

# Reflection and Prayer

## *Personal Worship*

Evelyn C. Davis, Ed.D.  
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**I will extol the Lord at all times;  
his praise will always be on my lips.**

*Psalm 34:1*  
*New International Version*

**Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.**

*1 Thessalonians 5:16–18*

*New International Version*



***Goal of the Topic:***

To worship and praise our Lord with joy and thanksgiving.

# Daily Devotions

## *In the Morning*

### **From Psalm 51**

Open my lips, O Lord,  
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.  
Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and renew a right spirit within me.  
Cast me not away from your presence  
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.  
Give me the joy of your saving help again  
and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.  
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. *Amen.*



### **The Collect**

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us in safety to this new day: Preserve us with your mighty power, that we may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all we do, direct us to the fulfilling of your purpose; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

## **At Noon**

### **From Psalm 113**

Give praise, you servants of the Lord;  
praise the Name of the Lord.  
Let the Name of the Lord be blessed,  
from this time forth for evermore.  
From the rising of the sun to its going down  
let the Name of the Lord be praised.  
The Lord is high above all nations,  
and his glory above the heavens.

### **A Reading**

O God, you will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are fixed on you; for in returning and rest we shall be saved; in quietness and trust shall be our strength. *Isaiah 26:3; 30:15*



### **The Collect**

Blessed Savior, at this hour you hung upon the cross, stretching out your loving arms: Grant that all the peoples of the earth may look to you and be saved; for your mercies' sake. *Amen.*

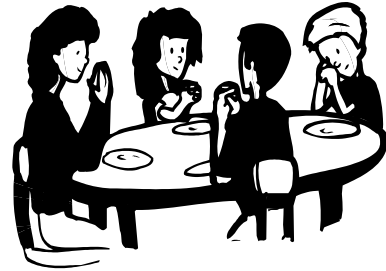
## ***In the Early Evening***

*This devotion may be used before or after the evening meal.*

O gracious Light,  
pure brightness of the everliving Father in heaven,  
O Jesus Christ, holy and blessed!

Now as we come to the setting of the sun,  
and our eyes behold the vesper light,  
we sing your praises O God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

You are worthy at all times to be praised by happy voices,  
O Son of God, O Giver of life,  
and to be glorified through all the worlds.



### **The Collect**

Lord Jesus, stay with us, for evening is at hand and the day is past; be our companion in the way, kindle our hearts, and awaken hope, that we may know you as you are revealed in Scripture and the breaking of bread. Grant this for the sake of your love. *Amen.*

## ***At the Close of Day***

### **Psalm 134**

Behold now, bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord,  
You that stand by night in the house of the Lord.  
Lift up your hands in the holy place and bless the Lord;  
The Lord who made heaven and earth bless you out of Zion.

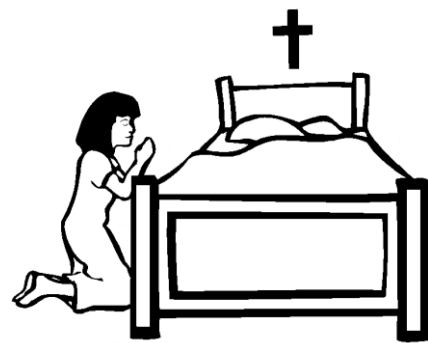
### **A Reading**

Lord, you are in the midst of us and we are called by your Name: Do not forsake us, O Lord our God. *Jeremiah 14:9, 22*

### **The Collect**

Visit this place, O Lord, and drive far from it all snares of the enemy; let your holy angels dwell with us to preserve us in peace; and let your blessing be upon us always; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The almighty and merciful Lord, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
bless us and keep us. *Amen.*



—from *The Book of Common Prayer*.

# Personal Worship

Evelyn C. Davis, 2010

As you spend time alone with the Lord, the following guidelines can be used.

Steps for a personal prayer focus are listed, with space given after each listing for you to add other verses, and/or to fill in what the Lord is saying to you. The steps are:

- Worship
  - Attentiveness
  - Approach the Throne
  - Submit to God
  - Confession
  - Forgiveness
  - Protection
  - Guidance and Direction
  - Petitions (Yourself and Others)
  - Special Needs
  - Put on Christ
  - Commit the Day to Him
- Walk in Triumph, Freedom, and Safety

‘Ideas for Your Personal Prayer Retreat’ (page 14) helps you plan for regular retreats.

There are three readings: ‘Divine Gestures’ (page 16); ‘Christ Exemplified ... Solitude’ (page 19); and ‘Footprints with A Twist’ (page 21).

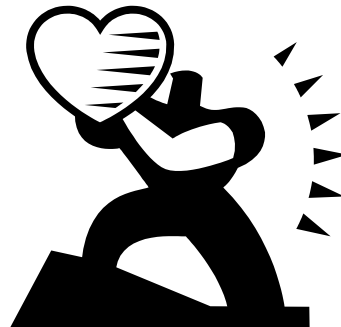
Three articles are also included: Bevere, John: *Drawing Near Through the Holy Spirit* (page 12); Rendall, Ted: *Prayer* (page 22); and Tan, Paul: *Precious Moments* (page 24).

‘A Vespers Office’ (page 28) is a good way to close the day, and ‘Monica: Praying the Prodigal Home’ (page 31) is a wonderful example of intercessory prayer.

**Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for  
I have put my trust in you.**

*Psalm 143:8*

*New International Version*



# A Personal Prayer Focus

Space is given for notes, for writing out any of the additional verses, for thoughts as you wait on the Lord, and/or for any direction or guidance that he speaks to you.

## Worship

I will extol the Lord at all times; his praise will always be on my lips. Psalm 34:1 (NIV)

I will praise you, O Lord my God, with all my heart; I will glorify your name forever.  
Psalm 86:12 (NIV)

Other Verses: 2 Samuel 7:22; Psalm 8; Psalm 113:3, John 4:24; Romans 12:1–2a.

## Attentiveness

‘Speak, for your servant is listening.’ 1 Samuel 3:10b (NIV)

... and the government (of my life) will be on his shoulders. Isaiah 9:6a (NIV)

He awakens my ear to listen as a disciple. Isaiah 50:4b (NASB)

Other Verses: Psalm 46:10a; Psalm 143:8–10; Luke 9:2–7.

## Approach the Throne

Because of Christ and our faith in him, we can now come boldly and confidently into God’s presence. Ephesians 3:12 (NLT)

So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most. Hebrews 4:16 (NLT)

Other Verses: Psalm 95:6; Lamentations 3:21–23; Matthew 6:33.

## **Submit to God**

Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth! Psalm 46:10 (NKJV)

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God, and he will come near to you. James 4:7–8a (NIV)

Other Verses: Psalm 27:14; Isaiah 33:6; Acts 2:39; 1 Peter 5:6.

## **Confession**

If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear. Psalm 66:18 (NASB)

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:8–9 (ESV)

Other Verses: Psalm 51:1–17; 1 Corinthians 10:12–13; James 5:16.

## **Forgiveness**

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. Romans 8:1–2 (NIV)

In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. Ephesians 1:7 (KJV)

Other Verses: Psalm 32; Psalm 103:11–14, 17–18; Romans 5:9; Romans 8:33–34; Hebrews 7:24–25.

## Protection

... be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

Ephesians 6:10–11 (NIV)  
(continue with verses 12–18)

For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.

1 John 5:4 (NASB)

Other Verses: Joshua 1:9; Psalm 18:1–5, 16–19, 25–30; Psalm 91; 1 Thessalonians 3:3;  
1 John 4:4b; Revelation 12:11.

## Guidance and Direction

O send out Your light and Your truth, let them lead me ...

Psalm 43:3a (NASB)

'I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.'

John 15:5 (NKJV)

Other Verses: Psalm 25:4–9; Psalm 119:133; Psalm 138:8; Isaiah 48:17; Isaiah 50:4b;  
Isaiah 58:11; Jeremiah 32:27; 2 Corinthians 4:1.

## Petitions (Yourself and Others)

In the morning, O Lord, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation.

Psalm 5:3 (NIV)

But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

Lamentations 3:21–23 (ESV)

Other Verses: 1 Samuel 1:27–28; Matthew 17:20b–21; John 16:24b;  
Romans 8:26–27; Philippians 4:6–7.

## **Special Needs**

I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. John 10:10b (ESV)

And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.  
Philippians 4:19 (NASB)

Other Verses: Isaiah 54:13; Jeremiah 32:17, 27; Matthew 21:22;  
Ephesians 3:20–21; 2 Peter 1:3–4; 1 John 5:14–15.

## **Put on Christ**

... clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature. Romans 13:14 (NIV)

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. Hebrews 12:2–3 (NIV)

Other Verses: John 15:11; Colossians 1:13–14.

## **Commit the Day to Him**

But I trust in you, O Lord; I say ‘You are my God. My times are in your hands.’  
Psalm 31:14–15a (NIV)

The Lord will work out his plans for my life—for your faithful love, O Lord, endures forever.  
Psalm 138:8a (NLT)

Other Verses: Psalm 27:14; Psalm 37:5; Isaiah 33:6;  
2 Thessalonians 3:16a.

### **Walk in Triumph, Freedom, and Safety**

I run in the path of your commands, for you have set my heart free. Psalm 119:32 (NIV)

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.  
2 Timothy 1:7 (NKJV)

Other Verses: Psalm 57:1–3; Proverbs 29:25; Romans 8:35–39;  
Galatians 5:1; Ephesians 1:18–19a.



**Now thanks be to God who always leads  
us in triumph in Christ, and through us  
diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in  
every place.**

*2 Corinthians 2:14*  
*New King James Version*

## Retreat Ideas, Readings, Articles, A Vespers Office, and An Intercessor

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# Drawing Near Through the Holy Spirit

John Bevere (2004)

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Recently, while I was deep in prayer, my cry became, ‘Lord, if I can’t have intimacy with You here on this earth, then please take me home to be with You!’ My knees shook a little as those words poured forth. I knew I had indeed meant what I’d said. Yet almost immediately my mind questioned whether I should pray such a bold prayer.

A few hours later, I opened my Bible. My eyes fell upon Psalm 28:1: ‘O Lord my Rock: Do not be silent to me, lest, if You are silent to me, I become like those who go down to the pit’ (NKJV).

Wow! David says we are no better off than sinners headed for hell if God doesn’t speak to us. Another translation says it like this: ‘For if you are silent, I might as well give up and die’ (NLT).

Immediately, I knew that I had not prayed contrary to God’s will, but by the Holy Spirit. He wants to be close to us and guide us in all things. It is His desire, His will.

One of my favorite Scriptures is David’s words, ‘My heart has heard you say, “Come and talk with me.” And my heart responds, “LORD, I am coming” ’ (Psalm 27:8, NLT). God invites each of us this way, saying, ‘Draw near; I want to be present with you, commune with you, share My heart with you, and show you great and mighty things of which you know not!’

Scripture speaks of two different presences of God. First is His omnipresence. This is the presence David speaks of when he writes, ‘Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?’ (Psalm 139:7, NKJV). It is His promise to never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). Though we cannot sense this presence, it is always there.

The second presence is God’s manifest presence. God reveals Himself not only to our spirit, but to our mind and senses as well. This is the presence Jesus spoke of when He said, ‘I will love him and manifest Myself to him’ (John 14:21, NKJV). Jesus is speaking of the Holy Spirit (see verses 15–26). The Holy Spirit’s role is to reveal Jesus to us, just as Jesus reveals the Father to us.

How can we then experience this manifest presence of God? In James we find this simple yet staggering statement: ‘Draw near to God and He will draw near to you’ (4:8, NKJV). Think of it: The Creator of the universe invites us to draw close! Even more shocking, we are told to initiate this!

Recently, the Spirit of God questioned me: ‘Did I not say in My Word to pray without ceasing?’ (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

I responded, ‘Yes, Lord, You did.’

He continued, ‘Is prayer a monologue or dialogue?’

‘It’s a dialogue—a two-way conversation,’ I said.

‘Well, then,’ He said, ‘if I said to pray without ceasing, then I am willing to communicate to you without ceasing!’

I was so excited by His response, but the thought crossed my mind, *Oh, how many opportunities have I missed because I haven’t drawn near?*

Let me explain something here. Just because He is willing to communicate with us without ceasing doesn’t mean we will hear words in our spirits nonstop. There are many ways to communicate. My wife can give me a certain look, and I can write three pages about what she has just communicated to me without

speaking a word. How do I know? We've had 20 years together! The Holy Spirit speaks directly to our hearts, but He also gives impressions, visions, dreams, and witnesses to our conscience.

He also speaks by His silence. If we are harboring unconfessed sin, then His silence may be due to His grieving. Other times, His silence may be saying, 'Don't stop. You're on track; just keep doing what you're doing.' Still other times, His silence may be telling

us that the answer is not for us to know, or it is not yet time to reveal it. It's so exciting to learn His ways.

In any case, God doesn't want us to be ignorant of how He communicates. The Scriptures tell us that the mature in the Lord have trained their spiritual senses to discern how He speaks (Hebrews 5:14.) Remember, He promises that if we draw near, He will draw near and reveal Himself!



**John Bevere** has an international teaching ministry which includes a weekly television broadcast, 'The Messenger.' He has authored many books, including several Christian top sellers. This article is an excerpt from his 2004 book, *Drawing Near: A Life of Intimacy with God*. (Thomas Nelson; [www.johnbevere.org](http://www.johnbevere.org))



# Ideas for Your Personal Prayer Retreat

Cynthia Hyle Bezek (2007)

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Need some ideas to direct your extended time of prayer? Choose from the following suggestions for ways to enjoy a prayer retreat with God.

- Read a short book from the Bible—for example, Mark, Ephesians, Philippians, or 1 John. Talk to the Lord about what you are reading as you go. Share with Him what you feel when you read His words. Confess any sins He reveals. Let Him know what encourages, challenges, confuses, or stresses you as you hear His heart through this portion of Scripture.
- Play a worship CD and sing your worship to God.
- Take a walk with God. Talk to Him about creation. Try to imagine what delights Him about what He has made, or better yet, ask Him!
- Pray some of the great prayers of all time. You might start with prayers from the Psalms or *The Book of Common Prayer*. If you find you can't pray parts of the prayer sincerely, stop and talk to God about it. Ask Him to search your heart, to show you why it's difficult for you to pray the part in question, and to purify, strengthen, heal, and help you.
- Ask the Lord to refresh you both spiritually and physically. Prayerfully select Scripture from the following list: Psalm 23:2–3, 62:1–5, 91:1; Proverbs 11:25; Isaiah 30:15; Matthew 11:28–29; Acts 3:19; Hebrews 4:1–11. Sit comfortably and meditate on the verses, letting each word or phrase soak in. Ask God's Spirit to let you see and experience all He has for you from these Scriptures. After you've enjoyed time pondering, talk to the Lord about what He has shown you.
- Bring a specific burden to the Lord and ask Him for wisdom, comfort, perspective, direction, correction, or help with it. Tell Him exactly how you feel, even if (perhaps especially if) you feel angry, discouraged, confused, or skeptical. Invite Him to speak to you about your concern. It may aid the conversation if you write down both your prayer to God and what you believe He is saying to you about it. Allow for back and forth, just like you would in a conversation with a well loved friend or family member. Take time with this. Heart-to-heart conversations are not to be hurried.
- Read a short portion of a devotional classic on prayer or the Christian life. Andrew Murray or A. W. Tozer are good places to start. Use what you read as a springboard for prayer.
- Spend time in extended intercession for those for whom you have committed to pray. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you how to pray for them. He may lead you to intercede for their spiritual, mental, physical, emotional, or relational lives. Linger over the things God shows you to pray about that seem especially significant.
- Ask God what He would like to talk to you about, and then just listen. Let Him pick the topic for a change. Write down what you believe He is saying so that you can reflect on it and respond to it both immediately and in the future.

- At the end of your prayer retreat, make notes or journal about what was most significant or enjoyable about what you and God have shared together. Keep these notes to reflect on at future prayer retreats, or whenever you need a reminder of what God is doing in your life as you relate to Him through prayer.

**Cynthia Hyle Bezek** is the editor of *Pray!* magazine (NavPress).



**My soul finds rest in God alone; my  
salvation comes from him. He alone is my  
rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I  
will never be shaken.**

*Psalm 62:1–2*

*New International Version*

# Divine Gestures

Nathan Bierma (2008)

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*‘Why do liturgical Christians make the sign of the cross?’*

Pray continually, Paul urged the Thessalonians. The early church fathers took this one step further: continually make the sign of the cross.

‘In all our travels and movements, in all our coming in and out, in putting on our shoes, at the bath, at the table, in lighting our candles, in lying down, in sitting down, whatever employment occupies us,’ wrote Tertullian at the turn of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, ‘we mark our foreheads with the sign of the cross.’ And in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, John Chrysostom (apparently anticipating an American Express slogan) wrote ‘Never leave home without making the sign of the cross.’

How the sign of the cross—the motion of the hand over the torso, up, down, then side-to-side—made its way from the early church to us today is a lesson in Christian history. Over the years, believers imbued this simple gesture with volumes of theological meaning. Holding three fingers together—thumb, forefinger, and middle finger—as you make the sign symbolizes the Trinity. Holding the other two fingers against your palm represents the two natures of Christ, human and divine. Dropping the hand from forehead to waist to begin the gesture represents Christ’s descent to earth and the upward movement that then follows represents his resurrection. And so on.

The origins of the sign are unknown. As Andreas Andreopoulos, author of *The Sign of the Cross: The Gesture, the Mystery, The History* points out: ‘Our information is sparse because this ancient practice emerged naturally, as something that made sense to most Christians.’ The earliest descriptions, such as Tertullian’s, indicate that the cross was made

with one finger—probably the thumb—on the forehead in the shape of a Hebrew *T* or a Greek *X*, letters that stood for names of God and Christ. Presumably, early Christians were taking their cues from passages in Genesis 4:15, Ezekiel 9:4, and Revelation 14:1 and 22:4, which describe a mark on the forehead as a sign of God’s claim on a person.

At some point, Christians began to make the sign with two fingers rather than just one, probably to indicate the two natures of Christ, and later, with three fingers to symbolize the Trinity. This change in fingering may have led to the ‘large cross’—the sign made over the entire upper body. One explanation is that amid 9<sup>th</sup>-century debates over the nature of the Trinity, Christians may have wanted to emphasize that they were now using three fingers rather than two, and so they used the larger sign to make it more obvious.

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**‘Never leave home without making the sign of the cross.’**

**John Chrysostom**

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If you think that’s getting theologically meticulous, you haven’t heard the debates over whether to finish the motion with a left-to-right movement (left cross) or right-to-left (right cross). The right cross, still practiced by Eastern Orthodox believers, symbolizes how ‘Christ descended from the heavens to the earth, and from the Jews (right) he passed to the Gentiles (left),’ according to Pope

Innocent III. In Roman Catholic practice, the left cross has become standard, showing (in one of many interpretations) that the believer hopes to be not on Christ's left—with the goats, as in Jesus' parable—at the day of judgment, but on Christ's right.

Andreopoulos explains that all symbols hold within them a multitude of meanings attained both intentionally and unconsciously. The sign as an act, however small it may be, expresses an impetus to cross the threshold between *thinking* and *practicing* the Christian life.

Many Protestants avoid the sign, assuming it is only a Catholic practice, or fearing it is a superstition. But the sign does *indeed* have a Protestant heritage: Martin Luther prescribed the sign of the cross in his Small Catechism, and the sign has long been part of Anglican and Lutheran practice.

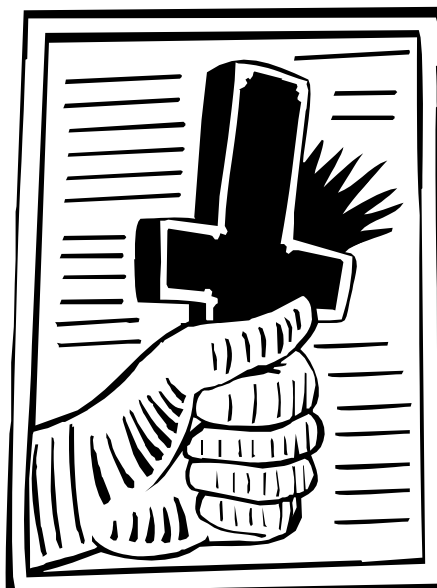
So whether we practice it or not, we ought to recognize that the sign of the cross is one

manifestation of how physical—how embodied—worship really is. It can be as simple as raising our hands during a praise song, sitting up straight during the first few chords of a hymn, or closing our eyes and folding our hands to pray. All of these motions have become ingrained in our body language of worship. Like the sign of the cross, they contain great potential to physically demonstrate and recall a deeper meaning—and also great potential to become so routine that eventually we do them out of habit—or worse, for show.

Centuries ago, Chrysostom admonished us to mean what we do. 'You should not just trace the cross with your finger,' he wrote, 'but you should do it in faith.' His words bear remembering during all our expressions of worship, old or new, liturgical or charismatic, public or private.

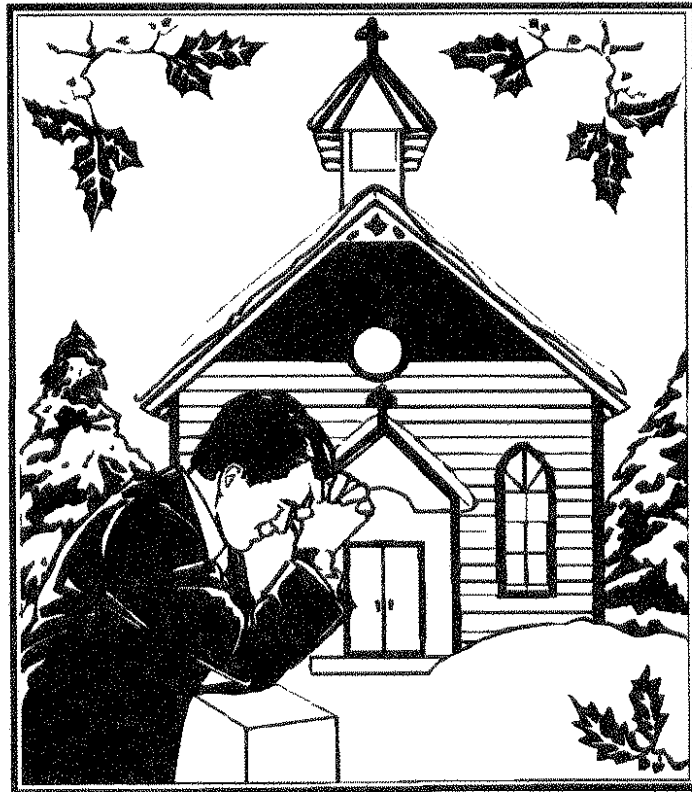


**Nathan Bierma** is communications and research coordinator for the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship and author of *Bringing Heaven Down to Earth: Connecting This Life to the Next*.



**And pray in the Spirit on all occasions  
with all kinds of prayers and requests.**

*Ephesians 6:18*  
*New International Version*



# Christ Exemplified ... Solitude

Jennifer Kennedy Dean (2002)

Used with permission.

*'Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.'*<sup>1</sup>

During His earthly life, Jesus made a habit of withdrawing to be alone with the Father. This habit so marked His life that the Gospel writers, who wrote their Gospels many years after Jesus had ascended to the right hand of God, recorded it. It was important enough that the Spirit of God prompted them to write on the eternal record of the Gospels that Jesus sought out solitude. He deliberately and purposefully made time to be alone with God the Father.

Jesus was fully aware that He was always with the Father, that He and God were never separated: 'The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him.'<sup>2</sup> Yet, He felt compelled to seek out solitude. Why?

The focus of Jesus' life was to stay perfectly attuned to His Father's voice. He was determined to live every moment in harmony with the Father's will: 'My food,' said Jesus, 'is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.'<sup>3</sup> He knew that to fulfill this purpose would require long stretches of time, sometimes all night long, alone with God.

If Jesus needed solitude to keep His earthly steps synchronized with the Father's heart, then is there any doubt that you and I need to schedule our days so that our first priority is time alone with God? This scheduled solitude is not so that God can hear you, but so that you can hear God. He has things to tell you and truth to impart to you that you can hear only in silence. He wants you to know His secrets: 'The Lord confides in those who fear him.'<sup>4</sup> Secrets are told in whispers; they are not exchanged in the hustle-bustle of life, but in quiet places and in quiet moments.

Jesus gave these instructions about prayer: 'When you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen.'<sup>5</sup> The following steps can help us to apply this advice to our times of solitude:

1. Determine the time and consider it a sacred appointment.
2. Set aside a place as your meeting place with the Father. Keep your Bible and other study tools in that place.
3. Keep your focus on Him. If your mind wanders, bring it back, and you will be able to train your thoughts to stay fixed on Him.

Determinedly seek time alone with God!

## End Notes

1. Mark 1:35, NIV.
2. John 8:29, NIV.
3. John 4:34, NIV.
4. Psalm 25:14, NIV.
5. Matthew 6:6, NIV.

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**To everything *there* is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven: A time to weep, and a time to laugh; A time to mourn, and a time to dance ...**

*Ecclesiastes 3:1, 4*  
*New King James Version*



# Footprints With A Twist

Imagine you and the Lord Jesus walking down the road together.

For much of the way the Lord's footprints go along steadily and consistently, but rarely varying the pace.

But your footprints are a disorganized stream of zigzags, starts, stops, turnarounds, circles, departures, and returns.

For much of the way it seems to go on like this, but gradually your footprints come more in line with the Lord's, soon paralleling His consistently.

You and Jesus are walking like true friends!

This seems perfect, but then an interesting thing happens:

Your footprints, that once etched the sand next to Jesus', are now walking precisely in His steps. Inside His larger footprints are your smaller ones, as safely you and Jesus are becoming one.

This goes on for many miles but gradually you notice another change.

The footprints inside the larger footprints now seem to grow larger. Eventually they disappear altogether.

There is only one set of footprints; they have become one.

This goes on for a long time, but suddenly the second set of footprints is back. This time it seems even worse! Zigzags all over the place. Stops. Starts. Deep gashes in the sand. A veritable mess of prints.

You are amazed and shocked. Your dream ends.

Now you pray:

'Lord, I understand the first scene with zigzags and fits. I was a new Christian; I was just learning. But you walked on through the storm and helped me learn to walk with you.'

'That is correct.'

'... and when the smaller footprints were inside Yours, I was actually learning to walk in Your steps; I followed you closely.'

'Very good. You have understood everything so far.'

'... and when the smaller footprints grew and filled Yours, I suppose that I was becoming like you in every way.'

'Precisely.'

'So, Lord, was there a regression or something? The footprints separated, and this time was worse than the first.'

There was a pause as the Lord answered with a smile in His voice.

'You didn't know? That was when we danced.'

'To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven: A time to weep and a time to laugh; A time to mourn and a time to dance ...' (Ecclesiastes 3:1, 4).



*May you have a day that makes you feel like dancing.*

**Jesus!**



# Prayer

Ted Rendall (1995)

Used with permission.

Asked about his plans for the day, Martin Luther once replied, ‘Work, work from early until late. In fact, I have so much work to do that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer.’ He believed that ‘to be a Christian without praying is no more possible than to be alive without breathing.’

C. F. Andrews, English missionary to India, noticed that whenever he returned to the West that men and women appeared to be living on the surface, almost frightened to be alone with themselves or their God. ‘They seem,’ he said, ‘to have lost the use of the greatest of all their faculties—prayer and communion with God.’

At this time in history God is looking for a praying people who will turn the tide of evil and error in church and society. But while Christians are upset by conditions around them and disturbed by the moral landslide, I believe that most are not ready to return to the Lord with fasting and weeping.

We know that there is a price to be paid for revival, but at the moment the price is too high for us. If man’s extremity is thus God’s opportunity, we are not yet at the point of extremity.

In these crisis days for our culture, God is calling us to prayer.

His name is being criticized and also even condemned by non-Christians because of the condition of the Church. But the quickest way to get a church on its feet is to get it on its knees.

The essence of revival praying is seeking God’s intervention.

In one of the great cotton factories of the south, there was a poster on the wall of the workroom: ‘If your threads get tangled, send for the foreman.’

One day a new worker tangled the threads in her machine. Trying her best to undo them, she only made things worse. Finally the foreman appeared, and after surveying the problem asked her why she had not called him.

‘I did my best,’ she replied.

‘No, you didn’t,’ said the foreman. ‘Doing your best is sending for me.’

The Church may be doing its best, but it is not good enough.



**While Christians are upset by conditions around them and disturbed by the moral landslide, most are not ready to pay the price for change.**



We need to urgently, unitedly, and humbly ask God to intervene.

Dr. A. C. Dixon, once pastor of Spurgeon’s Tabernacle in London, said, ‘When we rely upon organization, we get what organization can do; when we rely on education, we get what education can do; when we rely on eloquence, we get what eloquence can do. But when we rely upon prayer, we get what God can do.’

True revival praying majors on the heart relationship.

In Joel 2:13, we are exhorted to rend our hearts and not our garments.

God asks His people to come to Him with repentant and broken hearts. And He is ready to receive those who come into His presence meeting His requirements.

While we can never dictate how God will move in answer to our prayers, neither can we accept a view of divine sovereignty that nullifies our responsibility.

Evangelist D.L. Moody was crossing the Atlantic when fire broke out in the ship's hold. As the crew and passengers stood in line to pass buckets of water, a friend said to Moody, 'Let us go to the other end of the ship and engage in prayer.' But Moody replied, 'No, sir. We shall stand right here and pass the buckets and pray hard all the time.'

The church in the West may be sinking in the storm that is raging in our times, but our responsibility is to take our stand, pass the buckets and pray hard all the time.

The prophet asks, 'Who knows? He may turn and have pity and leave behind a blessing' (Joel 2:14). God is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and He relents from sending calamity when His people turn to Him.

In 1839 the Sultan of Turkey decreed that not a single representative of the Christian religion should remain in the empire. Hearing this, an American missionary to Turkey returned home to his colleague with the sad news. 'We will have to leave,' he said. 'The American consul and the British ambassador say that it is no use to meet this violent and vindictive monarch with antagonism.'

To that his friend replied, 'The Sultan of the Universe can, in answer to prayer, change the decree of the Sultan of Turkey,' and they gave themselves to prayer. The very next day the Sultan died and the decree was never executed.

Archimedes, the great pioneer in the realm of mechanics once declared, 'Give me a lever and a place to rest it, and I will move the world.'

God has given us the lever of prayer and the resting place of His promises.

We can indeed move the world.

**Ted Rendall** is Chancellor of Prairie Bible Institute and is also the author of several books, including *Fire in the Church*.

**'... With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying ...'**

***Ephesians 6:18***

*New International Version*



# Precious Moments

Paul Tan (2005)

Used with permission.

*You will never grow spiritually without spending time alone with God. Here's how to make that time special.*

My wife and two daughters were still asleep. It was just before dawn—around 4:30—and I was spending time alone with God. Suddenly, beautiful, heavenly worship filled my room. Not realizing what was happening, I rebuked the annoyance. After all, I was trying to focus on my fellowship with my heavenly Father.

In an instant my whole being was captivated by the voices of many angels worshiping, adoring and exalting God. I trembled to the core as I experienced an outpouring of His presence and peace.

Joy filled my spirit, soul and every cell in my body. There is no earthly word that can express the beauty and glory of His presence, which I experienced for about 45 minutes.

Having been born and raised in Indonesia, I am very familiar with how witch doctors communicate with demons and evil spirits. But when I received Jesus some 25 years ago I realized that the God I worship wants to relate to me personally. He wants to have an intimate relationship with His people.

I have had several angelic visitations, and they have made me want more—not more ‘goose bump’ experiences, but more of Him.

On the days following the visitation described above, I prayed and asked the Lord to reveal more of Himself to me. Then I waited. I expected Him to answer by sending another angelic visitation or shining a bright, heavenly light into my room. I was looking for some supernatural manifestations of His presence.

But God didn't respond as I thought He would. In fact, nothing happened, until I heard a still, small voice speaking directly to

my spirit, ‘Paul, I will reveal Myself through My Word.’

Throughout history, God has always revealed Himself to His people. His written Word, the Bible, uses phrases such as ‘God appeared to him,’ ‘God sent His angels to him,’ ‘God was with him,’ ‘God led him,’ and ‘God spoke to him’ to indicate the many ways in which God does this.

But even before the fall of man, God communicated with mankind. And after the fall, He took the initiative to rebuild the broken relationship between Him and His people.

But His people have not always responded. In Exodus 20:19–21 we see that the Israelites tried to avoid relating to Him. They wanted Moses to be their go-between.

The people of Israel said to Moses, ‘ “You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.” And Moses said to the people, “Do not fear; for God has come to test you, and that His fear may be before you so that you may not sin” ’ (NKJV).

But in spite of Moses' encouragement, ‘the people stood afar off’ (v. 21). But not Moses. ‘Moses drew near the thick darkness where God was’ (v. 21). He responded differently to God's presence than the rest of the Israelites.

## Worship From Afar

We tend to be like the people of Israel—not out of fear, but out of busyness. We try to justify our over-activity by doing multiple things at once to save time, including spending time alone with God. We drive to work, breakfast in hand, with a cell phone

headset plugged in one ear and a sermon going in the other—and we call that our ‘morning devotion.’

The Bible calls that worship from afar. No wonder we become double-minded! We have the head knowledge, but no intimate relationship with the One we worship. What we want is a high-speed spiritual connection that gives us a return even though we haven’t made an investment.

The sad thing is we believe God understands and approves of our busyness and our time constraints as long as we tithe. We even boast of the ministries we are involved in at church and the way we serve people. But we continue to stand afar off from the One for whom we do all these works.

Worship from afar is then just a one-way communication; it makes it possible for us to search the Scriptures without allowing the Scriptures to also search our hearts. No repentance is needed, and no obedience is required as long as we stick to our daily religious routines.

When we worship from afar, we go by what we feel and not by what God’s Word says. We believe only some selected verses in the Bible—the ones that tickle our ears.

But Moses was very different. He was busy serving, leading, judging, strategizing, giving counsel and listening to the Israelites’ many complaints; but he always went to the mountain to spend time alone with God. No wonder he experienced mighty miracles.

Today many Christians want to have a first-class experience with second-hand spiritual nourishment. They eat the digested Word from their pastor and from Christian books or magazines. They watch Christian television or listen to Christian radio. These are all good resources for growth, but they are not the same as personal time alone with God.

Can you imagine if we had lived in Jesus’ time? We would have found it hard to believe that Peter, Jesus’ disciple, had denied Him

three times. After all, Peter had seen many miracles, witnessed Lazarus raised from the dead, had walked on water, had seen Jesus transfigured, and much more. How could he turn away?

It was because Peter, long before Jesus was ever taken prisoner, followed Jesus only at a distance. He doubted His Word before he ever denied the Word made flesh.

Let’s look at Peter’s record. He did not believe Jesus when He quoted the Scripture, ‘I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered’ (Matthew 26:31). And when Jesus prophesied that he would deny Him three times, Peter still boldly proclaimed his loyalty (see vv. 34–35).

While Jesus spent time alone with the Father in Gethsemane, Peter slept (see v. 40). When Jesus faced the Sanhedrin, Peter sat outside in the courtyard (see vv. 57–58)—where he ultimately denied Jesus.

What a tragic story! But thank God it didn’t end there. Peter regressed, for sure, but then he progressed through both repentance and obedience.

Have you ever thought that what happened to Peter, the disciple of Jesus, could happen to you? You may still be in church doing your daily routine of ministry, but you lose sight of the purpose for which you are serving.

The Bible tells us the story of a man and his nephew. For quite some time the nephew was blessed abundantly, but he didn’t realize it was because of his uncle’s relationship with the Lord that he was blessed. The blessings caused him to compromise and stay away from God. Little by little, he began to worship from afar, until one day his life ended tragically.

On the contrary, his uncle, though he was not perfect, continued to seek the Lord. That’s how his character was molded. He was purified and tested, and even in his old age he kept on spending time alone with God. These two men were Abram and Lot.

Lot looked around and made a decision about the land he wanted based on what he could see (refer to Genesis 13:10–11); then he began to compromise by pitching his tent as far as Sodom (see v. 12). He wanted to know how far he could stretch God’s grace. Before long he actually then lived in Sodom (see v. 14:12).

When God decided to destroy this wicked city, He sent angels to save Lot and his family. So Lot did then experience angelic visitation. But his spiritual life degenerated to such a point that even his sons-in-law would not heed his words. His wife became a pillar of salt for disobeying God, and his daughters caused the first incest recorded in the Bible.

But Abram was different. Abram spent time alone with God continuously. As he did, he was changed.

God changed his name from Abram, which means father, to Abraham, the father of multitudes. Through the promise God gave them for a son, as well as through their material circumstances, Abraham and Sarah were blessed.

Do you want to be like Abraham—close to God, and blessed in your life? Then begin now to set aside time to be with God. Here’s what that involves:

**A Childlike Approach.** Spending time alone with God is simple. God is good, and He wants to have relationship with us. In fact, He has taken the initiative. We should not be discouraged from pursuing what He so longs to give us.

Jesus Himself told us, ‘Seek, and you shall find’ (Matthew 7:7). James 4:8 says, ‘Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.’

**A Time Commitment.** We need to set aside time to be alone with God on a regular basis. Whether early or late, it is best to make it around the same time each day so that we will develop a habit and begin to look forward to it with anticipation.

**A Choice.** This has nothing to do with personality or whether you are a morning person or you are a night person. But it has everything to do with choosing your priority. Mary chose the better part by sitting at Jesus’ feet and listening to Him (see Luke 10:39–42). However, it is not a question of spending time with the Lord or doing the work of ministry. We can—and must—do both.

**Focus.** Even when we are set apart in a quiet place to spend time with God, we can have difficulty maintaining our focus. Because of the busyness we are accustomed to, with so many things going on at once, our minds are unused to concentrating on God alone and on His Word. We will have to practice regaining our focus regularly until it becomes second nature to us.



**God is not distant, and He does not want us to worship Him from afar. He wants us to draw near to Him in intimate fellowship.**



**The Word of God.** Studying God’s Word is essential to our growth as Christians. The Bible says, ‘Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God’ (Romans 12:2).

The way we renew our minds is through the Word. It is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path (see Psalm 119:105), helping us to discern God’s plans for us, understand His nature and overcome the enemy. When Jesus was tempted He didn’t fight the devil with emotions or positive thinking, but by quoting to him the Word of God.

**Obedience.** Why did God tell Moses not to draw near to Him? (See Exodus 3:5.) It was

because the place of His presence is holy ground. If you seek the Lord and yet are unwilling to stop sinning, you will not find Him because you are seeking Him in a place where He is not. But if you sincerely forsake your sins and draw near to Him, you will surely find Him.

God is not distant, and He does not want us to worship Him from afar. He wants us to draw near to Him in intimacy so that He can have fellowship with us and reveal Himself to us. But it's up to us to respond. When we do, we will find in His presence 'pleasures forevermore' (Psalm 16:11).



**Paul Tan** is pastor of City Blessing Church in Claremont, California, and overseer of a network of primarily Indonesian churches in the United States, Canada, Europe and Indonesia. For more information, log on at [www.cityblessing.org](http://www.cityblessing.org).



# A Vespers Office

Phyllis Tickle (2000)

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*(To be observed between 5 and 8 p.m.)*

## The Call to Prayer

Come, let us bow down, and bend the knee and kneel before the Lord our Maker. For he is our God and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand (Psalm 95:6–7).

## The Request for Presence

I call upon you, O God, for you will answer me; incline your ear to me, and hear my words (Psalm 17:6).

## The Greeting

You are God: I praise you:

You are the Lord: I acclaim you;

You are the eternal Father: all creation worships you.

Throughout the world the holy Church acclaims you: Father, of majesty unbounded, your true and only Son, worthy of all worship, and the Holy Spirit, advocate and guide.

As these have been from the beginning, so they are now, and also evermore shall be. Alleluia.

## The Hymn

*All Praise to Thee, My God, This Night*

All Praise to Thee, my God, this night,  
For all the blessings of the light!  
Keep me, O keep me, King of kings,  
Beneath Thine own almighty wings.

Forgive me, Lord, for Thy dear Son,  
The ill that I this day have done,  
That with the world, myself, and Thee,  
I, ere I sleep, at peace may be.

O may my soul on Thee repose,  
And with sweet sleep my eyelids close,  
Sleep that may me more vigorous make  
To serve my God when I awake.

When in the night I sleepless be,  
My soul with heavenly thoughts supply;  
Let no ill dreams disturb my rest,  
No powers of darkness me molest.

O when shall I, in endless day,  
For ever chase dark sleep away,  
And hymns divine with angels sing,  
All praise to Thee, eternal king?

Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Him, all creatures here below;  
Praise Him above, ye heavenly hosts;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

—Thomas Ken

## The Refrain for the Vespers Lessons

[To be said after each Scripture reading for the day]

O Lord, you are my portion and my cup; it is you who uphold my lot (Psalm 16:5).

## The Vespers Psalm: An Evening Song

I will bless the LORD who gives me counsel; my heart teaches me, night after night.

I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand I shall not fall.

My heart, therefore, is glad, and my spirit rejoices; my body also shall rest in hope.

For you will not abandon me to the grave, nor let your holy one see the Pit.

You will show me the path of life; in your presence is fullness of joy, and in your right hand are pleasures for evermore (Psalm 16:7–11).

### ***The Lord's Prayer***

#### **The Prayer Appointed for the Week**

Holy Father, creator and sustaining wisdom of all that is, both in heaven and on earth, take from me those thoughts, actions and objects that are hurtful.

Give me instead those things that are profitable for me and all who seek rightly to praise you. I ask this grace in the company

of all believers and through the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, who is, with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.

#### **The Concluding Prayer of the Church**

Lord Jesus, stay with me, for evening is at hand and the day is past; be my companion in the way, kindle my heart, and awaken hope, that I may know you as you are revealed in Scripture and in the breaking of bread. Grant this for the sake of your love toward me. Amen.

*Excerpted from The Divine Hours: Prayers for Summertime by Phyllis Tickle.*



**Lord Jesus, stay with me  
... be my companion in  
the way, kindle my heart,  
and awaken hope.**

**So intense were her pleadings at the altar that her bishop, Ambrose of Milan, once sent her home, saying, 'Go your way; as sure as you live, it is impossible that the son of such tears should perish.'**



# Monica: Praying the Prodigal Home

Paul Thigpen (2004)

Used with permission.

Her heart was broken as only a Christian mother's heart could be. Now that her son had reached adolescence, he was following the footsteps of his pagan father, a lustful, dissolute, violent man. Despite her pleadings, the youth was rushing to self-destruction.

Monica (c. 331-387), a respected matron of the ancient North African city of Tagaste, longed to see her son settle down with a chaste and godly wife. Instead, he perpetually caroused with his buddies, and eventually he moved in with a mistress. Together they had an illegitimate child.

Monica begged her son to join the church and be freed by the life-changing truth of Christ. Instead, her son fell in with a cult group. Before long, he was persuading others to dabble in its dark heresies.

The young man at last decided to move across the sea to Rome, in part to escape his mother's pleas. When she threatened to follow him there, he tricked her into missing the boat. But he hadn't reckoned with the power of the prayers that sailed with him—nor with his mother's perseverance as an intercessor.

Monica finally caught up with the youth in Rome and followed him when he moved to

Milan, urging him to end his waywardness. Still, he refused. Her heart ached: Would she ever live to see him change his ways?

Through 15 long years, Monica never lost heart, but prayed with the heart of a warrior. Every day, twice a day, morning and evening, she went to the local church to pour her heart out to God. *So intense were her pleadings at the altar that her bishop, Ambrose of Milan, once sent her home, saying, 'Go your way; as sure as you live, it is impossible that the son of such tears should perish.'*

Monica took these words as a prophecy from God Himself, and she never lost confidence that her prayers would be answered. Sure enough, only a few short months before she died, her perseverance was at last rewarded. The young man finally repented, was baptized, and gave his life to Jesus Christ.

Who was that wayward son? His name was Augustine—the brilliant theologian who became the revered bishop of Hippo, the saint whose passion for God and profound spiritual wisdom would come to shape the course of Western civilization.



**Paul Thigpen** is the author of 30 books. His most recent title is *The Passion: Reflections on the Suffering and Death of Jesus* (*Allegiance*, © 2004).



# Suggested Reading

## *Personal Worship*

### Periodical

*Pray!* magazine, formerly published by NavPress, was a tool (1) to guide believers into a deeper relationship with Christ through prayer; and (2) to help believers pray more powerfully and effectively. To get a downloadable prayer library, go to [www.navpress.com/prayerlibrary.aspx](http://www.navpress.com/prayerlibrary.aspx).

### Books

Aronis, Alex B. 2002. *Developing intimacy with God: An eight-week guide based on Ignatius' 'spiritual exercises.'* Rev. ed. Makati City, Philippines: Union Church of Manila.

The author gives instructions on how one can increase devotion and adoration for God, and how to nurture and deepen one's relationship with Jesus. To order, visit [www.skywebsite.com/alexaronis/intimacywithGod](http://www.skywebsite.com/alexaronis/intimacywithGod), or contact Alex at his email address: [aaronis@sprintmail.com](mailto:aaronis@sprintmail.com).

Benner, David G. 2003. *Surrender to love: Discovering the heart of Christian spirituality.* Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

Most of us recoil from the concept of surrendering to a power or authority outside ourselves. But it need not be threatening when the One to whom we surrender is both goodness and love.

Bezek, Cynthia Hyle. 2008. *Come away with me: A guide to prayer retreats.* Colorado Springs, Colo.: *Pray!* Books, NavPress.

Is spiritual refreshment a luxury or a necessity? God has more for us than working on empty, and he longs to be our source of renewal. This is a practical, easy-to-follow guide on how to create your own personal getaway. Jesus found time to be with the Father, and so can you.

Blackaby, Henry and Norman. 2006. *Experiencing prayer with Jesus: The power of His presence and example.* Sisters, Ore.: Multnomah Publishers.

This 2006 U.S. National Day of Prayer book will revolutionize your prayer life. The One who loved us to his death continues to pursue us, humbly laying his heart over ours. His presence and power will be with us, and we will be changed forever.

Graf, Jonathan. 2002. *The power of personal prayer: Learning to pray with faith and purpose.* Colorado Springs, Colo.: NavPress.

In an easy-to-understand and encouraging manner, the author presents the keys to a dynamic prayer life. He teaches the foundational truths of what prayer is, and tackles tough questions.

Griffin, Emilie. 2001. *Doors into prayer: An invitation.* Brewster, Mass.: Paraclete Press.

An introduction to the life of prayer, the book can be sampled at random moments. It captures the basics of prayer and the practicalities of a disciplined prayer life.

Grubb, Norman. 1996 printing (from 1974). *Rees Howells, intercessor.* Fort Washington, Penn.: Christian Literature Crusade.

For those praying for special needs, ill health, lost loved ones, and other petitions, this classic is a 'must.' Howells found the key to prevailing prayer and learned to love the unlovely.

Lamb, Joy. 2007. *The sword of the Spirit: The word of God.* 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Jacksonville, Fla.: Lamb's Books, Inc.

This ‘handbook of praying God’s Word’ is not a book to read, but one to be used daily. It is a powerful tool to use when you pray individually or in a group, for Word-centered praying, led by the Spirit, is an absolute must for effective intercession.

Lundell, Peter. 2009. *Prayer power: 30 days to a stronger connection with God*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Revel.

The book helps you improve the essential facets of prayer such as passion, routine, fasting, praying with others, listening to God, handling distractions, and spiritual warfare.

Manuel, David. 2005. *Once upon a prayer: How to hear God in your heart*. Hagerstown, Md.: McDougal Publishing.

After coming within a millimeter of dying, God spoke to the author in his heart. As God drew him ever closer, he realized that he had regained his first love of the Father. He shows you how to do the same.

Murray, Andrew. 1982 (edited for the modern reader). *The ministry of intercession*. New Kensington, Penn.: Whitaker House.

Discover that prayer is the most dynamic opportunity available to God’s children today. It not only strengthens our own faith and energizes our times with God, but it also enables us to intercede for those we love and those we are concerned about.

Nouwen, Henri J.M. 1992. *The return of the prodigal son*. New York: Doubleday.

In seizing inspiration that came through Rembrandt’s depiction of the Gospel story, Nouwen probes it in light of his own life journey, with themes of homecoming, affirmation, and reconciliation.

Pearson, Mark A. 1996. *Why can’t I be me? Understanding how personality type affects emotional healing, relationships, and spiritual growth*. 2<sup>nd</sup> printing. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Chosen Books.

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator will help you determine your personality type—which is a special gift from God and a source of individual creativity. In his care you can be free to be the person you really are. *Note*: The book can be ordered from [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).

Sorge, Bob. 2005 (from 2001). *Secrets of the secret place: Keys to igniting your personal time with God*. Lee’s Summit, Mo.: Oasis House.

The ‘secret place’ is the fountainhead of kingdom faithfulness. With this book as a road map, gain fresh vision and inspiration for going forward on a journey of the issues of life.

Spangler, Ann. 2004. *Praying the names of God*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan.

The names of God in Scripture aren’t just ornamental and accidental—they are given to us to confirm attributes of God. They serve as a ladder to climb our way out of discouragement, defeat, bewilderment, and weakness. A daily guide and a journal are also available.

Stuhr, Diana. 2006. *He spoke. I listened*. BookSurge, LLC. [Orders@booksurge.com](mailto:Orders@booksurge.com).

The author is a Wycliffe member, and the book covers a variety of subjects and events centered on the Scriptures. Her questions are thought-provoking, and her ponderings insightful. She does not shy away from things too difficult to understand.

Thomas, Gary. 2002. *Sacred pathways*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan.

The book unfolds nine spiritual temperaments—their traits, strengths, and pitfalls—and helps individuals see themselves and the ways they naturally express their relationship with Jesus Christ. God designed for each person to experience growth and fulfillment.

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The Message

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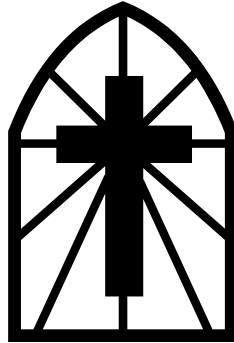
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**Note:** Inclusion of certain readings and articles are intended to add to an overall understanding of the topic, but SIL does not necessarily agree with every statement in each reading and each article.



## ***Notes***

So, if you're serious about living this new resurrection life with Christ, *act* like it ... don't shuffle along, eyes to the ground, absorbed with the things right in front of you. Look up, and be *alert* to what's going on around Christ—that's where the action is. See things from *His* perspective.



*Colossians 3:1–2*  
*The Message*





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