of opportunity for the gospel within your community.

L – Listen

As you worship and pray, leave space to listen to what God might want to say to you - then pray that back. Often God may give you promises from scripture or prophetic words and pictures; listen for promises and literally walk these promises all over your community.

If you are prayer-walking in twos, listen to one another's prayers and you will find yourself sparking off one another's words and thoughts.

K - Know your Land

Get (and keep) yourself informed around the area you are prayer-walking; research some of its history; some of its ongoing problems; so you can pray for breakthrough.

Get to know some of the current situations that require persevering prayer and also celebrate the particular graces that rest on the area, asking God to make your area a blessing beyond its borders.

Share with each other

If you've gone in different directions, meet up at the end to share what you've felt, seen, prayed and heard from God. And, if you can, keep a record of what you share so you can build on it next time.

People of Peace

What is a person of peace?

In the New Testament, the "person of peace" is the person who opens the way for the gospel to enter one's social group or even their village. Jesus taught his disciples to search for a "worthy" person or "person of peace" when they entered a village (Matthew 10:11; Luke 10:6). They were to "stay" with the worthy person until they left. Throughout the book of Acts, we see this played out as Jesus' apostles find persons of peace who help them share the gospel.

How do we notice them?

Someone who is OPEN to hearing Your Story, God's Story and the Good News of Jesus.

Someone who is HOSPITABLE and WELCOMES you into their home or their workplace or to join events with family and friends.

Someone who KNOWS OTHERS (or is KNOWN BY OTHERS) and who is excited to draw together a small group or even a crowd.

Someone who is FAITHFUL and SHARES what they learn with others - even after you're gone.

Ways to Pray

Acronym: **P.O.P.**

Divide into groups (no larger than 3) and pray for the following:

Person(s)

- Pray for God to lead you to unknown people of peace.
- Pray that God would show you people that you already know who could be your people of peace?
- Pray that God connects our Contact and Connect groups with people of peace

Opportunities

- Pray that God would provide you with opportunities to get to know your people of peace and share faith with them.
- Pray that God would provide Contact and Connect groups, with opportunities to get to know their people of peace and share faith with them.

People groups

- Pray that through our people of peace God would open doors to share faith more widely in communities, social groups and local areas.

WORSHIP

God is worthy of our worship. Worship is our gift to the Lord.

Worshipping together teaches us to submit and surrender all our cares to God – our priorities, plans, hopes, dreams, and even our fears. Worship and prayer are not a guarantee that our problems and situations will change immediately, but it will definitely help change and direct our hearts and perspective in life towards God. Being able to worship is also a blessing because it gives comfort for our present, and hope for our future.

Ways to worship

We can follow the journey in the temple to give us a structure on how to choose worship songs, or as a way to structure

worship without songs (or a mix). You may like to focus on 3 or 4 main themes and choose songs/alternative worship responses accordingly:

(You may even want to consider our bodies posture for each theme)

Worship journey:

Praise and Thanksgiving

People approached the great gates which reminded them to be thankful to God for all He had done, was doing and would do. Psalm 100:4

Submission and Sacrifice

The Altar of Sacrifice was a gruesome experience that connected people with God's grace – they were able to access him despite their brokenness. Romans 12:1-2

Cleansing

The Bronze Laver (or “molten sea”) used to physically wash the priests, reminding them that they needed to be spiritually cleansed before they could enter the Holy Place. Ephesians 5:26

Communion

The Table of Showbread. To the priests, this represented intimacy, communion with God: to commune with someone is to “share one's intimate thoughts and feelings.” John 17:3

Spirit and Fruitfulness

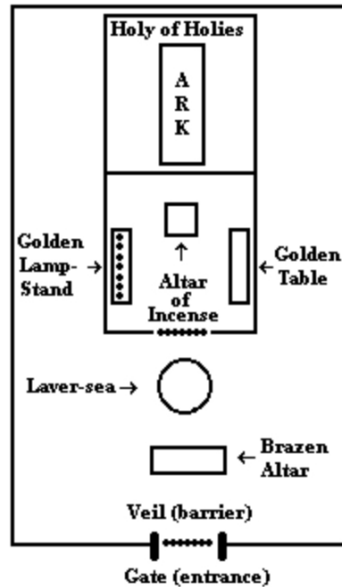
In the tabernacle, the Golden Lamp Stand gave light to the Holy Place and was a representation of the Holy Spirit and His ministry. Almond flowers represent new life - the life given by the Spirit. Pure oil and fire always represent the Spirit in scripture. And the nine lamps indicate the nine gifts and fruit of the Spirit. Galatians 5:22

Intercession

God instructed the priests to keep incense burning on the Altar of Incense day and night. It represents constant prayer & praise. It was the place He promised to speak to His people. Romans 12:11-13

The Holy of Holies

God instructed the priests to keep incense burning on the Altar of Incense day and night. It represents constant prayer & praise. It was the place He promised to speak to His people. Hebrews 9 (esp. verses 11-14)



THANKSGIVING

Testimonies

‘But they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they did not cling to life even in the face of death.’
Revelation 12:11

Testimonies are a powerful weapon. They can strengthen us, increase our faith and the faith of others when we share what God has done. Testimony gives us courage. Not only can it raise our faith but this in turn can help us overcome the work of the enemy.

There is no testimony too big or too small that is not worth sharing.

You may want to share testimony in smaller groups or as a whole. You may want to push into a particular theme if there is some ground that needs taking or if courage is needed in a particular area.

Examples: If there are financial struggles in the room or for the church then ask for testimonies about God’s provision.

If there are battles with sickness, then ask people to share testimonies about when God has healed or brought transformation to a situation.

If there are relational battles then ask people to share testimonies about when God has restored broken relationships or helped to forgive.

You can also look at stories in the Bible if that helps.

To finish

As you do this you may want to end with a time of communion together (ask a member of clergy to help with this) or informally break bread and share wine.

Or

You may want to take some time to thank God for all he has done.

Or

You may want to intercede for breakthrough in a particular area.

CONTEMPLATION

Spiritual Journey

The Bible gives many examples in the New Testament of journeys (aka walking and talking) that lead to deep encounter and transformation.

The goal of this kind of prayer is to connect with each other and God more deeply.

Use a Bible passage and draw out 3 open questions (ie not questions with a yes or no answer, you may want to choose your questions before hand or decide together).

Get into groups of 2's and 3's, read the Bible passage and then set out on your walk. Punctuate the journey with the 3 questions. Each person answers the question in turn. Take time with each question and notice opportunities that can lead to prayer. If you don't know how to answer the question, don't allow this to bring anxiety, but just notice this and allow this to be an opportunity for prayer.

Walk around the Garden of Hope or another suggested location.

Centering Prayer

What is centering prayer?

(Mark 6:31 NRSV): "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while."

Centering prayer is not a way of turning on the presence of God. Rather it is a way of saying "Here I am". The next step is up to God. It is a way of putting yourself at God's disposal; it is God who determines the consequences.

Centering prayer is a silent form of prayer that helps us cooperate with the activity that God is constantly initiating in our inmost centre. The desire to go to God, to open to God's presence within us does not come from our initiative. We do not have to go anywhere to find God, because God is already drawing us in every conceivable way into union. It is rather a question of opening to an action that is already happening in us.

Much of our prayer life is **kataphatic**: it is verbal and conversational and uses images and symbols.

Centering prayer is **apophatic** – it has no content and this allows the noise of life to be stilled and God to be met in union away from the cares of this life.

The Practice of Centering Prayer

It is recommended that you choose an amount of time beforehand and set a timer so that clock watching isn't a distraction once you've started.

1. Choose a sacred word as a symbol of your intention to consent to God's presence and action within, e.g. Abba, Amen, peace, trust, Jesus, Spirit, maranatha, shalom...
2. Sitting comfortably (normally back straight and feet planted firmly on the ground), with eyes closed, settle

briefly and silently introduce the sacred word. As you breathe naturally, the word anchors your consent and openness to the Holy One.

3. When you become aware of thoughts, return ever so **gently** to the sacred word, again affirming your choice to be united with God. Return to your word, whenever you are aware of distracting thoughts, images or sounds consenting again and again to God's presence. This isn't a fight so don't become frustrated if your mind wonders – just return gently to your sacred word once you become aware that you are distracted.
4. At the end of the prayer period, remain in silence with eyes closed for a minute.
5. Open your eyes. Stand and stretch, and move on with your everyday life.

Praying with the natural world

'Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made.' Romans 1:20

This prayer allows God to speak to us through the natural world around us. We use the same structure as Lectio Divina, but instead of using the Bible as the source of inspiration, for the purpose of this prayer, we use nature.

You may like to use the Garden of Hope, or another location outside.

Step one is lectio: **reading** the text of the landscape.

Like reading a book, except now it's another language that we are reading of clouds and birds and trees and sunlight. We start to open ourselves up to the truth, wisdom, or gift that the landscape may be offering us.

Example: Intentionally creating space for something to catch my attention, I become aware of various sensations. Where does my attention linger? Or keep returning to? Perhaps there's a breeze, and I notice the sound and the motion of the leaves on the trees. Is there an invitation in this?

Step two is meditation: **reflecting** - the stage where the mind is most active.

Here we begin to wonder why whatever has caught our attention might have done so, and why it might be a gift to us. The gift may be a difficult one, but we can trust that in time it may indeed become a gift.

Example: The leaves have caught my attention. I notice that most of the leaves are not breaking off, but are held by branches which themselves are swaying, taking the shock of the wind into themselves. Perhaps the truth or gift here is that I too am being held.

Step three is oratio: **responding** with a prayer or yearning.

Here we let the natural world work within us and whatever has caught our attention (the physical sight, sound or sensation - not thoughts about it) carry our prayers or yearnings.

Example: As things come to mind I let them be carried by the simple presence of this element of the natural world. For instance, I invite the sight and sound or later in the day the memory of the sight or sound) of the branches absorbing the destructive power of the wind, absorb the destructive power of whatever is concerning me. I express my longings to the Holy One.

Step four is contemplation: **resting** in wordless presence.

This can be like stepping into warm sunlight. It can also feel like nothing. Both sensations are normal and good.

Here we let go of whatever has caught your attention, and enjoy the sense of being alive, of being held, of being in the presence of the community of God, the Holy Trinity.

Example: So now I close my eyes and let the sound of the wind in the leaves and the sensation of the breeze on my face

*work within me. I consent to the Divine movement within me.
I am present. I choose life.*

Gospel Contemplation

Usually we approach Scripture with the expectation of reading its words and thinking about their meaning. Yet when we read anything that tells a story, or relates to life issues, we always use more than our intellects. Ignatius of Loyola (16th C) encouraged people to bring their whole selves to God in meditation and prayer, especially in meditating on the life of Christ, on gospel stories. Using our imaginations can open us to encounter Jesus more directly than our intellects allow. Here is a simplified version of what he taught.

Taking any incident from the life of Jesus in the Gospels, gently follow these steps:

1. Pray beforehand

Settle and relax yourself. Deal with any distractions that become evident. Open your mind and heart to God, praying that you might be open and attentive to anything God might want to say to you. Ask that your heart will be receptive and your will ready to obey.

2. Set the scene

Read the passage through to remind yourself of the story. Now use your imagination to set the scene as vividly as you can. Use as many of your senses as you can: What would you hear? What would you see? What would you smell? Who is in the scene? What are they doing? What is in the background? What is the emotional atmosphere like? Take time to let the scene unfold.

3. Enter into the story

Now let yourself become part of this scene. Without forcing anything, what are you drawn to in the story? Perhaps you particularly identify with one of the characters, and take that role. Perhaps you are a bystander, watching what is taking place. When you have found your place it is time to...

4. Allow the story to unfold

Using the biblical story, allow the action to be played in your imagination. Now that you are part of the scene, notice how you find yourself responding - your thoughts, actions and feelings. It may be that the story unfolds a little differently to the biblical account. Notice what happens, as it may be significant. Do you find yourself interacting with Jesus? Is there anything you want to say to him, or ask him? Is there anything he seems to want to say to you, or ask you? Maybe a dialogue with Jesus.

5. Reflection and prayer

Ignatius encourages us to "savour the response." When your imaginary journey through the story has come to an end, take time to think back over what happened and how you found yourself responding. It might be helpful to journal your reflections. Allow this to lead into prayer, as seems appropriate.

CONFESSION

1 John 1:9

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

Confession is an important part of being a disciple. Confession and repentance can help us to move on from something that is holding us back and moves us towards belief and freedom.

Both personal and corporate confession are important.

Here are some ways that you could lead a time of confession...

Leading a Personal Confession

Idea 1

Write down some things you want to say sorry for. Writing things down can help us to remember that we have responded to Holy Spirit's prompting.

Gather around the fire pit in the Garden of Hope and burn things we have written down.

As you do this together you may want to respond with a song or closing prayer.

Idea 2

- Holding hands out (palms up) in front of us we see the weight of sin we are carrying (think of specific sins).
- Turn hands over (Palms down) as a sign of giving the weight and sin to Jesus.
- Turn hands over (palms up) and ask Holy Spirit to come and fill us again and forgive us.

Leading a Corporate Confession

Idea 1

This idea works well if we are confessing our judgmental attitudes.

- Give everyone a stone.
Jesus challenged 'Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.' John 8:7
- Have a designated place to put down the stones, maybe beyond a line. You may want to offer people a response prayer like 'I choose mercy.'
- One person at a time lay down their stones and choose mercy over judgement when they are ready.

Idea 2

For a more general time of confession you could use the white board. Write on it 'God we are sorry for...'

- Allow each person to come and write something on the board that represents some kind of corporate confession ie 'our greed,' 'our individualism' or it could be more specific to The Bridge.

At the end thank God for his forgiveness and wipe off of confession as a sign of Jesus removing our sins.

BIBLE FOCUSED

Discovery Bible

A Discovery Bible Study is a discipleship study which enables us to read the Bible and discover what it has to say to us today. Simple, memorable questions allow us to understand the character of God, encourage us to obey what we are learning and help us to share it with others.

READ the passage x2, and then retell it

DISCUSS

1. What did I discover about God in this passage?
2. What did I discover about people in this passage?

ACT

3. How will I commit to obey this passage this week?
4. With whom will I share what I have learned from this passage?

PRAY for one another

Dwelling in the Word

"Dwelling in the word" is deliberately not about sharing information or seeking scholarly answers or even the right answers to the issues raised in the text but is about listening each other into free speech and discerning what God is doing amongst us.

You may want to give everyone a copy of the passage and a pen so that they can underline bits and make notes.

1. Start with prayer inviting the Spirit to guide our attending to the Word of God.
2. One person reads the passage out loud to the group. Then allow some silence as people "dwell in the Word." (You may want to read twice from 2 different versions)
3. Ask people to find another person. Listen to each other in free speech as he or she tells you what they heard in the passage (What captured your imagination in the passage? What would you like to find out more about?). Listen well, because you will report what your partner said, not what you yourself said. *Some take notes to help them remember.*
4. Come back together as a group, tell what you learned from your partner.
5. What is God saying? What questions do you need to work with today?
6. Close in prayer

Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina (translated "divine [or sacred] reading") is an approach to the Scriptures that sets us up to listen for the word of God spoken to us in this present moment. Lectio divina refers to the ancient practice of divine reading that dates back to the early mothers and fathers of the Christian faith. Referring to the material being read and also the method itself, the practice of lectio divina is rooted in the belief that through the presence of the Holy Spirit, the Scriptures are indeed alive and active as we engage them for spiritual transformation. (Hebrews 4:12)

Ready

Take a few moments to quieten yourself. Quiet your heart, sit in silence, and ask God to meet you during this time of prayer

Read

Read the passage through 2 times slowly. Ask people to notice any words or phrases that catch their attention.

Ask people to read through the passage once more in their heads.

Reflect

Ask people to reflect on the word or phrase that caught their attention, allowing the word or phrase to speak into their personal situation. Listen to what God is revealing, paying attention to any emotions or memories that the word or phrase may stir up.

Respond

Talk to God about what you have been thinking and hearing through the reading. As you dialogue with God you may want to ask him about things you don't understand. You might like to respond through writing it down in a journal – you may be moved by the spirit towards gratitude, longing, repentance or intercession.

Rest

Sit quietly with God, resting in the presence of the One who loves you. Simply be with God and trust that the Holy Spirit is at work in you.

Return

As you go about your day, keep returning to the passage and your reflection.

INTERCESSION

Petitioning Prayers

Bible verse:

Philippians 4:6

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”

What are the things we are persevering in prayer for?

Check the book.

Are there things that need adding? (If so add them to the book and date it)

Are there prayers that have been answered? (If so record this in the book and date it)

Pray for the things in the book that still need answered prayer.

Teaspoon Prayers

These can be done alone, in groups or a mixture. You may want to use the white board for praise or thanksgiving. You may want to give people time to say sorry prayers by themselves (also see confession prayers). You could also use songs to worship with. Feel free to be as creative with this simple pattern.

T – Thanksgiving. Say thank you prayers to God for whatever comes to mind.

S – Sorry prayers. Say sorry for wrong things you have done this week.

P – Praise. Spend time giving God praise

Liturgical Prayer

Call to worship (*All standing*)

Leader: In the beginning
 before time, before people,
 before the world began,

ALL: GOD WAS.

Leader: Here and now
 among us, beside us,
 enlisting the people of earth
 for the purposes of heaven,

ALL: GOD IS.

Leader: In the future,
 when we have turned to dust
 and all we know has found its fulfilment,

ALL: GOD WILL BE.

Leader: Not denying the world, but delighting in it,
 not condemning the world, but redeeming it,
 through Jesus Christ,
 by the power of the Holy Spirit,

**ALL: GOD WAS,
 GOD IS,
 GOD WILL BE.**

A song of praise?

Prayer *(All seated)*

Leader: Let us pray.

In you, gracious God,
the widowed find a carer,
the orphaned find a parent,
the fearful find a friend.

In you,
the wounded find a healer,
the repentant find a pardoner,
the burdened find a counsellor.

In you,
The despondent find a laughter-maker,
the legalists find a rule-breaker.

In you, Jesus Christ,
we meet our Maker,
And find our home.

And if some need to say, 'Help me'
and if some need to say, 'Save me'
and if some need to say, 'Hold me'
and if some need to say, 'Forgive me'
then let these be said now
in confidence
by us.

(Silence)

O Christ, in whose heart is both welcome and warning,
say to us,
do to us;
reveal within us
the things that will make us whole.

And we will wait;
and we will praise you.

ALL: AMEN

Word of God

Reader: Hear the word of God

ALL: OUR EARS ARE OPEN

Reader: A reading from... *(The Bible is read)*

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord/
Gospel of our Lord.

ALL: THANKS BE TO GOD.

Conversation

*(opportunity is given for people to divide into small groups
and share responses to questions below)*

1. What words in that reading do I particularly remember and why?
2. Was the reading intended to have an effect on what think, what I do or what I believe?

Prayers of the people

Leader: Let us pray for the breaking in of God's kingdom
in our world today.
Lord God.
because Jesus has taught us to trust you in all things,
we hold to his word and share his plea:

ALL: YOUR KINGDOM COME, YOUR WILL BE DONE.

Leader: Where nations budget for war;
while Christ says, 'Put up your sword':

ALL: YOUR KINGDOM COME, YOUR WILL BE DONE.

Leader: Where countries waste food and covet fashion,
while Christ says, 'I was hungry
...I was thirsty...':

ALL: YOUR KINGDOM COME, YOUR WILL BE DONE.

Leader: Where powerful governments
 claim their policies are heaven blessed, while scripture
 states
 that God helps the powerless:

ALL: YOUR KINGDOM COME, YOUR WILL BE DONE.

Leader: Where Christians seek the kingdom
 in the shape of their own church,
 as if Christ had come to build
 and not to break barriers:

ALL: YOUR KINGDOM COME, YOUR WILL BE DONE.

Leader: Where we, obsessed with being adult, forget to
 become like children:

ALL: YOUR KINGDOM COME, YOUR WILL BE DONE.

Leader: Where our prayers falter,
 our faith weakens,
 our light grows dim:

ALL: YOUR KINGDOM COME, YOUR WILL BE DONE.

Leader: Where Jesus Christ calls us:

ALL: YOUR KINGDOM COME, YOUR WILL BE DONE.

Leader: Lord God,
 you have declared that your kingdom is among us.
 Open our ears to hear it,
 our hands to serve it,
 our hearts to hold it.
 This we pray in Jesus' name.

ALL: AMEN.

Closing responses *(All standing)*

Leader: For all that God can do within us,
 for all that God can do without us,

ALL: THANKS BE TO GOD.

Leader: For all in whom Christ lived before us, for all in
whom Christ lives beside us,

ALL: THANKS BE TO GOD.

Leader: For all the Spirit wants to bring us,
for where the Spirit wants to send us,

ALL: THANKS BE TO GOD.

Leader: Listen,
Christ has promised to be with us
in the world as in our worship.

ALL: AMEN.

WE GO TO SERVE HIM.