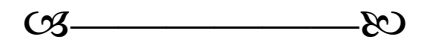
Prayers for Formal Occasions or Personal Reflections

We learn to speak to God
because God has spoken to us and speaks to us…
God's speech in Jesus Christ meets us in the Holy Scriptures.
If we wish to pray with confidence and gladness,
then the words of Holy Scripture
will have to be the solid basis of our prayer.
Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "Psalms: The Prayer Book of the Bible"

O God, most high and most glorious,
the thought of Your infinite serenity cheers me,
for when I am toiling and moiling, troubled and distressed,
You are for ever at perfect peace!
Your designs cause You no fear or care of unfulfillment—
they stand fast as the eternal hills.
Your power knows no bounds and Your goodness knows no stint.
You bring order out of confusion,
making my defeats Your victories—
the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!
Let the weeds that grow in my soul be cut at their roots.
Grant me to know that I truly live
only when I live to You—all else is trifling.
Your Presence alone can make me holy, devout, strong and happy.



Prayer is the soul's sincere desire, uttered or unexpressed;
the motion of a hidden fire that trembles in the breast.

Prayer is the simplest form of speech that infant lips can try,
prayer the sublimest strains that reach the Majesty on high.

Prayer is the Christian's vital breath, the Christian's native air,
his watchword at the gates of death: he enters heaven with prayer.

Prayer is the contrite sinner's voice, returning from his ways;
while angels in their songs rejoice, and cry, *'Behold, he prays*!'

The saints in prayer appear as one, in word and deed and mind;
while with the Father and the Son sweet fellowship they find.

Nor prayer is made on earth alone: the Holy Spirit pleads,
and Jesus on the eternal throne for sinners intercedes.

O Thou by whom we come to God, the Life, the Truth, the Way,
the path of prayer thyself hast trod: Lord, teach us how to pray!
James Montgomery (author of "Angels from the realms of glory"):

How to Pray

Quiet yourself and connect with God: *Our Father in heaven, may Your Name be kept holy [hallowed, honoured, reverenced].*

Sing a hymn or song from the heart to God: *Alter the lyrics to sing to God, not about Him.*

Read aloud a prayer (or use a hymn as a prayer): *Read it slowly and thoughtfully, modifying the words to make it your own.*

Ask God for your needs: *Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Keep us from falling into sin when we are tempted. Save us from the evil one.*[Matt.6:13] *Forgive my hidden faults. Keep me also from the sins I want to commit. May they not be my master.*[Ps.19:13]

Devote yourself and your day to God: *LORD, may the words of my mouth and the thoughts of my heart be pleasing in your eyes. You are my Rock and my Redeemer.*[Ps.19:14]

Prayer is not a formula for getting what we want but the expression of the soul's sincere desire. However, God does hear our prayers and He does answer our prayers. Maturity is trusting God with His answers! *Before they call, I will answer.*[Is.65:24] *Your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.*[Matt.6:8] God can't answer our prayers if we haven't prayed them—but God does answer prayers when we ask according to His will! *This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.*[1Jn.5:14-15]

God's name, God's kingdom, God's will
must be the primary object of Christian prayer.
Of course it is not as if God needed our prayers,
but they are the means by which the disciples
become partakers in the heavenly treasure for which they pray.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, The Cost Of Discipleship

Holy Spirit, rise up within me
and cause me to triumph every moment of today.

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Puritan Prayers

Confession and Petition

Holy Lord, I have sinned times without number, and been guilty of pride and unbelief, of failure to find Your mind in Your Word, of neglect to seek You in my daily life. My transgressions and short-comings present me with a list of accusations, but I bless You that they will not stand against me, for all have been laid on Christ. Go on to subdue my corruptions, and grant me grace to live above them. Let not the passions of the flesh nor lustings of the mind bring my spirit into subjection, but rule over me in liberty and power. I thank You that many of my prayers have been refused. I have asked amiss and do not have, I have prayed from lusts and been rejected, I have longed for Egypt and been given a wilderness. Go on with Your patient work, answering 'no' to my wrongful prayers, and fitting me to accept it. Purge me from every false desire, every base aspiration, everything contrary to Your rule. I thank You for Your wisdom and Your love, for all the acts of discipline to which I am subject, for sometimes putting me into the furnace to refine my gold and remove my dross. No trial is so hard to bear as a sense of sin. If You should give me choice to live in pleasure and keep my sins, or to have them burnt away with trial, give me sanctified affliction. Deliver me from every evil habit, every accretion of former sins, everything that dims the brightness of Your grace in me, everything that prevents me taking delight in You. Then I shall bless You, God of Jeshurun, for helping me to be upright.

Consecration and Worship

My God, I feel it is heaven to please You, and to be what You would have me be. O that I were holy as You are holy, pure as Christ is pure, perfect as Your Spirit is perfect! These, I feel, are the best commands in Your Book, and shall I break them? must I break them? am I under such a necessity as long as I live here? Woe, woe is me that I am a sinner, that I grieve this blessed God, who is infinite in goodness and grace! Oh, if He would punish me for my sins, it would not wound my heart so deep to offend Him; But though I sin continually, He

continually repeats His kindness to me. At times I feel I could bear any suffering, but how can I dishonour this glorious God? What shall I do to glorify and worship this best of beings? O that I could consecrate my soul and body to His service, withoutt restraint, for ever! O that I could give myself up to Him, so as never more to attempt to be my own! or have any will or affections that are not perfectly conformed to His will and His love! But, alas, I cannot live and not sin. O may angels glorify Him incessantly, and, if possible, prostrate themselves lower before the blessed King of heaven! I long to bear a part with them in ceaseless praise; but when I have done all I can to eternity I shall not be able to offer more than a small fraction of the homage that the glorious God deserves. Give me a heart full of divine, heavenly love.

Contentment

Heavenly Father, if I should suffer need, or go unclothed, or be in poverty, then make my heart prize Your love, know it and be constrained by it, though I be denied all material blessings. It is Your mercy to afflict and try me with wants, for by these trials I see my sins and desire severance from them. Let me willingly accept misery, sorrows, temptations, if I can thereby feel sin as the greatest evil—and be delivered from it with gratitude to You, acknowledging this as the highest testimony of Your love. When Your Son, Jesus, came into my soul instead of sin, He became more dear to me than sin had formerly been—His kindly rule replaced sin's tyranny. Teach me to believe that if ever I would have any sin subdued, I must not only labour to overcome it, but must invite Christ to abide in the place of it—and He must become to me, more than vile lust had been, that His sweetness, power and life may be there. Thus I must seek a grace from Him contrary to sin, but I dare not claim it apart from Himself. When I am afraid of evils to come, comfort me by showing me that in myself I am dying, condemned and wretched, but in Christ I am reconciled and I live; that in myself I find insufficiency and no rest, but in Christ there is satisfaction and peace; that in myself I am feeble and unable to do good, but in Christ I have ability to do all things. Though now I have His graces in part, I shall shortly have them perfectly, in that state

where You will show Yourself fully reconciled, and alone sufficient, efficient, loving me completely, with sin abolished. O Lord, hasten that day.

The Deeps

Lord Jesus, give me a deeper repentance, a horror of sin and a dread of its approach. Help me to flee from sin and to resolve that my heart shall be Yours alone. Give me a deeper trust, that I may lose myself to find myself in You, the ground of my rest, the spring of my being. Give me a deeper knowledge of Yourself as Saviour, Master, Lord, and King. Give me deeper power in private prayer, more sweetness in Your Word, more steadfast grip on its truth. Give me deeper holiness in speech, thought, action, and let me not seek moral virtue apart from You. Plough deep in me, great Lord, heavenly Husbandman, that my being may be a tilled field, the roots of grace spreading far and wide until You alone are seen in me—Your beauty, golden like summer harvest; Your fruitfulness, as autumn plenty. I have no master but You, no law but Your will, no delight but Yourself, no wealth but that which You give, no good but that which You bless, no peace but that which You bestow. I am nothing but what You make me. I have nothing but what I receive from You. I can be nothing but that what grace adorns me. Quarry me deep, dear Lord and then fill me to overflowing with living water.

Devotion

God of my end, it is my greatest and noblest pleasure to be acquainted with You. It is sweet to look into my being when all my powers and passions are united and engaged in pursuit of You; when my soul longs and passionately breathes after conformity to You and the full enjoyment of You. No hours pass away with so much pleasure as those spent in communion with You. O how desirable, O how profitable to the Christian life is a spirit of holy watchfulness and godly jealousy over myself; when my soul is afraid of nothing except grieving and offending You, the blessed God, my Father and Friend, whom I love and long to please, rather than be happy in myself! May my joy derive from glorifying and delighting You. I long to fill all my time for You,

whether at home or in the way; to place all my concerns in Your hands; to be entirely at Your disposal, having no will or interest of my own. Help me to live to You for ever, to make You my last and only end.

Divine Support

You are the blessed God, happy in Yourself, source of happiness in Your creatures, my Maker, Benefactor, Proprietor and Upholder. You protect and sustain me, support and indulge me, save and keep me—in every situation, You are able to meet my needs and wants. May I live by You and live for You—never being satisfied with my Christian progress save as I resemble Christ. May conformity to His principles, character and conduct grow hourly in my life. Let Your unexampled love, constrain me into holy obedience and render my duty my delight. If others deem my faith, folly; my meekness, infirmity; my zeal, madness; my hope, delusion; my actions, hypocrisy—may I rejoice to suffer for Your Name. Keep me walking steadfastly towards the country of everlasting delights—that paradise-land which is my true inheritance. Support me by the strength of heaven, that I may never turn back or desire false pleasures that will disappear into nothing. And as I pursue my heavenly journey, let me be known as a person with no aim but that of a burning desire for You and the good and salvation of my fellow man.

Evening Praise

Giver of all, another day is ended and I take my place beneath my great Redeemer's cross, where healing streams continually descend, where balm is poured into every wound, where I wash anew in the all-cleansing blood, assured that You see in me no spots of sin. Yet a little while and I shall go to Your home and be no more seen. Help me to gird up the loins of my mind, to quicken my step and to speed as if each moment were my last, so that my life is joyous and my death is glorious. I thank You for the temporal blessings of this world—the refreshing air, the light of the sun, the food that renews strength, the raiment that clothes, the dwelling that shelters, the sleep that gives rest, the starry canopy of night, the warm summer breeze, the flowers' sweetness, the music of flowing streams, the happy endearments of

family, kindred and friends and the animate and things inanimate things that minister to my comfort—my cup runs over. Suffer me not to be insensible to these daily mercies—Your hand bestows blessings and Your power averts evil. I bring my tribute of thanks for the full warmth of faith, the cheering presence of Your Spirit, the strength of Your restraining will and Your spiking of hell's artillery—Blessed be my sovereign Lord!

Evening Prayer

O lover of Your people, You have placed my whole being in the hands of Jesus, my Redeemer, Commander, Husband and Friend and You care for me in Him. Keep me holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners; may I not know the voice of strangers, but go to Him where He is, and follow where He leads. You have bathed me once for all in the sin-removing fountain, cleanse me now from this day's defilement, from its faults, deficiencies of virtue and harmful extremes, that I may exhibit a perfect character in Jesus. O Master, who washed the disciples' feet, be very patient with me, be very condescending to my faults; go on with me till Your great work in me is completed. I desire to conquer self in every respect, to overcome the body with its affections and lusts, to keep under my flesh, to guard my manhood from all grosser sins, to check the refined power of my natural mind, to live entirely to Your glory, to be deaf to unmerited censure and the praise of men. Nothing can hurt my new-born inner man, it cannot be smitten or die; nothing can mar the dominion of Your Spirit within me; it is enough to have Your approbation (*approval)* and that of my conscience. Keep me humble, dependent, supremely joyful, as calm and quiet as a sucking child, yet earnest and active. I wish not so much to do as to be, and I long to be like Jesus; if You make me right I shall be right. Lord, I belong to You, make me worthy of Yourself.

Evening Renewal

My Father, if Your mercy had bounds, where would be my refuge from just wrath? But Your love in Christ is without measure. Thus, I present myself to You with sins of commission and omission, against You, my Father, against You, adorable Redeemer, against You and Your

strivings, O Holy Spirit, against the dictates of my conscience, against the precepts of Your Word, against my neighbours and myself. Enter not into judgment with me, for I plead no righteousness of my own, and have no cloak for iniquity. Pardon my day dark with evil. This night I renew my penitence. Every morning I vow to love You more fervently, to serve You more sincerely, to be more devoted in my life, to be wholly Yours; Yet I soon stumble, backslide, and have to confess my weakness, misery and sin. But I bless You that the finished work of Jesus needs no addition from my doings, that His oblation is sufficient satisfaction for my sins. If future days be mine, help me to amend my life, to hate and abhor evil, to flee the sins I confess. Make me more resolute, more watchful, more prayerful. Let no evil fruit spring from evil seeds my hands have sown; Let no neighbour be hardened in vanity and folly by my want of circumspection. If this day I have been ashamed of Christ and His Word, or have shown unkindness, malice, envy, lack of love, unadvised speech or heavy temper, then let it be no stumbling block to others or dishonour to Your Name. O help me to set an upright example that will ever rebuke vice, allure to goodness and evidence that the ways of Christ are lovely.

Grace Active

O God, may Your Spirit speak in me that I may speak to You. Lord Jesus, great High Priest, You have opened a new and living way by which a fallen creature can approach You with acceptance. Help me to contemplate the dignity of Your Person, the perfectness of Your sacrifice and the effectiveness of Your intercession. O what blessedness accompanies devotion, when under all the trials that weary me, the cares that corrode me, the fears that disturb me and the infirmities that oppress me, I can come to You in my need and feel peace beyond understanding! The grace that restores, is necessary to preserve, lead, guard, supply, help me; and here Your saints encourage my hope—they were once poor and are now rich, bound and are now free, tried and now are victorious. Every new duty calls for more grace than I now possess, but not more than is found in You, the Divine Treasury, in whom all fullness dwells. To You I repair for grace upon

grace, until every void made by sin be replenished and I am filled with all Your fullness. May my desires be enlarged and my hopes emboldened, that I may honour You by my entire dependency and the greatness of my expectation. Prepare me for all the smiles of prosperity, the frowns of adversity, the losses of substance, the death of friends, the days of darkness, the changes of life, and the last great change of all. May I find Your grace sufficient for all my needs.

Heart Corruptions

O God, may Your Spirit speak in me, that I may speak to You. I have no merit so let the merit of Jesus stand for me. I am undeserving but I look to Your tender mercy. I am full of infirmities, wants and sin but You are full of grace. I confess my sin, my frequent sin, my wilful sin—all my powers of body and soul are defiled and a fountain of pollution is deep within my nature. There are chambers of foul images within my being; I have gone from one odious room to another, walked in a no-man's-land of dangerous imaginations and pried into the secrets of my fallen nature. I am utterly ashamed that I am what I am in myself. I have no green shoot in me nor fruit, but thorns and thistles; I am a fading leaf that the wind drives away; I live bare and barren as a winter tree, unprofitable, fit to be hewn down and burnt. Lord, have mercy on me. You have struck a heavy blow at my pride, at the false god of self and I lie in pieces before You. But You have given me another master and lord, Your Son, Jesus. And now my heart is turned towards holiness, my life speeds as an arrow from a bow towards complete obedience to You. Help me in all my doings to put down sin and to humble pride. Save me from the love of the world and the pride of life; from everything that is natural to fallen man and let Christ's nature be seen in me day by day. Grant me grace to bear Your will without repining and delight to be not only chiselled, squared, or fashioned but separated from the old rock where I have been embedded so long and lifted from the quarry to the upper air, where I may be built in Christ for ever.

Longings after God

My dear Lord, I can but tell You that You know I long for nothing but

Yourself, nothing but holiness, nothing but union with Your will. You have given me these desires and You alone can give me the thing desired. My soul longs for communion with You, for mortification of indwelling corruption—especially spiritual pride. How precious it is to have a tender sense and clear apprehension of the mystery of godliness and of true holiness! What a blessedness to be like You as much as it is possible for a creature to be like its Creator! Lord, give me more of Your likeness, enlarge my soul to contain fullness of holiness and engage me to live more for You. Help me to be less pleased with my spiritual experiences and when I feel at ease after sweet communings, teach me it is far too little that I know and do. Blessed Lord, let me climb up near to You, and love and pant for deliverance from the body of sin, for my soul mourns to think it should ever lose sight of its beloved. Wrap my life in divine love—keep me ever desiring You and more fixed on You. May I always be humble and resigned to Your will, that I may be more fitted for doing and serving.

Meeting God

Great God, in public and private, in sanctuary and home, may my life be steeped in prayer, filled with the spirit of grace and supplication—and may each prayer be perfumed with the incense of atoning blood! Help me and defend me, until from praying ground I pass to the realm of unceasing praise. Urged by my need, invited by Your promises and called by Your Spirit, I enter Your presence and worship You with godly fear—awed by Your majesty, greatness, glory, but encouraged by Your love. I am all poverty as well as all guilt, having nothing of my own with which to repay You—but in the arms of faith, I bring Jesus to You, pleading His righteousness to offset my iniquities, rejoicing that He will weigh down the scales for me and satisfy Your justice. Although the least sin deserves infinite punishment because it is done against an infinite God, yet great sin draws out great grace and so I bless You that that there is mercy for me. For where guilt is most terrible, there Your mercy in Christ is most free and deep. Bless me by revealing to me more of His saving merits, by causing Your goodness

to pass before me, by speaking peace to my contrite heart. Strengthen me to give You no rest until Christ shall reign supreme within me—in every thought, word and deed—in a faith that purifies the heart, overcomes the world, works by love, fastens me to You, and ever clings to the cross.

Morning

Compassionate Lord, Your mercies have brought me to the dawn of another day. Its gift will be in vain unless I grow in grace, increase in knowledge, and ripen for spiritual harvest. Let me this day, know You as You are, love You supremely, serve You wholly and admire You fully. Here is my grateful heart, overflow it with Your choicest gifts; here is my understanding, chase away any mists of ignorance. O ever watchful Shepherd, lead, guide and tend me this day; without Your restraining rod I err and stray. Hedge up my path lest I wander into unwholesome pleasure and drink its poisonous streams; direct my feet that I be not entangled in satan's secret snares, nor fall into his hidden traps. Defend me from assailing foes, from evil circumstances, from myself. My adversaries are part and parcel of my nature; they cling to me as my very skin; I cannot escape their contact. In my rising up and sitting down they barnacle me; they entice with constant baits; my enemy is within the citadel. Come with almighty power and cast him out, pierce him to death, and abolish in me every particle of carnal life this day.

Morning Dedication

Almighty God, as I cross the threshold of this day, I commit myself—my soul, my body, my affairs and my friends—into Your care. Watch over me, keep me, guide me, direct me, sanctify me and bless me. Incline my heart to Your ways. As a potter forms clay, mould me wholly into the image of Jesus. May my lips be a well-tuned harp to sound Your praise. Let those around, see me living by Your Spirit, trampling the world underfoot, unconformed to lying vanities, transformed by a renewed mind, clad in the entire armour of God, shining as a never-dimmed light and showing holiness in all my doings. Let no evil this day soil my thoughts, words or hands. May I travel the miry paths of life, free from spot or stain. In needful transactions let

my affection be in heaven and my love soar upwards in flames of fire. May my gaze be fixed on unseen things, and my eyes open to the emptiness, fragility, mockery and vanities of this world. May I view all things in the mirror of eternity, waiting for the coming of my Lord, listening for the last trumpet call, havening unto the new heaven and earth. Order this day all my communications according to Your wisdom and to the gain of mutual good. May I speak each word as if my last word and walk each step as if my final one—and if my life should end today, let this be my best day.

Morning Needs

O God the author of all good, I come to You for the grace another day will require for its duties and events. I step out into a wicked world; I know that without You I can do nothing, that everything with which I shall be concerned, however harmless in itself, may prove an occasion of sin or folly, unless I am kept by Your power. You hold me up and so I shall be safe. Preserve my understanding from subtilty of error, my affections from love of idols, my character from stain of vice, my profession from every form of evil. May I engage in nothing in which I cannot implore Your blessing, and in which I cannot invite Your inspection. Prosper me in all lawful undertakings, or prepare me for disappointments. Give me neither poverty nor riches. Feed me with food convenient for me, lest I be full and deny You and say, "*Who is the Lord*?" or be poor, and steal, and take Your name in vain. May every creature be made good to me by prayer and Your will. Teach me how to use the world and not abuse it; to improve my talents and to redeem my time; to walk in wisdom toward those without and in kindness to those within; to do good to all people and especially to my fellow Christians. And to God be all the glory.

Openness

Lord of immortality, before whom angels bow and archangels veil their faces, enable me to serve You with reverence and godly fear. You who are Spirit and require truth in the inward parts, help me to worship You in spirit and in truth. You who are righteous, let me not harbour sin in my heart, or indulge a worldly temper, or seek satisfaction in

things that perish. I haven towards an hour when earthly pursuits and possessions will appear vain, when it will be indifferent whether I have been rich or poor, successful or disappointed, admired or despised. But it will be of eternal moment that I have mourned for sin, hungered and thirsted after righteousness, loved the Lord Jesus in sincerity and gloried in His cross. May these objects engross my chief solicitude (*consideration*)! Produce in me those principles and dispositions that make Your service perfect freedom. Expel from my mind all sinful fear and shame, so that with firmness and courage I may confess the Redeemer before others. May I go forth with You, being zealous with Your knowledge, filled with Your wisdom, walking with Your circumspection, asking counsel of You in all things, repairing to the Scriptures for Your orders and staying my mind on Your peace because nothing can befall me without Your permission, appointment and administration.

Purification

Lord Jesus, I sin. Grant that I may never cease grieving because of it, never be content with myself and never think I can reach a point of perfection. Kill my envy, command my tongue, trample down my self. Give me grace to be holy, kind, gentle, pure and peaceable; to live for You and not for self; to copy Your words and Your acts; to be transformed into Your likeness; to be consecrated wholly to You; to live entirely to Your glory. Deliver me from attachment to things unclean, from wrong associations, from the predominance of evil passions and from the sugar of sin as well as its gap—so that with self-loathing, deep contrition and earnest heart searching I may come to You, cast myself on You, trust in You, cry to You, be delivered by You. O God, the Eternal One, help me to know that all things are shadows—but You are the substance; that all things are quicksands—but You are the mountain; that all things are shifting—but You are the anchor; that all things are ignorance—but You are true wisdom. If my life is to be a crucible amid burning heat, so be it—but You sit at the furnace mouth to watch the ore so that nothing is lost. If I sin wilfully, grievously or tormentedly, in grace take away my mourning and give

me music; remove my sackcloth and clothe me with beauty; still my sighs and fill my mouth with song—and then give me summer weather as a Christian!

Refuge

O Lord, whose power is infinite and wisdom infallible, order things that they may not hinder me, discourage me, or prove obstacles to the progress of Your cause. Stand between me and all strife so that no evil befalls me and no sin corrupts my gifts, zeal or attainments. May I follow duty and not any foolish device of my own. Permit me not to labour at work which You will not bless, so that I may serve You without disgrace or debt. Let me dwell in Your most secret place under Your shadow, where there is safe impenetrable protection from the arrow that flies by day, the pestilence that walks in darkness, the strife of tongues, the malice of ill-will, the hurt of unkind talk, the snares of company, the perils of youth, the temptations of middle life, the mournings of old age and the fear of death. I am entirely dependent upon You for support, counsel and consolation. Uphold me by Your Spirit and may I not think it enough to be preserved from falling, but may I always go forward, always abounding in the work You give me to do. Strengthen me by Your Spirit in my inner self for every purpose of my Christian life. All my jewels I give to the shadow of the safety that is in You—my name anew in Christ, my body, my soul, my talents, my character, my success, my spouse, my children, my friends, my work, my present, my future and my end. Take them all—they are Yours. And I am Yours, both now and for ever.

Resting on God

O God most high and most glorious, the thought of Your infinite serenity cheers me—for when I am toiling and moiling, troubled and distressed, You are for ever at perfect peace. Your designs cause You no fear or care of unfulfillment—they stand fast as the eternal hills. Your power knows no bounds and Your goodness no stint. You bring order out of confusion and my defeats are Your victories: The Lord God Omnipotent reigns! I come to You as a sinner with cares and sorrows, to leave every concern entirely to You, with every sin calling

for Christ's precious blood. Revive deep spirituality in my heart and let me live near to the great Shepherd, hear His voice, know its tones and follow its calls. Keep me from deception by causing me to abide in the truth and keep me from harm by helping me to walk in the power of the Spirit. Give me an intenser faith in the eternal verities and burn into me by experience, the things I know. Let me never be ashamed of the truth of the gospel, that I may bear its reproach, vindicate it, see Jesus as its essence and know in it the power of the Spirit. Lord, help me, for I am often lukewarm and chilled; unbelief will mar my confidence and sin will make me forget You—let the weeds that grow in my soul be cut at their roots. Grant me to know that I truly live only when I live to You—and that all else is trifling. Gracious God, it is Your presence alone that can make me holy, devout, strong and happy.

Spiritual Helps

Eternal Father, it is amazing love, that You have sent Your Son to suffer in my stead; that You have given Your Spirit to teach, comfort, guide; that You have allowed the ministry of angels to wall me round. Permit Your unseen servants to be ever active on my behalf and to rejoice when grace expands in me. Suffer them never to rest until my conflict is over and I stand victorious on salvation's shore. Grant that my proneness to evil, my deadness to good and my resistance to Your Spirit's motions, may never provoke You to abandon me. May my heart awake Your pity, not Your wrath—and if the enemy gets an advantage through my corruption, let it be seen that heaven is mightier than hell and that those who are for me are greater than those against me. Arise to my help in the richness of Covenant blessings—keep me feeding in the pastures of Your strengthening Word and searching Scripture to find You there. If my waywardness is visited with a scourge—enable me to receive correction meekly, to bless the reproving hand, to discern the motive of rebuke, to respond promptly and do the first work. Let all Your fatherly dealings with me, make me a partaker of Your holiness. Grant that in every fall, I may sink lower on my knees, and that when I rise, it may be to loftier heights of devotion. May every cross be

sanctified, every loss be gain, every denial a spiritual advantage, every dark day a light of the Holy Spirit and every night of trial, a song.

Belonging to Jesus

Heavenly Father, teach me to see that Your Spirit and Your power are mine by resting on Christ's death alone—and that if Christ has pacified You and satisfied divine justice, then He can also deliver me from my sins. I am justified by Christ and I do not live in self-confidence in my own strength, but I am enabled to obey You by the Spirit of life whom You have given me. That Spirit of life within, answers to the law without—and if I don't sin, I should thank You for it, but if I do sin, I should come to You for forgiveness. When I see how sin strikes at You, it makes me mourn and when I see that it was sin that caused Christ's death, it makes me mourn. You have taught me that faith is receiving Your kindness; that faith is resting on Christ; that faith is clinging to Christ, as a branch to the tree, and seeking life and vigour from Him. Reconciliation with You proves that my faith has truly apprehended Christ—and the evidence of my reconciliation is sanctification. I thank You for showing me the vast difference between knowing things by reason, and knowing them by the spirit of faith. By reason, I see a thing is so; but by faith, I know it is so. When I saw You by reason I was not amazed, but when I saw You as You are in Your Son, I was overwhelmed to behold You. I bless You that I am Yours in my Saviour, Jesus.

Freedom

O Holy Father, You have freely given me Your Son. O Divine Son, You have freely paid my debt. O Eternal Spirit, You have freely bid me come. O Triune God, You have freely graced me with salvation. My prayers and tears could not suffice to pardon my sins and a thankful acceptance could never pay my debts—but my believing is my receiving. What did You see in me, that I, a poor, diseased, despised sinner should be clothed in Your bright glory? Who can fathom Your immeasurable love? As far as the rational soul exceeds the senses, so does the spirit exceed the rational in its knowledge of You. You have given me understanding to compass the earth and to measure the sun,

moon and stars, but above all—to know You, the only true God. I marvel that the finite can know the Infinite—here a little and then afterwards in full-orbed truth. Now I know but a small portion of what I shall know—here in part, then in perfection, here a hint, then in glory. To know is to enjoy—and to know You is life eternal. Keep me in Your freedom of experiencing Your salvation continually.

Victory

Divine Redeemer, great was Your goodness in undertaking my redemption—in consenting to be made sin for me and in conquering all my foes. Great was Your strength in enduring the extremities of divine wrath and in taking away the load of my iniquities. Great was Your love in manifesting Yourself alive and in showing Your sacred wounds—that every fear might vanish and every doubt be removed. Great was Your mercy in ascending to heaven, in being crowned and enthroned; there to intercede for me; there to help me in temptation; there to open the eternal Book; there to receive me finally to Yourself. Great was Your wisdom in devising this means of salvation—bathe my soul in rich consolations of Your resurrection life. Great was Your grace in commanding me to come hand in hand with You to the Father; to be knit to Him eternally; to discover in Him my rest; to find in Him my peace; to behold His glory; to honour Him who is alone worthy. You gave Your Spirit as my Teacher, my Guide and my Power, that I may live—repenting of sin, conquering temptations and finding victory in life. When You are present all blessings are mine.

The Life Look

O God, I bless You for the happy moment when I first saw Your law fulfilled in Christ—that Your wrath was appeased; that my death was destroyed; that my sin was forgiven; that my soul was saved. And ever since, You have been faithful to me—daily have I proven the power of Jesus' blood, and daily have I known the strength of Your Spirit, my Teacher, my Director and my Sanctifier. I want no other Rock to build upon than that I have in You; I desire no other hope than that of gospel truth; I need no other look than that which gazes on the cross. Forgive me if I have tried to add anything to that One Foundation; if

I have unconsciously relied upon my knowledge, experience or deeds and not seen them as filthy rags; if I have attempted to complete what is perfect in Christ. May my cry be always: Only Jesus! Only Jesus! In You is freedom from condemnation; in Your righteousness, there is fullness of life; in Your given life, there is eternal vitality; in fellowship with You, there is enduring union. In You I have all that I can hold—but enlarge me to take in more! If I backslide, let me like Peter, weep bitterly and return to You. If I am tempted and have no joy, give me strength enough to trust in You. If I am weak, may I trust in Your eternal love. If in extremity, let me feel that You can deliver me. If driven to the edge of hope and to the pit of despair, grant me grace to fall into Your arms. O God, hear me; do for me more than I can ask, think or dream.

A Convert's First Prayer

My Father, unless You had first loved me, I could never have sought my happiness in Your love. Your Spirit has encouraged me by grace to seek You; Your Spirit has made known to me Your reconciliation in Jesus; Your Spirit has taught me to believe it; and Your Spirit has helped me to take You for my God and portion. Grant me to grow in the knowledge and experience of Your love and walk in it all the way to glory. Blessed for ever be Your fatherly affection, which chose me to be one of Your children by faith in Jesus—I thank You for giving me the desire to live as such. In Jesus, my Elder Brother, I have my new birth, I have restraining power and I have renewing grace. It is by Your Spirit that I call You Father, that I believe in You and that I love You. Strengthen me inwardly for every purpose of my Christian life. Let Your Spirit continually reveal to me my interest in Christ and open to me the riches of Your love in Him. May He abide in me that I may know my union with Jesus and enjoy constant fellowship with Him. By Your Spirit may I daily live to You, may I daily rejoice in Your love, may I daily find it the same to me as to Your Son and may I become rooted and grounded in You as a house on rock. I know but little—increase my knowledge of Your love in Jesus. Keep me pressing forward for clearer discoveries of Your love, so that I may find its

eternal fullness. Magnify Your love to me according to its greatness and not according to my deserts or prayers—and whatever increase You give, let it draw out greater love to You.

Assurance

Almighty God, I am loved with everlasting love and clothed in eternal righteousness. My peace flows like a river; my comforts are many and large; my joy and triumph unutterable; my soul is lively with a knowledge of salvation; my sense of justification is unclouded. I have scarcely anything to pray for—Jesus smiles upon my soul as a ray of heaven and my supplications are swallowed up in praise! How sweet is the glorious doctrine of election when based upon Your Word and wrought inwardly within the soul! I bless You that You will keep the sinner that You have loved and have engaged—else I would never get to heaven. I wrong the work of grace in my thought if I deny my new nature and my eternal life. If Jesus were not my Righteousness and Redemption, I would sink into the lowest hell by my misdoings, my shortcomings, my unbelief and my unlove. If Jesus were not my Sanctification by the power of His Spirit, there is no limit to sin I might commit. All the good things of life are less than nothing when compared with Your love and with one glimpse of Your electing favour. All the treasures of a million worlds could not make me richer, happier or more contented—for Your unsearchable riches are mine! One moment of communion with You, one view of Your grace, is ineffable and inestimable. But O God, I would not long after Your presence if I did not know the sweetness of it.

Jesus' Return

O Son of God and Son of Man, You were incarnate, You suffered, You rose and You ascended for my sake. Your departure was not a token of separation but a pledge of return. Your Word, Your Promises and Your Emblems show Your death until You come again. That day is no horror to me, for Your death has redeemed me, Your Spirit fills me, Your love animates me and Your Word governs me. I have trusted You and You have not betrayed my trust; I waited for You and not waited in vain. You will come to raise my body from the dust and re-

unite it to my soul by a wonderful work of infinite power and love—greater than that which bounds the oceans' waters, than that which ebbs and flows the tides, than that which keeps the stars in their courses and than that which gives life to all creatures. This corruptible shall put on incorruptible, this mortal shall put on immortality, this natural body shall put on a spiritual body, this dishonoured body shall put on a glorious body, this weak body shall put on a body of power. I triumph now in Your promises as I shall do in their performance. Beyond the grave is resurrection, judgment, acquittal and dominion. Every event and circumstance of my life will be dealt with—the sins of my youth, my secret sins, the sins of abusing You, the sins of disobeying Your Word, the sins of neglecting admonitions, the sins of violating my conscience—all will be judged. And after judgment, for Your elect there is peace and rest, life and service, employment and enjoyment. O God, keep me in this faith, and ever looking for Christ's return.

Christ Alone

O God, Your main plan, and the end of Your will, is to make Christ glorious and beloved in heaven—where He is now ascended and where one day, all the elect will behold His glory and will love and glorify Him for ever. In this world You have given me a beginning—but one day it will be perfected in the realm above. You have helped me to see and know Christ, to take Him, to receive Him, to possess Him, to love Him, and to bless Him in my thoughts, words and life. Let me study and stand for discipline—and all the ways of worship. Out of love for Christ, help me to show my thankfulness, to seek and know Your will from love, to hold Your will in love—and to daily keep this state of thought. You have led me to place all my nature and happiness in oneness with Christ; in having thought and mind centred only on Him; in being like Him in communicating good to others. This is my heaven on earth, but I need the force, energy and impulses of Your Spirit to carry me on my way to the New Jerusalem. Here it is my duty to be as Christ in this world, to do what He would do, to live as He would live, to walk in love and meekness—then He will be known and I will have peace in death.

Union With Christ

O Father, You have made man for the glory of Yourself and when not an instrument of that glory, he is a thing of nought. No sin is greater than the sin of unbelief—for if union with Christ is the greatest good, unbelief is the greatest sin. I see that whatever my sin is, yet no sin is like disunion from Christ by unbelief. Lord, keep me from committing the greatest sin in departing from Him, or I can never in this life perfectly obey and cleave to Christ. When You take away my outward blessings, it is sin to not acknowledge, that all that I have is of You; it is sin in not serving You through what I have; it is sin in making myself secure and hardened. Lawful blessings can be my secret idols and can do the most harm—the greatest injury is in the having, and the greatest good is in the taking away. In love, divest me of the dominion of material blessings that I may glorify You the more. In love, remove the fuel of my sin that I may prize the gain of holiness as overbalancing all my losses. The more I love You with a truly gracious love, the more I desire to love You. Keep me from all things that turn to unbelief or lack the felt union with Christ.

The All-Good God

My God, You have helped me to see, that whatever good be in honour and rejoicing, it is You who gives them—and You can also withdraw them! Blessedness does not lie so much in receiving good from You, but in holding forth Your glory and virtue—it is an amazing thing to see Deity in a creature, speaking, acting, filling, shining through it. Nothing is good apart from You and when I am near You, I am near good. To be like You is a glorious thing—and this is my magnet, my attraction. You are all my good in times of peace, my only support in days of trouble, my one sufficiency when life shall end. Help me to see how in everything, Your will is good and even when Your will crosses mine, teach me to be pleased with it. Grant me to feel You in fire, and food and every providence—and to see that Your many gifts and creatures are but Your hands and fingers taking hold of me. You are the bottomless fountain of all good. I give myself to You out of love, for all I have or own is Yours—my goods, family, church, self—to do with as You will. Honour Yourself

by me and by all that is mine. If it be consistent with Your eternal counsels, the purpose of Your grace and the great ends of Your glory, then bestow upon me the blessings of Your comforts—and if not, then let me resign myself to Your wiser determinations.

Heaven Desired

O my Lord, I am standing in Your presence, an heir of Your kingdom, the spouse of Christ and a member of His body. Praise in the mouth of Your saints is comely, so teach me to exercise this divine gift, when I pray, read, listen, look or act, as I hope to praise You eternally hereafter —in the presence of friends and of strangers. And soon I shall arrive—where means of grace shall cease and I need no more to pray, weep or watch; where nothing defiles and there is no more grief, sorrow, sin, death, separation, tears, pale face, languid body, aching joints, feeble infancy, decrepit age, pining sickness, griping fears, consuming cares. Then there will be full knowledge of You, for I shall be with You and be one with You, exercising all my powers of body and soul in the enjoyment of You.

True Christianity

Lord of Heaven, Your goodness is ineffably sublime—in the works of Creation, You are Almighty; in the dispensations of Providence, You are all-wise; in the gospel of Grace, You are all love. In Your Son, You have provided for our deliverance from the effects of sin, the justification of our person, the sanctification of our nature and the perseverance of our soul. In the path of life, we have a refuge from the storm, a fountain for sin and a fullness that is accessible to all. Grant us always to know that to walk with Jesus makes all other interests a shadow and a dream. Keep us from intermittent attention to eternal things. Save us from the delusion of those who fail to go far in religion—who are concerned but not converted, who have another thought but not a new one, who have light, zeal and confidence, but not Christ. Let us judge our Christianity, not only by our dependence upon Jesus, but by our love to Him, our conformity to Him and our knowledge of Him. Give us a religion that is both real and progressive, that lives and works in the Spirit and that profits by Your correction.

Before Sleep

God of all Sovereignty, Your greatness is unsearchable, Your Name is most excellent and Your glory is magnificent. Ten thousand minister to You, ten thousand times ten thousand stand before You. We come boldly to Your throne because we will find grace to help us when we need it most—and we will receive Your mercy. Let us see Your hand in the instruments of our grief, rejoicing in Your over-ruling providence. Let not our weeping hinder sowing; nor our sorrow hinder duty. While living in a world of change let us seek the abiding City—the New Jerusalem. Be with us to our journey's end that we may glorify You in death as we do in life. We bless You for Your preservation, Your supplies and Your mercies. To You, the keeper of souls, we commit all we are and all we have. May no evil befall us, no sickness come nigh us and no horror disturb us! May our conscience be clear, our hearts pure and our sleep sweet! Now, with the innumerable company who neither slumber nor sleep, we join in ascribing blessing, honour, glory and power to the Lamb upon the throne, for ever and ever. Amen.

A Minister's Praises

O God my exceeding joy, singing Your praises uplifts my heart for You are a fountain of delight and You bless the soul that joys in You. You are in Jesus, the object of inexpressible joy. I take exceeding pleasure in the thought of You and I will at all times rest myself in Your excellences, Your goodness and Your loving-kindness. Give me the sweet results of faith in my secret character and in my public life. Cast cords of love around my thoughts for You hold me and will never let me go. May the Saviour's wounds sway me more than the sceptre of princes. Let me love You with a love that covers and swallows up all, that I may not violate my chaste union with the Beloved.

Future Blessing

O Lord God, there is no blessing we implore but that You are able to give, have promised to give and have already given, to countless multitudes like ourselves. May we be willing to receive the supply of our need from Your bounty—to this end convince us of sin and soften our hard hearts so we may look with wonder, submission and delight

to the provision You have made in the salvation of sinners, for the glory of Your Name. You give us a hope that makes us not ashamed, a love that excites to holy obedience, a joy in You that is our strength and a faith in Your Son who loved us and died for us. May we persevere in duty (even when we are not fully conscious of You), wait upon You and keep Your ways, living continually as on the brink of eternity. We are at Your disposal for the duties and events of life, submitting our preferences to Your wisdom and will. May we know the blessedness of people whose strength is in You and in whose hearts are the highways to heaven.

God's Good Pleasure

Sovereign Lord, Your will is supreme in heaven and earth, and all beings are creatures of Your power. You are the Father of our spirits; Your inspiration gives us understanding, Your providence governs our lives. But, Lord, we were sinners in Your sight; You judged us so, and if we deny it we make You a liar. Yet in Christ You are reconciled to us, Your subjects; give us the ear of faith to hear Him, the eye of faith to see Him, the hand of faith to receive Him, the appetite of faith to feed upon Him; that we might find in Him light, riches, honour, eternal life. You are the inviting One, may we hearken to You. You are the Almighty Instructor—teach us to live for You. Possess our minds with the grandeur of Your perfections. Your love to us in Jesus, is firm and changeless. Nothing can separate us from Your love and in the enjoyment of Your love, nothing can make us miserable. Preserve us from all hypocrisy and formality in religion. Enable us to remember what You are and what we are; to recall Your holiness and our unworthiness; to approach You boldly yet clothed with humility. Let us never forget Your patience, wisdom, power, faithfulness and care—and let us never cease to respond to Your invitations.

Earth and Heaven

O Lord, we live here as fish in a vessel of water with only enough to keep us alive—but in heaven we shall swim in the ocean. Here we have a little air in us to keep us breathing—but in heaven we shall have sweet and fresh gales; Here we have a beam of sun to lighten our darkness,

a warm ray to keep us from freezing—but in heaven we shall live in light and warmth for ever. Our natural desires are corrupt and misguided and it is Your mercy to destroy them. Our spiritual longings are of Your planting and You will water and increase them—quicken our hunger and thirst after the realm above. Here we can have the world—but in heaven we shall have You in Christ. Here is a life of longing and prayer—but in heaven there is assurance without suspicion, asking without refusal. Here are gross comforts, more burden than benefit—but in heaven there is joy without sorrow, comfort without suffering, love without inconstancy, rest without weariness. Give me to know that heaven is all love, where the continual viewing of Your beauty keeps the soul in continual transports of delight. Give me to know that heaven is all peace, where error, pride, rebellion and passion raise no head. Give me to know that heaven is all joy, the end of believing, fasting, praying, mourning, humbling, watching, fearing, repining—and lead me to it soon!

Faith

My God, I bless You that You have given me the eye of faith, to see You as Father, to know You as a Covenant God, to experience Your love planted in me. For faith is the grace of union by which I spell out my entitlement to You. Faith casts my anchor upwards where I trust in You and engage You to be my Lord. Be pleased to live and move within me, breathing in my prayers, inhabiting my praises, speaking in my words, moving in my actions, living in my life, causing me to grow in grace—Your bounteous goodness has helped me believe. Lord, fan this divine spark into glowing flame. Lord, awake faith to put forth its strength until all heaven fills my soul and all impurity is cast out.

Happiness

O Lord, help me not to expect happiness from the world, but only in You. Let me not think that I shall be more happy by living to myself, for I can only be truly happy if employed for You and if I desire to live in this world only to do and suffer what You allot me. Teach me that if I do not live a life that satisfies You, I shall not live a life that will satisfy myself. Help me to desire the spirit and attitude of angels

who willingly come down to this lower world to perform Your will, though their desires are heavenly and not set in the least upon earthly things—then I shall have the attitude that I ought to have. Help me not to think of living to You in my own strength, but always to look to You and rely on You for assistance. Teach me that there is no greater truth than this: that I can do nothing of myself. Lord, this is the life that no unconverted man can live—yet it is an end that every godly soul presses after. Let it be my concern to devote myself and my all to You. Make me more fruitful and more spiritual. How precious is time, and how painful to see it fly with little done to good purpose—I need Your help! O may my soul sensibly depend upon You for all sanctification and every accomplishment of Your purposes for me, for the world, and for Your kingdom.

Rest in God

My dear Lord, I depend wholly upon You—wean me from all other dependences. You are my all, You overrule all and You delight in me. You are the foundation of goodness; how can I distrust You? How can I be anxious about what happens to me? In the light of Your preciousness, the world and all its enjoyments are infinitely poor—I value the favour of men no more than pebbles. Amid the blessings I receive from You, may I never lose the thought of being a stranger here on earth. May I love You, my Benefactor, in all my benefits, not forgetting that my greatest danger arises from my advantages. Produce in me a self-despair that will make Jesus precious to me, delightful in all His offices, pleasurable in all His ways. And may I love His commands as well as His promises. Help me to discern between true and false love—the one consisting of supreme love to You, the other not; the former uniting Your glory and man's happiness that they may become one common interest, the latter disjointing and separating them both. Teach me that genuine love is different in kind from that wrought by rational arguments or the motive of self-interest. Grant me grace to distinguish between the genuine and the false and to rest in You who are all love.

Blessings

You are the great Three-in-One, the Author of all the blessings that I enjoy and of all that I hope for. You have taught me that the experience of present evils, the remembrances of former sins, nor the remonstrances of friends, cannot, nor will not, affect a sinner's thought—unless You vouchsafe to reveal Your grace. You have shown me that the sensible effusions of divine love in the soul are superior to, and distinct from, bodily health—and that oft-times spiritual comforts are at their highest when physical well-being is at its lowest. You have given me the ordinance of song as a means of grace—fit me to bear my part in that ever-new music which is being sung before Your throne by angels and the saints made perfect. I bless You for tempering every distress with joy, because too much of the former might weigh me down—You are wise to give me a taste of both! Apart from You, I quickly die; bereft of You, I starve; far from You, I thirst and droop—but You are all I need. I love You for giving me clusters of grapes in the wilderness and drops of heavenly wine that set me longing to have my fill. Let me continually grasp the promise: 'I will never leave You nor forsake You.'

Love Shed Abroad

Gracious God, I praise You for the wonder of Your love in Jesus. He is heaven's darling, but for me, He is the incarnate, despised, rejected, crucified sin-bearer. In Him Your grace has almost out-graced itself; in Him Your love to rebels has reached its height—O to love You with a love like this! My thoughts are locked—let Your love be the master key to open them. O Father, I adore You for Your great love in the gift of Jesus. O Jesus, I bless You for resigning Your life for me. O Holy Spirit, I thank You for revealing to me this mystery. Great God, let Your Son see in me the travail of His soul! Bring me away from my false trusts to rest in Him and Him alone. Let me not be so callous to His merit as not to love Him or be so indifferent to His blood as to not desire cleansing. Lord Jesus, Master, Redeemer, Saviour, come and take entire possession of me—this is Your right by purchase. In the arms of love, enfold and subdue my wilful spirit. Take, sanctify and

use my every faculty. I am not ashamed of my hope, nor has my confidence led me into confusion. I trusted in You regarding my innumerable sins and You have cast them behind Your back. I trusted in You when evils encompassed me, and You brought me out into a beautiful place. I trusted in You in an hour of distress and You did not fail me, though faith trembled. O God of the eternal choice; O God of the restored possession purchased on the tree; O God of the effectual call—Father, Son, Holy Spirit—I adore Your glory, honour, majesty, power and dominion for ever.

Privileges

O Lord God, teach me to know that your grace precedes, accompanies and follows my salvation; that your grace sustains the redeemed soul; that not one link in the chain of Your grace can ever break. From Calvary's cross, wave upon wave of Your grace reaches me; Your grace deals with my sin; Your grace washes me clean; Your grace renews my thoughts; Your grace strengthens my will; Your grace draws out my affection; Your grace kindles a flame in my soul. Your grace rules throughout my inner man; Your grace consecrates my every thought, word and work; Your grace teaches me Your immeasurable love. How great are my privileges in Christ Jesus! Without Him I stand far off, a stranger, an outcast; but in Him I draw near and touch His kingly sceptre. Without Him I dare not lift up my guilty eyes; but in Him I gaze upon my Father-God and my Friend. Without Him I hide my lips in trembling shame; but in Him I open my mouth in petition and praise. Without Him all is wrath and consuming fire; but in Him is all love and the repose of my soul. Without Him is gaping hell below me and eternal anguish; but in Him its gates are barred to me by His precious blood. Without Him darkness spreads its horrors in front; but in Him an eternity of glory is my boundless horizon. Without Him all within me is terror and dismay; but in Him every accusation is charmed into joy and peace. Without Him all things external call for my condemnation; but in Him they minister to my comfort and are to be enjoyed with thanksgiving. Praise be to You for Your grace and for the unspeakable gift of Jesus.

Repose

Heavenly Father, my faith is in You, my expectation is from You, my love goes out toward You. I believe You, I accept Your Word, I acquiesce to Your will, I rely on Your promises and I trust Your providence. I bless You that the court of conscience proves me to be Yours. I do not need signs and wonders in order to trust You, for Your Word is sure truth. I have cast my anchor in the port of peace, knowing that my past, my present and my future are in Jesus' nail-pierced hands. You are so good, so wise, so just and so holy, that no mistake is possible to You. You are the fountain and source of all law—and Your commands are mine to obey. I yield to Your sovereignty with all that I am and all that I have—do with me as You will. You have given me silence in my thoughts in place of murmurings and complaints. Keep my wishes from growing into willings, and my willings from becoming fault-finding with Your providences. Lord, have mercy on me! And if I sin and am rebellious, help me to repent—then take away my mourning and give me music; take away my sackcloth and adorn me with beauty; take away my sighs and fill my mouth with songs. And when I am restored and rest in You, give me summer weather in my thoughts.

The Prayer of Love

Gracious Lord, Your Name is love—in love receive my prayer. My sins are more than the wide sea's sand—but where sin abounds, there is grace more abundant. Look to the cross of Your beloved Son and view the preciousness of His atoning blood. Listen to His never-failing intercession and whisper to my thought, '*Your sins are forgiven, be of good cheer, lie down in peace*.' Grace cataracts from heaven and flows for ever, and mercy never wearies in bestowing benefits. Grant me more and more, to prize the privilege of prayer—of coming to You in simple faith as Your child and conversing with You. In prayer may I know You as the path in which my feet tread; as the latch upon the door of my lips; as the light that shines through my eyes; as the music of my ears; as the marrow of my understanding; as the strength of my will; as the power of my affection; and as the sweetness of my memory. May the

matter of my prayer be always wise, humble, submissive, obedient, scriptural, and Christ-like. Give me unwavering faith so that my supplications are never in vain—and if I seem not to obtain my petitions, that I shall have larger and richer answers which surpass all that I ask or think. Thank You that You have given me the greatest Gift of all, the Person of Your Son—for it is in Him, You will give me all I need.

Desires

O You who hear prayers, teach me to pray. I confess that in religious exercises, the language of my lips and the feelings of my thoughts have not always agreed; that I have often desired things which would have injured me; that I have depreciated some of my chief mercies; that I have erred both on the side of my hopes and also of my fears. Let Your Spirit help my infirmities, so that I will pray as I should. Let Him produce in me wise desires by which I may ask right things—then I shall know You hear me. May I never be importunate for temporal blessings but always refer them to Your Fatherly goodness—for You know what I need before I ask. May I never think I prosper unless my soul prospers; or that I am rich, unless rich toward You; or that I am wise, unless wise unto salvation. May I seek first Your kingdom and its righteousness. May I value things in relation to eternity. May my spiritual welfare be my chief solicitude (*consideration*). I would rather be poor, afflicted and despised—and have Your blessing, than be successful in enterprise, or have more than my thought can wish, or be admired by my fellow-men—if thereby these things make me forget You. May I regard the world as dreams, lies, vanities, vexation of spirit and desire to depart from it. And may I seek my happiness in Your favour, image, presence and service.

Worship and Fellowship

O Lord, we commune with You every day but sometimes secular concerns reduce heavenly impressions. We bless You therefore, that today is sacred to our souls and we can wait upon You and be refreshed. We thank You for the institutions of religion, by use of which, we draw near to You and You to us. We rejoice that today,

without distractions or even with distractions, we can attend upon You. Let our fellowship be devout, our conversation edifying, our reading pious and our hearing profitable. We are the House of Prayer—pour upon us the Spirit of Grace and Supplication. We are the House of Praise—awaken in us every grateful and cheerful emotion so that our souls are quickened and elevated. As we receive instruction, give testimony to the Word preached and glorify it in the hearts of all who hear. May Your Word enlighten the ignorant, awaken the careless, reclaim the wandering, establish the weak, comfort the feeble-minded and make ready a people for their Lord. Be a Sanctuary to all who cannot come and forget not those who never come. Bestow upon us benevolence towards our dependants, forgiveness towards our enemies, peaceableness towards our neighbours and openness towards our fellow-Christians.

Bounty

You are the great and only Potentate; You have made summer and winter, day and night—each of these revolutions serves our welfare and is full of Your care and kindness. Your bounty is seen in the relations that train us, the laws that defend us, the homes that shelter us, the food that builds us, the raiment that comforts us, and the continuance of our health, senses, understanding, memory, affection and will. But as stars fade before the rising sun, You have eclipsed all these benefits in the wisdom and grace that purposed redemption by Jesus Your Son. Blessed be Your mercy through that One who is mighty, willing and able to save to the uttermost. Make us deeply sensible of our need of His saving grace, of His blood that cleanses and of the rest He has promised—that He imputes to us His righteousness which justifies the guilty, giving us a title to eternal life and possession of the Spirit. May we love the freeness of salvation and joy in its holiness. Give us faith to grasp Your promises that are our hope, that provide for every exigency and that prevent every evil. Keep our hearts from straying after forbidden pleasures and may Your will bind all our wishes. Let us live out of the world as to its spirit, maxim and manners, but live in it as the sphere of our action and usefulness.

May we be alive to every call of duty, accepting without question Your determination of our circumstances and our service.

The Giver

Creator, Upholder and Proprietor of all things, we cannot escape from Your presence and control, nor do we desire to do so. Our privilege is to be under the agency of Your Omnipotence, Righteousness, Wisdom, Patience, Mercy and Grace, for You are Love with more than parental affection. We admire Your Goodness and we stand in awe of Your Power and Your Purity. It is the discovery of Your Goodness alone that can banish our fear and allure us into Your Presence. We review our past guilt and are conscious of unworthiness. We bless You that Your steadfast Love and Attributes are essential to our happiness and hope. You have witnessed to us Your Grace and Mercy in the bounties of nature, in the fullness of Your Providence, in the revelations of Scripture, in the gift of Your Son, in the proclamation of the Gospel. Help us not only to receive Jesus but to walk in Him, to depend upon Him, to commune with Him and to follow Him as dear children—not yet perfect, but still pressing forward; not complaining of labour, but valuing rest; not murmuring under trials, but thankful for our state. And by so doing, let us silence the ignorance of foolish people.

Retrospect and Prospect

Supreme Ruler of the visible and invisible worlds, my thought is drawn out to You for Your amazing grace and condescension. You have kept my conversion fresh before me—that season of my first spiritual comfort when I passed through the Red Sea by a way I did not expect. I rejoiced then, for that unthought-of passage, that delivered me from the fear of the Egyptian when I had almost despaired of life. I rejoice now, as these things are fresh and lively in my mind. You are my divine treasury in whom all fullness dwells, my life, hope, joy, peace, glory, end. May I be daily more and more conformed to You, with the meekness and calmness of the Lamb in my soul, and a sense of the felicity of heaven, so that I may be fit for His enjoyments and employments. I am not afraid to look the king of terrors in the face,

for I know I shall be drawn, not driven, out of this world. Until then let me continually glow and burn for You, and when the last great change shall come, let me awake in Your likeness, leaving behind an example that will glorify You, while my spirit rejoices in heaven, and my memory is blessed upon earth with those who follow me—praising You for my life.

Worship

Glorious God, It is the flame of my life to worship You, the crown and glory of my soul to adore You, my heavenly pleasure to approach You. Give me power by Your Spirit to help me worship now, that I may forget the world, be brought into fullness of life, be refreshed, comforted and blessed. Give me knowledge of Your goodness that I might not be over-awed by Your greatness. Give me Jesus, Son of Man, Son of God, that I might not be terrified but be drawn near with filial love and holy boldness. He is my Mediator, Brother, Interpreter, Branch, Daysman, Lamb—Him I glorify and in Him I am set on high. Crowns to give, I have none—but what You have given, I return, content to feel that everything is mine when it is Yours, and the more fully mine when I have yielded it to You. Let me live wholly to my Saviour, free from distractions, from carking [*distressing*] care and from hindrances to the pursuit of the narrow way. I am pardoned through the blood of Jesus—give me a new sense of it and continue to pardon me by it. May I come every day to the fountain and every day be washed anew, that I may worship You always in spirit and truth.

A Disciple's Renewal

O my Saviour, help me. I am so slow to learn, so prone to forget, so weak to climb—I am in the foothills when I should be on the heights. I am pained by my graceless thought, my prayerless days, my poverty of love, my sloth in the heavenly race, my sullied conscience, my wasted hours, my unspent opportunities. I am blind while light shines around me—take the scales from my eyes and grind to dust the evil thoughts of unbelief. Make it my chief joy to study You, to meditate on You and to gaze on You; to sit at Your feet like Mary; to lean against You like John; to appeal to Your love like Peter; to count all things as

loss like Paul. Give me increase and progress in grace, so that there may be more decision in my character, more vigour in my purposes, more elevation in my life, more fervour in my devotion and more constancy in my zeal. As I have position in the world, keep me from making the world my position. May I never seek in the creature what can be found only in the Creator. Let not faith cease from seeking You until it vanishes into sight. Ride forth in me, O King of kings and Lord of lords, that I may live victoriously—and in victory, attain my end.

A Cry For Deliverance

Heavenly Father save me entirely from sin. I know that I am righteous through the righteousness of Another—but I pant and pine for likeness to Yourself. I am Your child and should bear Your image. Enable me to recognize my death unto sin and when it tempts me, may I be deaf unto its voice. Deliver me from the invasion of sin as well as the dominion of sin. Grant me to walk as Christ walked and to live in the newness of His life—the life of love, the life of faith and the life of holiness. When Your blessings come—children, friends, wealth, honour—if I should idolize them, then cleanse this spiritual adultery; give me spiritual chastity and close my spiritual affection to all but You. Sin is my greatest curse—let Your victory be apparent to my consciousness and displayed in my life. Help me to be always devoted, confident, obedient, resigned and childlike in my trust of You; to love You with my soul, body, mind and strength; to love my fellow-man as I love myself; to be saved from unregenerate temper, hard thoughts, slanderous words, meanness and unkind manners; to master my tongue and keep the door of my lips. Fill me with grace daily, that my life may be a fountain of sweet water.

A Christian's Prayer

Blessed God, defend me—ten thousand snares are mine without and within. When sloth and indolence seize me, give me views of heaven. When sinners entice me, give me disrelish of their ways. When sensual pleasures tempt me, purify and refine me. When I desire worldly possessions, help me to be rich toward You. When the vanities of this world ensnare me, let me not plunge into new guilt and ruin. May I

remember the dignity of my spiritual release and never be too busy to attend to my soul or so engrossed with time that I neglect the things of eternity—and thus may I not only live for You, but also grow towards You. Form my mind to the right notions of religion, that I may not measure my spiritual advances by the efforts of my natural being. May I seek after an increase of divine love to You; an unreserved resignation to Your will; an extensive benevolence to my fellow creatures; a patience and fortitude of soul; a heavenly disposition; a concern to please You in public and in private. As You draw the contours of Christ on my soul, take delight in every trace and feature, for I am Your workmanship, created in Christ Jesus; I am Your letter written with the Holy Spirit's pen; I am Your tilled soil ready for the sowing and the harvest.

Weaknesses

O Spirit of God help my infirmities. If I am pressed down with a load of sorrow, perplexed and knowing not what to do, If I am slandered and persecuted and made to feel the weight of the cross—help me, I pray. If You see in me any wrong thing encouraged, any evil desire cherished, any delight that is not Your delight, any habit that grieves You, any nest of sin in my thought—then grant me the kiss of Your forgiveness and teach my feet to walk the way of Your commandments. Deliver me from carking [*distressing*] care and make me a happy, holy person. Help me to walk the consecrated life with firm and brave steps and to wrestle successfully against weakness. Teach me to laud, adore and magnify You with the music of heaven and make me a perfume of praiseful gratitude to You. I do not crouch at Your feet as a slave before a tyrant but exult before You as a son with a Father. Give me power to live as Your child in all my actions and to exercise sonship by conquering self. Preserve me from the intoxication that comes of prosperity. Sober me when I am glad with a joy that does not comes from You. Lead me safely on to the eternal kingdom, not asking whether the road be rough or smooth. I request only to see the face of Him I love, to be content with bread to eat, with raiment to put on and that I am brought to Your house in peace.

Vocation

Heavenly Father, You have placed me in the Church which Your Son purchased by His own blood. Add grace to grace that I may live worthy of my vocation. I am a voyager across life's ocean; safe in heaven's ark, may I pass through a troubled world into the harbour of eternal rest. I am a tree of the vineyard that You have planted—grant me not to be barren with worthless leaves and wild grapes; prune me of useless branches and water me with dews of blessing. I am part of the Lamb's Bride, the Church—help me to be true, faithful, chaste, loving, pure and devoted; let no strong affection of mine wantonly dally with the world. May I live high above a love of things temporal, sanctified, cleansed, unblemished and hallowed by grace—Your love, my fullness; Your glory, my joy; Your precepts, my pathway; Your cross, my resting place. My thought is not always a flame of adoring love, but resting in Your Son's redemption, I look forward to the days of heaven, where no languor [*laziness or indolence*] shall oppress, no iniquities chill, no mists of unbelief dim the eye and no zeal ever tires. Father, these thoughts are the stay, support and comfort of my soul.

A Prayer of Protection

O Lord God, You are our Preserver, Governor, Saviour and coming Judge. Quieten our souls to call upon Your Name. Detach us from the influence of the flesh and the senses. Impress us with the power of faith. Promote in us spirituality of mind that will render our services acceptable to You—and be delightful and profitable to ourselves! Bring us into that state which attracts Your eye and prepare us to receive the proofs of Your love. Show us our danger that we may fly to You for refuge. Make us sensible of our sin's disease that we may value the good Physician. Placard to us the cross that it may slay the enmity of our hearts. Help us to be watchful over our ways, jealous over our tempers and diligent over our hearts. When we droop, revive us; when we loiter, quicken us; when we go astray, restore us. Possess us with that faith which is the principle of all vital godliness—that we may be rich in faith, strong in faith, live by faith, walk by faith, experience the joy of faith, hope through faith and do the work of

faith. Perceiving nothing in ourselves, may we find our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption in the Saviour.

A Prayer of Devotion:

O God, Your main plan and the end of Your will, is to make Christ glorious and beloved in heaven where He is now ascended and where one day all the elect will behold His glory—and love and glorify Him for ever. In this world You have given me a beginning—one day it will be perfected in the realm above. You have helped me to see and know Christ (though obscurely); to take Him and receive Him; to possess Him and to love Him; to bless Him in my thought, mouth and life. Let me study and stand for discipline and all the ways of worship; to show my thankfulness out of love for Christ; to seek and know His will from love—to hold it in love and daily to care for and keep this state of thought. You have led me to place all my nature and happiness in oneness with Christ, in having thought and mind centred only on Him and in being like Him in communicating good to others. This is my heaven on earth, but I need the force, energy and impulses of Your Spirit to carry me on the way to my Jerusalem. Here it is my duty to be as Christ in this world, to do what He would do, to live as He would live, to walk in love and meekness. Then He will be known and I will have peace in death.

A Prayer to the Trinity

Three in One, One in Three, God of my salvation, Holy Father, Blessed Son, Eternal Spirit, One God in three distinct Persons, I adore You for bringing sinners to Your knowledge and to Your kingdom. O Father, You have loved me and sent Jesus to redeem me; O Jesus, You have loved me and assumed my nature, shed Your own blood to wash away my sins and wrought righteousness to cover my unworthiness; O Holy Spirit, You have loved me and entered my thought, implanted there eternal life and revealed to me the glories of Jesus. Three Persons and one God, I bless and praise You for love so unmerited, so unspeakable, so wondrous, so mighty to save the lost and raise them to glory. O Father, I thank You that in fullness of grace You have given me to Jesus—to be His sheep, His jewel and His portion; O Jesus, I

thank You that in fullness of grace You have accepted me, espoused me and bound me; O Holy Spirit, I thank You that in fullness of grace You have exhibited Jesus as my salvation, implanted faith within me, subdued my stubborn thoughts and made me one with Him for ever. O Father You are enthroned to hear my prayers; O Jesus, Your hand is outstretched to take my petitions; O Holy Spirit, You are willing to help my infirmities, to show me my need, to supply words, to pray within me and to strengthen me that I faint not in supplication. O Triune God, who commands the universe, You have commanded me to ask for those things that concern Your kingdom and my soul. Let me live and pray as one baptized into the threefold Name.

The Heart

O God, may Your Spirit speak in me, that I may speak to You. I have no merit but the merit of Jesus which stands for me. I was undeserving—but I looked to Your tender mercy. I was full of infirmities, wants and sin—but You were full of grace. I confessed my sin—my frequent sin, my wilful sin and You gave me another master and lord, Your Son, Jesus. Now my heart is turned towards holiness and my life speeds as an arrow from a bow towards complete obedience to You. Help me in all my doings to put down sin, and save me from the love of the world and the pride of life. Deliver me from everything that is natural to fallen man and let Christ's nature be seen in me day by day. Grant me grace to bear Your will without repining (*feel or express discontent; fret*), so I will delight to be not only chiselled, squared and fashioned, but also separated from the old rock where I was embedded for so long. Lift me from the quarry to the upper air, where I may be built in Christ for ever.

Meeting God

Great God, in public and private, in sanctuary and home, may my life be steeped in prayer, filled with the spirit of grace and supplication, and each prayer perfumed with the incense of atoning blood. Help me and defend me, until from praying ground I pass to the realm of unceasing praise. Urged by my need, invited by Your promises and called by Your Spirit, I enter Your presence, worshipping You with

godly fear, awed by Your majesty, greatness and glory, but encouraged by Your love. By myself, I am all poverty as well as all guilt, having nothing of my own with which to repay You, but I bring Jesus to You in the arms of faith, pleading His righteousness to offset my iniquities, rejoicing that He will weigh down the scales for me and satisfy Your justice. I bless You that great sin draws out great grace and that although the least sin deserves infinite punishment because done against an infinite God, yet there is mercy for me—for where guilt is most terrible, there Your mercy in Christ is most free and deep. Bless me by revealing to me more of His saving merits, by causing Your goodness to pass before me and by speaking peace to my contrite heart. Strengthen me to give You no rest until Christ reigns supreme within me in every thought, word, and deed, and in a faith that purifies the heart, overcomes the world, works by love, fastens me to You and ever clings to the cross.

Openness

Lord of immortality, before whom angels bow and archangels veil their faces, enable me to serve You with reverence and godly fear. You who are Spirit and require truth in the inward parts, help me to worship You in spirit and in truth. You who are righteous, let me not harbour sin in my heart, or indulge a worldly temper, or seek satisfaction in things that perish. I hasten towards an hour when earthly pursuits and possessions will appear vain, when it will be indifferent whether I have been rich or poor, successful or disappointed, admired or despised. But it will be of eternal moment that I have mourned for sin, hungered and thirsted after righteousness, loved the Lord Jesus in sincerity, gloried in His cross. May these objects engross my chief solicitude (*consideration*)! Produce in me those principles and dispositions that make Your service perfect freedom. Expel from my mind all sinful fear and shame, so that with firmness and courage I may confess the Redeemer before men, go forth with Him hearing His reproach, be zealous with His knowledge, be filled with His wisdom, walk with His circumspection, ask counsel of Him in all things, repair to the Scriptures for His orders, stay my mind on His peace, knowing that

nothing can befall me without His permission, appointment and administration.

In Prayer

O Lord, in prayer, I launch far out into the eternal world and on that broad ocean my soul triumphs over all evils on the shores of mortality. Time, with its gay amusements and cruel disappointments, never appears so inconsiderate as then. In prayer, I see myself as nothing; I find my heart going after You with intensity and long with vehement thirst to live to You. Blessed be the strong gales of the Spirit that speed me on my way to the New Jerusalem. In prayer, all things here below vanish, and nothing seems important but holiness of heart and the salvation of others. In prayer, all my worldly cares, fears, anxieties disappear and are of as little significance as a puff of wind. In prayer, my soul inwardly exults with lively thoughts at what You are doing for Your church, and I long that You should get Yourself a great name from sinners returning to Zion. In prayer I am lifted above the frowns and flatteries of life and taste heavenly joys; entering into the eternal world I can give myself to You with all my heart, to be Yours for ever. In prayer, I can place all my concerns in Your hands, to be entirely at Your disposal, having no will or interest of my own. In prayer I can intercede for my friends, ministers, sinners, the church, Your kingdom to come, with greatest freedom, ardent hopes, as a son to his father, as a lover to the beloved. Help me to be all prayer and never to cease praying.

The Nevers of the Gospel

O Lord, May I never fail to come to the knowledge of the truth, never rest in a system of doctrine, however scriptural, that does not bring or further salvation, or teach me to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, or help me to live soberly, righteously, godly; never rely on my own convictions and resolutions, but be strong in You and in Your might; never cease to find Your grace sufficient in all my duties, trials, and conflicts; never forget to repair to You in all my spiritual distresses and outward troubles, in all the dissatisfactions experienced in creature comforts; never fail to retreat to Him who is full of grace and truth,

the Friend that loves at all times, who is touched with feelings of my infirmities, and can do exceeding abundantly for me; never confine my religion to extraordinary occasions, but acknowledge You in all my ways; never limit my devotions to particular seasons but be in Your fear all the day long; never be godly only on the sabbath or in Your house, but on every day abroad and at home; never make piety a dress but a habit, not only a habit but a nature, not only a nature but a life. Do good to me by all Your dispensations, by all means of grace, by worship, prayers, praises, and at last let me enter that world where is no temple, but only Your glory and the Lamb's.

Victory is Assured

O Lord, I bless You that the issue of the battle between Yourself and satan has never been uncertain, and will end in victory. Calvary broke the dragon's head, and I contend with a vanquished foe, who with all his subtlety and strength has already been overcome. When I feel the serpent at my heel, may I remember Him whose heel was bruised, but who, when bruised, broke the devil's head.

A Colloquy on Rejoicing

Remember, O my soul, it is your duty and privilege to rejoice in God: He requires it of you for all His favours of grace. Rejoice then in the Giver and His goodness. Be happy in God, O my heart, and in nothing but Him, for whatever a person trusts in, from that they expect happiness. He who is the ground of your faith should be the substance of your joy. From whence then comes heaviness and dejection, when joy is sown in you—promised by the Father, bestowed by the Son, inwrought by the Holy Spirit? This joy is yours by grace and your spiritual birthright through believing. Are you seeking to rejoice in yourself from a motive of pride or self-reputation? You have nothing of your own to move God to be gracious or to continue His grace towards you. If you forget this you will lose your joy. Are you grieving under a sense of indwelling sin? Let godly sorrow work repentance, as the true spirit which the Lord blesses and which creates fullness of joy—godly sorrow opens rejoicing in God and draws down divine

delights. Have you sought joys in some creature comfort? Look not below God for happiness; fall not asleep in Delilah's lap. Let God be all in all to you and joy in the fountain that is always full.

The Valley of Vision

Lord, high and holy, meek and lowly, You have brought me to the valley of vision, where I live in the depths but see You in the heights; hemmed in by mountains of sin I behold Your glory. Let me learn by paradox that the way down is the way up, that to be low is to be high, that the broken heart is the healed heart, that the contrite spirit is the rejoicing spirit, that the repenting soul is the victorious soul, that to have nothing is to possess all, that to bear the cross is to wear the crown, that to give is to receive, that the valley is the place of vision. Lord, in the daytime stars can be seen from deepest wells, and the deeper the wells the brighter Your stars shine; let me find Your light in my darkness, Your life in my death, Your joy in my sorrow, Your grace in my sin, Your riches in my poverty, Your glory in my valley.

Taken from The Valley of Vision: A Collection of Puritan Prayers & Devotions.

Prayer for Formal Services

Prayer of Peace

Lord, make us an instrument of Your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love; for it is in giving that we receive; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Heavenly Father whose heart is selfless love, take pity on our divided world and grant that we may follow in the steps of Your Son in giving ourselves to the service of others, reaching out to the marginalized and the despised, that peace and justice may triumph and Your kingdom come on earth. As Your people, holy and dearly loved, help us to clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience, bearing with each other and forgiving whatever grievances we may have against one another. Help us to forgive as You have forgiven us. And over all these virtues help us to put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.*Col.3:12-16* Amen

Prayers of Praise

Heavenly Father, no one can fathom Your greatness and each generation commends Your works to another. As we speak of Your glorious splendour, we will meditate on Your wonderful works. As we tell of the power of Your awesome works, we will proclaim Your great deeds. As we celebrate Your abundant goodness, we will joyfully sing of Your righteousness. You are gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. You have compassion on all You have made and You are good to all. All Your works praise You, LORD and Your faithful people extol You. We will tell of the glory of Your kingdom and speak of Your might so that all people may know of Your mighty acts and the glorious splendour of Your kingdom. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and Your dominion endures through all generations. You are trustworthy in all You promise and faithful in all You do. You uphold all who fall and lift up all who are bowed down. You are near to all who call on You, to all who call on You in truth. *Ps.145:3-18*

For God's Glory

Eternal Father, thank You that You are working out Your plan to have all things put under Jesus' feet. Thank You that You delight in Your Son and that His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom that will never pass away. Thank You for giving us Your Spirit to empower us to speak and act as Your kingdom people in the world. May You get all the glory. In Jesus Name. Amen

For Freedom

Lord, where Your spirit is, there is freedom. Yet the freedom to proclaim Jesus is being taken away. Please preserve our freedom to speak about Jesus Christ in public life and to express the hope of the gospel in the workplace, schools and universities.

For King and Government

Lord, enthroned in heavenly splendour: look with favour upon Charles our King, and bestow upon him such gifts of wisdom and love that we and all Your people may live in peace and prosperity and in loving service one to another, to Your eternal glory; Ruler of All, we ask that You guide those who govern us. Help our King, our Prime Minister, those in Church leadership and all other leaders to speak the truth, obey their conscience, and pay homage to King Jesus.

Communal Prayers

O Lord, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, help us to comfort those in trouble with the comfort we have received from You. *2Cor.1:3-4*

For Your goodness and generosity in giving us all that we need, **we will praise You O God.** In every circumstance of life, in good times and bad, **we will trust You, O God.** In love and faithfulness, with all that we have and all that we are, **we will serve You, O God.** As we speak or write or listen to those nearby or far away, **we will share Your love, O God.** In our plans and work for ourselves and for others, **we will glorify You, O God.** In every thought and word and deed, by the power of Your Holy Spirit, **we will live for You, O God.**

Prayer for Emergency Services

God our Father, we praise Your holy Name for all who lived and died in the service of others and are now at rest in Christ. Their example has encouraged us, their witness has inspired us, and the memory of them makes us glad today. For them all we thank You, we honour and we worship You, as they do now by Your grace and in Your glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

We pray for all who promote health and wellbeing in policy and practice; for nurses offering care, both in hospitals and in homes; for nurses in training and those who teach them; for all engaged in research; and all those who, through their office, work for the flourishing of all people.

We remember O Lord, all those who have faithfully served you here on earth and are now at rest; grant us, with them, and with all the faithful departed, the joy of your salvation.

We pray for all those in sorrow, need, anxiety and sickness; that in their weakness, they may know Your strength, and that in despair, they may find hope.

We pray for those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit; for those who are terminally ill, elderly, or frail; for all refugees and those who bear the scars of war; for all who live with chronic disability and pain; and for the many who care for them.

We pray for those among whom we live and work, especially for those in the **Ambulance Services** in the United Kingdom, the Crown Dependencies of Guernsey and Jersey, the Territory of Gibraltar and the Republic of Ireland.

We pray for those who work in the NHS and for those who work in the Independent Sector.

We pray for those who work on the Front-line and for those who work as support.

And today we especially pray for the families of those who have died whilst working for the Ambulance Services.

We remember with thanksgiving those who made the supreme sacrifice of laying down their lives.

We pray that the offering of their lives may not be in vain. By Your grace, enable us this day to dedicate ourselves anew to the service of others and give us the wisdom and strength to build a better world for the honour and glory of Your Name. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A Paramedic's Prayer

As I perform my duty, Lord, whatever be the call
Help me to guide and keep me safe, from dangers big and small
I want to serve and do my best no matter what the scene,
I promise to keep my skills refined, my judgement sharp and keen.
This call to give of myself, most do not understand,
But I stand ready all the time to help my fellow man.
A word of thanks I may not hear but knowing is enough,
That I have helped just even one to go on to live and love.

Fireman's Prayer

When I am called to duty, God wherever flames may rage,
give me strength to save a life, whatever be its age.
Help me to embrace a little child before it's too late,
or save an older person from the horror of that fate.
Enable me to be alert to hear the weakest shout,
and quickly and efficiently to put the fire out.
I want to fill my calling and to give the best in me,
to guard my neighbour and protect his property.
And if according to your will I have to lose my life,
bless with your protecting hand my loving family from strife.

Dear God,
Please guide me in my plight. Help me think quickly, but safely.
Guild my hand to help those who are seeking knowledge.
Give me the wisdom, to help the injured and the weak.
To help those who have no thrive for life.
Grant me the strength to fight the fire with assertive skill.
And God please grant me the ability to return home, to my family.
And, if in your wisdom, I may give my life,
protect them from harm, no matter what the foe. Amen

Soldier's Prayer

Dear Lord, keep me by the arm You bear,
And direct a path through harm's way.
Help me know that You're always there
Guiding me by night and day.
And Lord at moments when I'm feeling lonely
And tempted with discouragement at my post.
Help me lean mightily on You only
Because it is You I depend on the most.
When I long to see my family
Or start thinking of times with a friend.
I'll know that You're always with them
Even after absence is at an end.
Shield me as I answer duty's call
For I have a job from which I can't depart.
Protect me from my enemy, who'd have me fall
For it is You who guards my life and heart.

Soldier's Prayer (Cromwell)

Arise, O, Lord, lift up Thy hand; forget not the humble. Give us help from our trouble, for vain is the help of man. Lord, it is nothing with Thee to help, whether with many or with them that have no power!

Help us, O Lord, our God, for we rest on Thee, and in Thy name we go against this multitude. O Lord, thou art our God. O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us, neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon Thee. Our enemies are lively and strong; they that hate us wrongfully are multiplied. Our own familiar friend, in whom we trusted, hath lifted up his heel against us. Arise, O Lord, in Thine anger, lift up Thyself because of the rage of our enemies, and awake for us to the judgment Thou hast commanded.

Judge us, O God, and plead our cause against an ungodly nation. Oh! deliver us from the deceitful and unjust man. Deliver us, O God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man. Let them not say in their hearts, Aha! so would we have it;

we have swallowed them up. Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after our life; let them be turned back and brought to confusion that desire our hurt. Slay them not, but scatter them by Thy power, and bring them down, O Lord, our shield. Put them in fear, O Lord, that the nations may know themselves to be but men.
Grant not, O, Lord, the desire of the wicked; further not his wicked device, lest they exalt themselves; but grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, may serve Thee without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Thee all the days of our life. O Lord, though our iniquities testify against us, do Thou it for Thy name's sake; for our backslidings are many; we have sinned against Thee. We have sinned against Thee, because we have forsaken the Lord; but now deliver us out of the hands of our enemies, and we will serve Thee. Hear now in Heaven, Thy dwelling-place, and answer and forgive; and this we beg for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen.

Naval Prayer

Eternal God, creator of the heavens and ruler of the raging seas, take under Your powerful protection and bless all members of the Royal Navy. Preserve them from the dangers of the sea and strengthen them so that they may faithfully serve our country. With the help of others who love freedom may they be able to ensure security for all those who lawfully travel the seven seas, and by their effort maintain for all people the possibility of serving You in peace and justice all through their lives. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Prayer in time of war

Thank You, Lord, for all that You have done and are still doing. We trust Your will is always good and finally You will turn evil away. We know You are not silent but patient, but how long will it take, Lord? We are looking forward to a new beginning among people in *xxx*. Our desire is that evil will stop and that we see Your glory shine again in the darkness. We are longing for healing and restoration. We cry out to You, Lord. We are longing for a new generation, taking their place in Your Kingdom, to be the light and salt in the nation. Help us to see

our role in this transformation. Protect us and be with us; carry us day by day. Amen.

O Lord, we trust You—You who calmed the storm. We pray: liberate *xxx*. Liberate *xxx*. We want to go back. We want to go back. Amen.

Father God, even through war and struggle, You are King. Bring Your Kingdom to xxx. Bring peace and justice where there is war and wrongdoing. Be with those Christians In *xxx* that have fled home due to terror. Meet their physical needs. Strengthen their love of You. Raise passion and love. Help them forgive. Bring an end to pain, trauma and fighting. Rebuild Your church in xxx with new vision and influence. Bring many to You. Help them keep going. Amen.

Prayer for Invaded Countries.

Heavenly Father, destroy the works of the enemies, divide their tongues, frustrate their efforts and bring their counsels to naught; cause the enemy to fight within their own ranks, weaken their cause, force them to abandon the war and return home in shame, never to return! In Jesus' Name. Amen.

A Prayer Before Battle

Consecrate my sword and strengthen the arm that wields it. Purify my mind and secure my heart that the blood it circulates remains pure and incorruptible. Cleanse my soul from doubt and from every importuning temptation. Make fear a stranger and make compassion and sacrifice my staunch companions. Render me a willing implement of justice and mercy. Give me strength beyond my strength to persevere past all impossibility. Bless me as you send my soul to battle.

Today we remember

We remember those who have lost their lives defending us.
We remember those who serve in the forces.
We remember all those who live in places of conflict today,
and we remember God's promises of peace

Before whom generations rise and fall, have mercy on human foolishness and failure. When greed, fear and jealousy prevail over love and understanding, forgive those sins that lead to war.

Almighty God, today we remember. We remember the courage of men and women who resisted evil and stood for justice. We remember those who stand today, and we ask you to watch over them. Help us to value the freedom won for us. Help us to use it wisely, gratefully, and pass it on to generations to come, as a legacy of peace and hope. In the name of Jesus, the Prince of Peace, Amen

Bereavement

Father, our hearts and our minds remember those who have lost their lives whilst serving in the military. We ask Father, that you give your strength and comfort to those who grieve and know the pain of loss. During times of feeling alone and shattered by loss please shine your light and peace into their hearts. In the darkest times, please bring hope. In Jesus Name. Amen.

Peace

Heavenly Father, in a world peppered with conflict, unrest and violence we pray that Your peace would break through. Lord, bless our leaders and give them a spirit of peace. Protect our soldiers, physically and mentally, and give them strength to carry out their duties. Soften the hearts of those who perpetrate injustice, set free the prisoners of war and strengthen by Your Holy Spirit those whose struggle is for peace Heal those who carry the deep wounds and scars of war and bring them closer to You. Your Son Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace; give us courage to wear the shoes of peace that your gospel would be proclaimed as we tread the path set before us.

Heavenly Father, as we grieve for those who have sacrificed their lives in so many wars, we thank You for the greatest sacrifice of all—Your Son Jesus. Help us to live in the power of His resurrection today and every day. In Jesus' mighty Name we pray. Amen.

Lord Jesus, we find it so easy to remember the faults of others and so difficult to understand our own. Give us the will to build understanding between people and, in pursuit of Your gift to the world of peace, to dismantle the walls of hostility. Lord Jesus You are the Prince of Peace who has promised to be with us always. Help us every day to be more tuned in to the reality of Your presence and, as we are,

may we experience Your peace and rest, here and now—even on this side of heaven

Serving Military

Let us pray for all those of our armed forces serving at sea, under the sea, in the air and on the land. Whether serving at home or overseas, be ever present with them and their families and friends. Give them courage in danger, energy in times of routine and boredom, peace in their separation and assurance of your presence and guidance at all times. In Jesus Christ, our Lord

Sacrifice

Sovereign Lord, we thank You for the bravery of those who have fought the fight even to the ultimate sacrifice of giving their lives for our nation. You led by Your own example demonstrating that Greater Love means to put Your life on the line for your friends. Real love in sacrifice means that we are Your friends when we do the things You command us. You taught us to love one another. We honour those who have gone before us in the laying down of their lives. May we always remember them. We ask this in the Mighty and Victorious Name of Jesus our Lord. Amen. *(based on John 15:13)*

Remembering

Heavenly Father, as time passes by, it's so easy to forget.
Help us to:
Remember with clear eyes the horrific cost of war.
Remember with deep sorrow those who killed and were killed.
Remember with grief the blood-stained battlefields.
Remember with compassion the bereaved and the wounded.
Remember with respect those who risked their lives for peace.
In a few minutes of silence, we remember family members, friends and people of all walks of life, who courageously and faithfully serve or have served in the armed forces.
Help us to never forget that Jesus made the ultimate Sacrifice for each and every one of us so that we can be free. In the mighty Name of Jesus we pray. Amen

For the Fallen

With proud thanksgiving, a mother for her children,
England mourns for her dead across the sea.
Flesh of her flesh they were, spirit of her spirit,
Fallen in the cause of the free.
Solemn the drums thrill; Death august and royal
Sings sorrow up into immortal spheres,
There is music in the midst of desolation
And a glory that shines upon our tears.
They went with songs to the battle, they were young,
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow.
They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted;
They fell with their faces to the foe.
They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.
They mingle not with their laughing comrades again;
They sit no more at familiar tables of home;
They have no lot in our labour of the day-time;
They sleep beyond England's foam.
But where our desires are and our hopes profound,
Felt as a well-spring that is hidden from sight,
To the innermost heart of their own land they are known
As the stars are known to the Night;
As the stars that shall be bright when we are dust,
Moving in marches upon the heavenly plain;
As the stars that are starry in the time of our darkness,
To the end, to the end, they remain.

Laurence Binyon, The London Times (1914)

A Farmer's Prayer

Bless us, O God, we who live close to the land. Help us as You have helped others before us. They, like we, knew the struggles, the fears, the joys and the rewards of life in a rural area. Please help us to trust

in the Lord Jesus Christ, who said "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." Help us to be aware of the quiet beauty of the night, the fresh green growth on trees, the sweet song of birds. We give thanks for all of these. May we always show respect for all of Your creation. Help us to grow in love and unity with You and with each other. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

Hunting Prayers

A Prayer for the Hunt

Almighty God, Maker and Sustainer of all life, protect all who hunt from danger and from pride. May we be thankful and careful for all living things. Grant us joy in the chase, good fellowship with others and humility at the death. And, we pray, open our eyes, that like St Hubert, we may see the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, for it is in Him alone that we have hope of a new humanity and new creation perfectly restored in Thee. **Amen.**

Following the example of St. Hubert, may we always honour God our Creator, who set man in dominion over all the animals. May the Lord God make us honourable hunters who respect fellow hunters, the quarry, and all of creation. May He keep us safe, and along with all who share the field or the forest, may we be proud of our kill, generous with our meat and thankful in all circumstances. And the blessing of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be with us all. **Amen**.

Hunting Grace

Praise to the Lord for a fine Hunting Morn.
Praise for our Food at the Sound of the Horn.
Praise for our Wine, the Bogs and the Ditches;
Ditches which crumble, we fumble, we tumble.
Praise to the Lord for a day
with the Bitches, Doghounds and Mixed Packs
of the Dartmoor, the Pennine, the Zetland
and all the Packs registered with
Baily's Hunting Directory.
Amen!

Confessions

A Prayer of confession over our giving

Father, in the Name of Jesus,
I confess that Your Word reigns over every area of my life.
You give me the ability to produce wealth and so confirm Your covenant.[Deut.8:1] I bring my whole tithe into the storehouse that there may be food in my house.[Mal.3:10] I am generous and freely give, knowing that I will prosper.[Prov.11:24-25] I give generously, cheerfully and willingly, knowing that You will make me rich in every way, so I can be generous on every occasion.[2Cor.9:6-11] I am a partner with You in giving and receiving, confident of You crediting my account and supplying all my needs according to Your glorious riches in Christ Jesus.[Phil.4:15-19] Because I obey You, I am blessed when I go out and when I come in. You send a blessing on everything I put my hand to.[Deut.28:1-8] Your blessing brings wealth and You add no trouble to it.[Prov.10:22] Good health, full life and true prosperity is my inheritance in Jesus and the reward of the righteous.[Ps.1:1-3; Prov.13:21; Jn.10:10; 3Jn.1:2]
Father, I thank You for true prosperity in Jesus Name.
AMEN—I make this prayer mine

Remember to Whom you belong

I am created by God, I am His. I am redeemed by God, I am His. I am twice His, by original right and by purchase. **I belong to Jesus Christ.**
God defends me, I am His. God corrects me, He makes use of me, I am His. He loves me, He delights in me. **I belong to Jesus Christ.**
I am my Beloved's and He is mine. No-one else possesses any right or power over me. All that is mine is His. **I belong to Jesus Christ.**
All my sin, weakness and shortcomings, I give to Him. He has taken all my condemnation, misery and fear. **I belong to Jesus Christ.**
His strength is my strength, His righteousness, my righteousness. His wisdom, my wisdom and His holiness, my holiness. **I belong to Jesus Christ.**
He is my God. He is my Father. His family, is my family and His heaven, is my home. **I belong to Jesus Christ.**

I am a Disciple of Jesus Christ

I identify with the blood of Jesus Christ, the Word of God and the Anointing of the Holy Spirit. I'm a part of the Fellowship of the Unashamed; I have Holy Spirit power. The die has been cast, I have stepped over the line; the love of God controls me. I won't look back, let up, slow down or back away. The decision has been made, I am a Disciple of Jesus Christ. My past is redeemed, my present makes sense and my future is secure. I am finished and done with low living, sight walking, small planning, colourless dreams, tame visions, mundane talking, cheap giving and dwarf goals. I no longer need pre-eminence, position, promotion, plaudits or popularity. I don't have to be recognised, regarded, rewarded or considered right.

I now live by faith and walk with patience. I live by prayer and labour with power. My face is set, my pace is fast and my goal is the Kingdom of God. My road is narrow, my way is rough, my companions few, my Guide reliable, my mission clear. I cannot be bought, compromised, detoured, lured away, turned back, deluded or delayed. I will not flinch in face of sacrifices, hesitate in the presence of adversaries, negotiate at the pool of popularity or meander in the maze of mediocrity.

I won't give up, shut up or let up until I have stood up, prayed up and spoken up for the cause of Jesus Christ. I must go until He comes, give until I drop, teach until all know and work until He stops me.

I am a Disciple of Jesus Christ!

Confession over my Bible

This is my Bible; I am what it says I am. I have what it says I have. I can do what it says I can do. Today, I will be taught the Word of God. I boldly confess that my mind is alert, my heart is receptive, I will never be the same again. I am about to receive the Incorruptible, Indestructible, Ever-living seed of the Word of God.

I will never, never be the same. In Jesus Name. Amen

Marriage

Wedding Prayer

The value of two people, particularly husband and wife, being in agreement with each other cannot be calculated. *If two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for it will be done for you by my Father in heaven.*[Matthew 18:19]

Father, it is written in Your Word that You have poured out Your love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom You have given to us.[Rom.5:5] Your love endures for ever[2Chron.20:21] and is new every morning. Great is Your faithfulness.[Lam.3:22]

We know and rely on the love You have for us. Because You loved us we can truly love each other. There is no fear in love but perfect love drives out fear.[1Jn.4:15-18] You have given us a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.[2Tim.1:7]

Thank You that our love for each other abounds more and more in knowledge and depth of insight.[Phil.1:9] We clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience, forgiving every grievance we may have against each other as You have forgiven us. And over all these virtues we put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.[Col.3:12-15]

We stay completely humble and gentle, remaining patient and bearing with each other in love,[Eph.4:2] that nothing may hinder our prayers.[1Pet.3:7]

We desire above all things that our lives are worthy of You and please You in every way, bearing fruit in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God.[Col.1:10]

Our love for each other is patient and kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Our love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.[1Cor 13:4-7]

Father, in flesh and in spirit we are Yours,[Mal.2:14] our marriage is honourable and our marriage bed remains pure.[Heb.13:4] You have united us, so we have become one flesh.[Gen.2:24] We will not permit anything—person, possession or pursuit—to separate what You have joined

together.*Matt.19:6* We guard ourselves in our spirits, that we do not break faith with our partner. You are our witness.*Mal.2:14-15*
We love and respect each other, as Your Word says*Eph.5:33* and we follow the way of love*1Cor.14:1* which never fails.*1Cor.13:8*
Remember, love never fails!

For Marriage

Father of the Bridegroom, Your wonderful pattern for marriage and family is being systematically eroded in the Church and in the world. Please give our Church leaders boldness to uphold the Bible's teaching that marriage is between one man and one woman. May the beauty of the gospel shine brightly through our own marriages and families.

Funeral Prayers

Father God, we pray that out of Your glorious riches, You will strengthen us with power through Your Spirit in our inner being, so that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith.*Eph.3:14-21 NLT* **You are the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort.** Comfort us in our troubles, so we that can comfort others with the comfort we have received from You.*2Cor.1:3-4*

We are grateful for the precious gift of life and we give thanks for *Name's* **life. We pray** that we may not be overwhelmed or embittered by *her/his* death; that *her/his* death may not cause us to think less of life but more.

We have come here to honour *Name*, and so we commit ourselves to make life not only bearable but joyful and triumphant for all who struggle. We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

May we remember the dignity of our spiritual release, never being too busy to attend to our soul and never being so engrossed with time that we neglect the things of eternity. Form our minds to right notions of religion, that we may not judge Your grace by wrong conceptions, nor measure our spiritual advances by the efforts of our natural being.

May we seek after an increase of divine love to You, after an unreserved resignation to Your will, after an extensive benevolence to our fellow creatures, after patience and fortitude of our soul, after a

heavenly disposition, after a concern that we may please You in public and private.

You are the Father who gives tender love. All comfort comes from You and as You comfort us in all our troubles, let us now comfort others when they are in trouble because we have received our comfort from You.

Lord, You are our place of safety. Give us strength. You are always there to help us in times of trouble.[Ps.46:1-3]

We pray for *Name's* **family** (especially) as they are tested. Grant them courage and confidence to face life

Teach us how to use the world and not abuse it; to improve our talents and to redeem our time; to walk in wisdom toward those without and in kindness to those within; to do good to all people and especially to those we love. We all hasten towards an hour when earthly pursuits and possessions will appear vain, when it will be indifferent whether we have been rich or poor, successful or disappointed, admired or despised. But it will be of eternal moment that we have mourned for sin, hungered and thirsted after righteousness, loved the Lord Jesus in sincerity, gloried in His cross. May these objects engross our chief solicitude (*consideration*)! Produce in us those principles and dispositions that make Your service perfect freedom. And keep us walking steadfastly towards the country of Everlasting Delights—that Paradise-land which is our true inheritance. Support us by the strength of heaven, that we may never turn back or desire false pleasures that will disappear into nothing. As we pursue our heavenly journey by Your grace, let us be known as people with no aim but that of a burning desire for You, the good of others and their salvation. May we view all things in the mirror of eternity, waiting for the coming of our Lord and listening for that last trumpet call to herald the new heaven and new earth.

Now let Your unfailing love comfort us, just as You promised us, Your servants.[Ps.119:76]

Yet a little while and we too shall go to our eternal home and be seen no more; help us to gird up the loins of our minds, to quicken our steps and to speed as if each moment were our last, that our life be joy and our death glory.

Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or are hungry or cold or in danger or threatened with death? No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us. And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from his love. Death can't, and life can't. The angels can't, and the demons can't. Our fears for today, our worries about tomorrow, and even the powers of hell can't keep God's love away. Whether we are high above the sky or in the deepest ocean, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.*Rom.8:35*

I long to see the face of my Saviour.
It won't be long now, it won't be long.
These many years I've known Him in measure;
But soon His fullness I know I'll see.
His glorious face I shall behold. His majesty shall unfold.
And in His presence I then shall stand, re-made by His Almighty hand.

I've felt the touch of hands that were nail-scarred.
I've felt His presence for He was near.
I've walked by faith when I could not see Him;
But soon my vision will be made clear.

I've felt His power, I know that He saved me.
I've shared His blessings they've been so free.
I've shared His love when others have failed me;
But soon His fullness I know I'll see.

Ruth Heflin

Legalistic remorse says, "*I broke God's rules*," while real repentance says, "*I broke God's heart.*"
This Bible is for the government of the people, by the people and for the people. *John Wycliffe*

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be Your Name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen

Our Father in heaven, may Your Name be honoured. May Your Kingdom come. May what You want to happen be done on earth as it is done in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, just as we also have forgiven those who sin against us. Keep us from falling into sin when we are tempted. Save us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.*Matt.5:5-9(NIrV)*

Grace

Bless the food before us and the people beside us;
May the sharing of this meal strengthen our communities
and nurture the bonds between us—
bonds of friendship, hope and trust.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ
Who reigns as Servant of all. Amen

Benedictions

The blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. Amen

The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn His face towards you and give you His peace. *Numbers 6:24-26*

Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.*Eph..3:20-21*

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*2Cor.13:14*

To Him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before His glorious presence without fault and with great joy—to the only God our Saviour be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.[Jude 24-25]

Go forth into the world in peace; be of good courage; hold fast that which is good; render to no-one evil for evil; strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak; help the afflicted; honour all people; love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

Rise up within me O Christ of God and cause me to triumph and walk in victory every moment of today!
Holy Spirit flow through me today. Trust me with opportunities to show Your power and I will gladly take them. Thank you for using me. I do expect a Miracle from You today.

A Prayer for the Church

Father, may we clearly know Your will and achieve the height and depth of spiritual wisdom and understanding. May our lives be a credit to You, Lord; and what's more, may we continue to delight You by doing every good work and growing in the true knowledge that comes from being close to You. Strengthen us with Your infinite power, according to Your glorious might, so that we will have everything we need to hold on and endure hardship patiently and joyfully. Thank You, Father, as You have made us eligible to receive our portion of the inheritance given to all those set apart by the light. You have rescued us from dark powers and brought us safely into the kingdom of Your Son, whom You love and in whom we are redeemed and forgiven of our sins through His blood. Colossians 1:9-14 The Voice

Shepherd of the Flock, cause Your Church to rise up and be strong in confidently and uncompromisingly proclaiming the gospel to our nation. Enable Bible-teachers to preach the whole counsel of God. Grow churches where the Bible is taught faithfully and give them influence in their local communities.

Father, out of Your glorious riches, strengthen us with power through Your Spirit in our inner being, that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith. Help us to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ. Your divine power has given us everything we need or life and godliness, so we will make every effort to add to our faith goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love. Love covers over a multitude of sins and so we will love each other deeply. We will offer hospitality to one another without grumbling and will use whatever gifts we have received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.

O Lord, make an end to all our distress; strengthen our feet and hands and let us always until death, commend ourselves to Your care and faithfulness, so to go our way with assurance into Your Heaven.

Thank You, Father, for [*name*]. I pray that as he goes and tells his story of faith, he would tell everyone so that they will know for certain all the good that comes to those who put their trust in the Anointed One.*Philemon6*

Ordination and Induction

N, my *brother/sister* in Christ, you are called to be a servant and a shepherd in this *congregation/these congregations.*

It is your work to preach Christ's gospel, to call people to repentance, to assure them of God's mercy, and to baptise. You will teach, inspire and encourage, both by word and example, the people entrusted to your care. You will lead them in worship and celebrate the Lord's supper with them. You will take Christ the Good Shepherd as your example, caring for his people and serving with them in their witness to the world.

In view of this solemn trust, we ask you to reaffirm the declaration of faith and obedience that you made at your ordination and to show that you desire, by God's grace, to continue your ministry in this congregation.

Do you confess anew Jesus Christ as Lord? *I do so confess.*

Do you receive the witness to Christ in the holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments?

Do you accept the discipline of this Church and the oversight of this presbytery? *I do.*

Will you take part in the work of this presbytery and other councils of this Church, and will you share in the life and witness of the wider church?

Almighty God, in every age You have chosen servants to speak Your word and lead Your people. We thank You for *N* whom You have called to serve You. Fill *him/her* with the Holy Spirit and give *him/her* gifts for this ministry. May *he/she* have the same mind that was in Christ Jesus, and be a faithful disciple, being an example to the people of God and witnessing before the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Eternal God, we bring to You our thanks, we offer to You our praise for the demonstration of Your eternal love made to the world in the life and death and resurrection of Jesus who is the Christ for the vulnerable infant, the suffering servant, the crucified Christ for the risen, living, glorified Christ accompanying His people through this life and beyond. We thank You for the generations of the faithful who have gone before us, who enjoyed the gifts of Your Spirit and with whom You unite us in Your great church that is in heaven and on earth. Today we thank You for the service that *N* has given to Your church in different ways and in different places, and we pray that *his/her* sense of calling may be renewed as *s/he* comes to this work in *P.* We thank you for the talents and skills *s/he* has exercised and which *s/he* now brings to this charge, for her/his integrity and faith. We thank You for all that *s/he* has learned in ministry, all that *s/he* has given and all that *s/he* has shared in. We thank You for the pilgrimage of *her/his* past and the mission that is the future. We thank You for *N*'s family, and pray for *N* and *N*, that in their own right they may know that they are welcomed by a community, embraced by a fellowship and loved for themselves.

In this ministry, may *N* give and be given to, hear and be heard, love and be loved, support and be supported. Grant Your grace to both minister and congregation to forge together a partnership of trust and respect. May they proclaim the good news of the kingdom through their life and worship together. May they teach, baptise and nurture new

believers. Through their faith and fellowship, may they respond to human need by loving service. Through their stewarding of energies, funds and resources may they seek to transform unjust structures of society. Through their compassion and courage, may they strive to safeguard the integrity of creation. Through their vigilance and vision may they sustain and renew the life of the earth. We pray for your presence in the dreams they dare to dream, in the hopes they begin to build and the future they begin to plan. You who transformed the cross into a victory and built Your church on the weak and the powerless, keep them faithful to their calling; equip them for your service; guide them on their pilgrimage and welcome them into Your future.

Heavenly Father, through Your church, You call people into positions of leadership, to serve You and Your people. We pray for wisdom, strength and grace as we submit to You and to one another. Help us to all take our part within the Body of Christ so that Your manifold wisdom is manifested among us.

Anoint me with the oil of a New Testament prophet. Forbid that I should become a religious scribe and thus lose my prophetic calling. Save me from the curse that lies dark across the face of the modern clergy, the curse of compromise, of imitation, of professionalism. Save me from the error of judging a church by its size, its popularity, or the size of its yearly offerings. Help me to remember that I am a prophet—not a promoter, nor a religious manager, but a prophet. Let me never become a slave to crowds. Heal my soul of carnal ambitions and deliver me from the itch for publicity. Lord, make me childlike. Deliver me from the urge to compete with another for prestige or position. I would be simple and artless as a little child. Deliver me from pose and pretence. Forgive me for thinking of myself. Help me to forget myself and find my true peace in beholding You. **A. W. Tozer** (1897 - 1963)

Thankfulness

Being thankful in the midst of trials and suffering often enables us to see that God's hand is still moving. Thankfulness helps us focus on Him and His faithfulness. Thankfulness defeats discontent and bitterness. Gratitude and contentment go together. God calls us to

praise and thankfulness, knowing that we are all prone to discontent. Giving thanks as a daily practice is one of the most distinctive marks of our faith. Thankfulness in every situation, places God over our lives and in the centre of our hearts. Through our gratitude to God, we acknowledge that He is our sovereign Lord.

Heavenly Father, thank You for the sunsets and evening stars. I end this day knowing that You have been with me in all that I have done and that You will be with me as I sleep. Give me holy rest this night and deep peace. Forgive me for any wrong I have done to You, O God, and to others—or for any good deeds I have omitted. Holy, holy, holy God, You love me and You forgive me. Blessed, holy and glorious are You, my God—You are compassionate and loving, this night and forever. Amen.

Good morning, God! Please give me the strength to do the tasks that You set before me today. Whenever I find myself with a bit of extra time, prompt my heart to pray for those who are working without the luxury of a spare moment. In the midst of personal challenges, it is easy to become self-absorbed and forget Your many blessings. Guide me toward a sincere appreciation of the trust You have in my abilities and move me to use them for the benefit of others.
Heavenly Father, I thank You for another day. As the world interrupts my dreams, open my heart to Your love. As I spend today in joyful praise of You my Creator, help me to enjoy Your creation.
Lord Jesus, I thank you for the night's rest. As I organize today's schedule, open my ears to Your voice and help me to hear what You are calling me to do today.
Holy Spirit, I thank You for another opportunity to share the gifts that You have given me. As I begin this day, open my eyes to Your presence here on earth and help me to take the time to help others along the way. Amen.

Heavenly Father, I praise You for this day, for the life You have given me. I praise You for my body, which is beginning to age—but I still enjoy life! Father, I praise You that You have inspired me from my

early youth to love You and to search for You—it's such a gift. Heavenly Father, I thank You and I praise You for Jesus, who is the light of my life and my deepest friend. Heavenly Father, I praise You for the gift of pardon because without Your pardon, I would be discouraged. Thank You heavenly Father for this day. I praise You, Father.

Dear friends, I recommend you to praise the Lord. Every day, try to have a moment of praise—it changes the day. Give Him a smile.

A Prayer for those who are deconstructing

Father in heaven, you are worthy of all praise, honor, and glory. You are all-powerful, all-good, and all-loving. You know the end from the beginning. You know what lies deep in the heart and mind of ****, who is in deconstruction. You know the causes, the confusion, and the circumstances that have led them to doubt the reality of your Word, your plan, and your gospel. I ask you to lead them to Truth and heal all wounds. I ask that you use me in this process and give me wisdom to know what to say and when to say it. Shine your light on me and convict me if I have sinned against my loved one that I might repent and model that repentance to them. I trust you with my loved one and ask that you save them. Help me to trust you with this relationship, knowing that you work all things together for good for those who love you and are called according to your purpose. May the beauty of the gospel be on display in my life that it might be beautiful to all who see. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Sundry

How God "Hears" Prayers

How can God hear all our prayers at once? This is what children ask, but the question comes up with adults, too. The answer is easy, though. God doesn't learn our requests by listening to them. Since God is omniscient—He knows everything, including our prayers before we pray them—He gains no information when we pray. He has always known what our prayer would be. Having always known, He's also always known how He would respond. The purposes of His will regarding the prayer have been eternally established.

Prayer is not just an empty ceremony, though. God's knowledge of our prayer depends on the fact that we pray. If we don't pray, then there is no prayer for God to have known in advance. He only knows our prayers beforehand because we actually choose to pray them in the future. That's why, even with a God who knows everything—including our prayers in advance—prayer still matters. *Greg Koukl*

Trouble Praying

You said you find it hard to pray, your prayer times empty pass;
The air it feels like granite, and the ceiling seems like brass!
You said your prayers don't go beyond, the room; that you feel static.
The ceiling! Who told you that God lives inside your attic?
Whoever told you had it wrong—misplacing God's true venue:
The truth is, once invited there, that God resides within you.

Wee Willie Winkie climbs the stairs
Wee Willie Winkie kneels to say his prayers:
Hands together, eyes closed, a bowing of his head
Mumbles words his mother taught him—tumbles into bed.
Wee Willie Winkie never fails to pray
Wee Willie Winkie knows just what to pray
Wee Willie wonders what good the words have done
For he has never prayed a prayer with words that are his own. *G.Baily*

Prayer for a cow!

There lived within a country town
A dear old woman named Betty Brown.
She kept a cow in her back shed
And always saw it was well fed.

On Sunday she would haste away
To hear the Pastor preach and pray.
His faith was always firm and strong,
The Pastor could do nothing wrong.

When she was taken ill one day,
She for the Pastor sent to pray.
Next morn her neighbour came and said:

“I just popped in to make your bed,
But, oh, you seem quite well again.
What did you take to ease your pain?”
“Nothing” Betty said, “I do declare
It must have been the Pastor’s prayer.”

When sickness fell on Betty’s cow,
“It’s queer,” she said, “But anyhow
I’ll call the Pastor, that I will,
And tell him my poor cow is ill.”

“Pastor” she said, “oh do come now
And pray a prayer for my poor cow!”
The Pastor scarce knew what to do
Praying for cows was something new.

But since she put him to the test
He promised he would do his best.
He thought the cow was almost dead
So, bending over it he said:

“You poor old beast, you look so bad
Your poor old face with eyes so sad,
If you live you live, if you die you do
And that will be the end of you!”

The cow got well and the dear old dame
Went off to Church when Sunday came.
She told the Pastor how his prayers
Had healed her cow and eased her cares.

Next morn, the Pastor caught a chill
Which made him feel extremely ill.
A violent cough went through his frame
And in his throat an abscess came.

The Doctor said unless it broke
He most decidedly would choke.
His wife was almost wild with grief
And could in no way find relief.

As soon as Betty heard the news
She quickly donned her Sunday shoes,
Her bonnet and her Sunday shawl
And at the house she made a call.

The servant there began to grin,
Of course they would not let her in!
The Pastor heard the noise below,
They told him that she would not go.

"Then let her in" was his reply,
"I'll see old Betty before I die!"
As Betty reached the Pastor's bed
She gently sat and then she said:

"I cannot pray, I don't know how,
But when you prayed for my poor cow
I learnt that prayer and now I'll pray.
And this is what I'm going to say:

"You poor old beast, you look so bad
Your poor old face with eyes so sad,
If you live you live, if you die you do
And that will be the end of you!"

The Pastor laughed enough to choke
And all at once the abscess broke.
So, gone the tears and gone the pain
And soon he got quite well again.

And then he told his anxious wife
How Betty's prayer had saved his life.
God bless dear Betty and her cow
She beat the Doctor anyhow!

Gardening

For the garden or your daily living: Water freely with patience and cultivate with love. There is much fruit in your garden because you reap what you sow.

Plant Three Rows of Peas: Peace of mind; Peace of heart; Peace of soul

Plant Four Rows of Squash: Squash gossip; Squash of indifference; Squash grumbling; Squash selfishness

Plant Four Rows of Lettuce: Lettuce be faithful; Lettuce be kind; Lettuce be patient; Lettuce really love one another

No Garden is Complete without Turnips: Turnip for Meetings; Turnip for Service; Turnip to help one another

To Conclude Our Garden we must have Thyme: Thyme for each other; Thyme for family; Thyme for friends

Gardeners Hymn

All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful, the Lord God made them all.
But what we never mention, though gardeners know its true
Is when He made the goodies, He made the baddies too.
All things spray and swattable, disasters great and small,
All things paraquatable, the Lord God made them all.
The greenfly on the roses, the maggots in the peas,
Manure that fills our noses, He also gave us these.
The fungus on the goose-gogs, the club-root on the greens,
'I'he slugs that eat the lettuce and chew the aubergines.
The drought that kills the fuchsias, the frost that nips the bud,
The rain that drowns the seedlings, the blight that hits the spuds.
The midges and mosquitoes, the nettles and the weeds,
The pigeons in the green stuff, the sparrows on the seeds.
The fly that get the carrots, the wasp that eats the plums,
How black the gardeners outlook, though green may be his thumbs.
But still we gardeners labour, midst vegetables and flowers,
And pray what hits our neighbours, will somehow pass ours!

Adam was a handsome man

Adam was a handsome man, God made him from dust,
He placed him in a garden fair, away from sin and lust.
Adam was a perfect man but one thing makes me glum,
Although he lived in paradise, he never had a Mum!

Adam was a special man, he had a job to do,
He named the birds, he named the beasts as God had told him to,
He also gave the fruit its name, like apple, pear and plum,
And although he lived in paradise, he never had a Mum!

Eve was made from Adam's rib, a woman fair was she,
Her hair was long, her teeth were white, a perfect sight to see;
Adam fell in love with her, he said "I'm glad you've come
For though I live in paradise, I've never had a Mum!"

Eve & Adam lost their home in that sweet garden fair,
Sin had crept into their lives to drive them to despair;
They had to work and toil all day, from dawn to setting sun.
Who could they tell their troubles to? They never had a Mum!

People here on earth today, remember that first pair
Who never grew up in a home with other kids to share;
They may have had a paradise but when all's said & done,
You nearly have had everything, when you have had a Mum!

The Parson's Problem

Reverend Purbright-spick and span, was a very holy man,
Washed his hands twelve times a day, hoped the germs would keep away.
Hygiene was a thing with him, exercising kept him slim,
Vitamins were in his diet, by nature he was meek and quiet.

Each day he visited his flock, kept some peppermints in stock,
Patted children on their heads, gave advice to newly weds.
Once he called on widow Petty; lived alone quite near the jetty,
Smoke filled room, a dirty place, Reverend Purbright needed grace.

He took a seat so daintily, she offered him a cup of tea,
It was the cup that she had used, got the poor chap all confused.

He turned the cup the other way, prayed the germs be kept at bay,
Mrs Petty laughed with glee, "You're left handed—same as me."

Adam's Wrong Diet

As Adam slept beneath a tree
An artful snake accosted he.
The snake was beautiful it seems
And roused young Adam from his dreams.

"Your wife and I have had a chat,
She seems to be confused and that
It would be wrong for her to dabble
With the fruit that's like an apple."

Adam said "My wife is right,
Her diet is prescribed as light
She only eats the proper food,
Which keeps her slim and looking good."

Thus the snake now looking coy
Thought he'd try another ploy
He said to Eve "Of brains you're short,
To try this fruit you really ought.

You see, you've never been to school
And basically you're just a fool.
This is just the stuff for brains,
She who eats it wisdom gains."

Adam came and they did share,
Not an apple or a pear;
Forbidden fruit, Oh yes they knew it
Mankind's future, they just blew it.

When they ran to hide their shame,
Each the other tried to blame.
They both had made a big mistake
They really should have ate the snake.

Bill West

He didn't bring us this far to leave us

There are some promises in a letter written a long, long time ago
They're not getting older they're getting better
because He still wants us to know…
He didn't bring us this far to leave us. He didn't teach us to swim to let us drown
He didn't build His home in us to move away. He didn't lift us up to let us down
Never use the word "*defeat*"; claim His promises, every one of them
Every spoken word He'll keep because we're everything to Him

Thoughts on the Holy Spirit

Jesus says that to experience the Holy Spirit is like to be born again. It's a new birth in the sense that everything comes alive. The Holy Spirit doesn't change anything and He changes everything. He doesn't add anything to what Jesus has already said and instituted but he makes all Jesus has said and done alive, today. This is what the Holy Spirit is meant to be. The One who accomplishes, who realizes and re-enacts the work of Jesus. The Holy Spirit is a relationship, a Person. Its personal love between God the Father and Son and if human love can change the lives of two people, imagine what the Holy Spirit does who is love in a person, when He comes on a person and when He is accepted, welcomed. There can't be a more rewarding experience than to accept the Holy Spirit. *Raniero Cantalamessa (the Pope's personal preacher)*

Prayer Quotes

Christian prayer takes its stand on the solid ground of the revealed Word and has nothing to do with vague, self-seeking vagaries. We pray on the basis of the prayer of the true Man Jesus Christ. … We can pray aright to God only in the name of Jesus Christ. We learn to speak to God because God has spoken to us and speaks to us. God's speech in Jesus Christ meets us in the Holy Scriptures. If we wish to pray with confidence and gladness, then the words of Holy Scripture will have to be the solid basis of our prayer. *Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Psalms.*

Prayer is not a free-will offering to God. We are not free to engage in it according to our own wishes. Prayer is the first divine service in the day… The person who waits upon moods is impoverished. If the painter only wanted to paint when in the mood for it, he would not

get very far. In religion, as in art and science, along with the times of high excitement, there are times of sober work and practice. We must practice our communion with God, otherwise we will not find the right tone, the right word, the right language, when God surprises us with His presence. *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, *Meditating on the Word.*

When we pray, we can rely on Jesus Christ, who is always praying for us and with us. Christ's praying on our behalf is what makes our prayers true prayer. Prayer is not fundamentally about us pouring out our words, our hearts, or our emotions to God… When we pray "*in Jesus' name*," we acknowledge that our prayers depend on Jesus Christ, which gives us freedom. When we're not tangibly aware of God's presence in prayer, it's okay. We are always connected by the Spirit to Jesus' ongoing ministry of prayer, whether we feel it or not. When prayer doesn't deliver the sense of intimacy we are expecting, we can find joy in knowing that our union with Christ is secure. When suffering and grief make it difficult to pray, we can rest in the reality that the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ will continue to intercede on our behalf. When we go through seasons of dryness, we can persevere in faith, remembering that our experience of prayer is not foundational. Jesus Christ himself is the foundation, the Word of God, who always lives to intercede for us. Praying with the borrowed words of the Bible was one way God rebuilt my life of prayer on a more solid basis, reminding me that prayer is answering God, not generating my relationship with God. *Kristen Deede Johnson, "Our Theology of Prayer Matters More than Our Feelings."*
Triumphant prayer is almost impossible where there is neglect of the study of the Word of God. Prayer that is born of meditation upon the Word of God is the prayer that soars upward most easily to God's listening ears. *R.A.Torrey*
I make it my business only to persevere in His holy presence, wherein I keep myself by a simple attention and a general fond regard to God—which I may call an *actual presence* of God—or, to speak better, an habitual, silent and secret conversation of the soul with God. *Brother Lawrence*
You think like a man instead of thinking like God. Your thoughts concerning God are too human! …When we pray, we must hold fast

and believe that God has heard our prayer. It was for this reason that the ancients defined prayer as an *Ascensus mentis ad Deum*, "a climbing up of the heart unto God." *Martin Luther*

Remorse before Calvary is of God; remorse after you have been to Calvary is of the devil. Repent of your sin, yes; but do not make your sin a subject for long and melancholy meditation. Why should I cheat God by spending my time and energy on remorse? I am greater than my sins. *Martin Luther*

Watch and Pray: if you are praying about a certain matter, get busy with it—when a farmer prays for a corn crop, God expects him to say *'Amen'* with a hoe! *Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.*[Mk.14:38]

The thought of God stirs a person so deeply that he cannot be content unless he praises Him, because He made us for Himself and our hearts find no peace until they rest in Him. *Augustine of Hippo*

Moses prayed that God would deliver his people; but the Lord said to him *Why do you cry to me?* As much as to say this is not the time for prayer, it is the time for action. *Tell the people of Israel to go forward.*[Ex.15:14] When we have prayed over a matter to a certain degree, it then becomes sinful to tarry any longer; our plain duty is to carry our desires into action, and having asked God's guidance, and having received divine power from on high, to go at once to our duty without any longer deliberation or delay. Spiritual men, in their distresses, turn at once to prayer, even as the stag when hunted takes to flight. Prayer is a never-failing resort; it is sure to bring a blessing with it. Even apart from the answer of our supplications, the very exercise of prayer is healthy to the man engaged in it. Far be it from me ever to say a word in disparagement of the holy, happy, heavenly exercise of prayer. But, beloved, there are times when prayer is not enough—when prayer itself is out of season. You will think that a hard saying, and say, "*Who can hear it?…" C.H.Spurgeon*

The wonderful thing about praying is that you leave a world of not being able to do something, and enter God's realm where everything is possible—He specializes in the impossible; nothing is too great for His almighty power; nothing is too small for His love. *Corrie ten Boom*

Our prayers can go where we cannot go—there are no borders, no prison walls and no doors that are closed to us when we pray. *Brother Andrew*
Never make the blunder of trying to forecast the way God is going to answer your prayer. *Oswald Chambers*
Biblical meditation is filling the mind with Scripture and then loading the heart with it until it affects not only the emotions but the entire life. *John Owen*
When we pray, we are expressing our dependence on God (c.f. many of the Psalms). *Andrew Corbett*
Religion is following a set of rules; Christianity is following Jesus Christ. Religion always spiritualises God; Jesus humanises God. Religion keeps people away from God; Christianity unites people with God through Jesus. Religion is man's attempt to get to God; Christianity is God coming to the people in Jesus. Religion is a ritual, a dogma, a ceremony; Christianity is a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Prayer is communion with the Father; it is pondering what His Word says about our ideas and conforming our concepts to His. Never contemplate that sacred season with demons on your mind. Never project a war with darkness or anticipate a battle with evil forces. *Christ did all of that for us, in our name.*[Col.1:13; 2:15] *T.L.Osborn*
Spiritual stability and genuine maturity. There are no shortcuts to spiritual stability and genuine maturity. We have to stick with the basics, the routine, ordinary disciplines that have been around for millennium and have served a very good purpose, to build solid Christian people over time. **We attain a deeper, fuller, richer Christian life by following the fundamental, basic disciplines of Christianity that God has given us and revealed in the Bible**: Prayer; Fellowship with accountability; Bible study; Meditation and memorization; Practicing Christian virtue; Obedience; Repentance; Worship. And every single Christian person can do all of these ordinary, everyday type of things! **It's the practice of these things in a consistent manner over a long period of time that builds deep spirituality—not some power encounter with God (or the devil).** I'm not disregarding powerful spiritual encounters people have with God. Those are

valuable and God determines when they happen. But people who seek those sometimes get other kinds of experiences besides God. Not only that, it often substitutes a dramatic emotional experience for substantive, real, genuine transformation of character. We must also know the truth. We've got to know doctrine—the nature of God; the person of Christ; the nature of man; the work of the cross; the nature of revelation. Virtually every significant error in Christendom at large is an error in one of those areas. We have to know something about church history, about the development of Christian thought. People have been getting weird for 2000 years, and a record of the history of the church demonstrates that fact, but it also makes it clear what is weird and what isn't, what was rejected and what was accepted and the reasons why. Most of the errors being made now have been made a number of times in the past. But if your view is out of step with the conventional view of the church, you better be really certain that Scripture unequivocally backs you up. *Greg Koukl*

Do Our Prayers Make a Difference? If God is sovereign over history, why should we pray? Does it makes sense to pray for things since God has already sovereignly planned history from beginning to end? This is a thoughtful question, and I think a big part of the answer is that God uses certain means to accomplish His plans in order to bring Himself the most glory. When we pray for something and God gives it, He unquestionably gets the glory. This is why *we have not because we ask not.*[Jas.4:2] Were God to always give us what we need apart from our prayers, I guarantee you we would quickly lose sight of Who was behind those gifts. We would either take in the gifts unnoticed or, worse, conclude our own great abilities were responsible for obtaining them. God uses the means of prayer because He wants us to remain dependent on Him, to remind us that we're creatures in need and that He's the giver, and to help us recognize His work in the world (that is, we see and know He's working when specific prayers are answered, and we know this in a much deeper way than if He were to act behind the scenes without our thinking about it). Our prayers keep us connected with all these things and cause us to rightfully worship and

appreciate Him in awe and thanks. When we say "*But Your will be done*" at the end of a prayer, that's yet another way of recognizing our place as creatures beneath God, our fallibility even in praying for the right things, and our willingness to see Him glorified in the way He chooses. So our prayers really do make a difference—not only because they change us and the way we view God, but because they're the means God uses to intervene in the world. "*We have not because we ask not*," therefore God moves when we ask. Our prayers are part of His plan. Yes, I also think the Holy Spirit moves us to ask in accordance with God's plan, but that's happening behind the scenes and is not something we need to figure out or try to learn to recognize. Our job is to go ahead and pray about everything, knowing that our prayers are making a difference because that's the way God has chosen to work. *Amy Hall* www.str.org

Faith doesn't make things easy—it makes them possible. Faith is the deliberate confidence in the character of God whose ways you may not understand at the time. *Oswald Chambers*

When Christians gather together, vibrations of thankfulness create internal rhythms of praise. The conversation is lively, the songs animated, and the community spirit congenial. The liveliness and the unity are created by the all-encompassing and all-enlivening word of Christ.*Col.3:7 TM*

The unbeliever is the most impractical person. For what is more impractical than working hard all your life and getting paid with nothing more than an expensively framed death certificate? *C.f. Rom.6:21*

Stepping on the accelerator doesn't get us to our destination any faster if we are on the wrong road. If we are doing the wrong thing or doing something in the wrong way, increased zeal only makes it worse. *C.f. Rom.10:3*

Don't get so bogged down in the details of doctrine that you miss the point of salvation, or so absorbed in the trees of history that you miss the forest of faith. We need to keep focused on Jesus. Meditation is thought that is disciplined to exclude distractions, paying attention to God's Spirit only. *Eugene Peterson*

A friend of mine defines prayer as "a *declaration of dependence*." Prayer is powerful, but if our prayers are aimless, meaningless and mingled with doubt, they will be of little hope to us. *Billy Graham.*

Why should we bother to pray if God already knows what we are going to ask for? Prayer involves so much more than making personal requests. It connects us with God and works to bring our wills into conformity with His.

Prayer is never simply a matter of talking to God. It is trusting Him with our concerns. There are many times when we are anxious about children, family, and friends. There is often much that we worry about—their spiritual well-being, schooling, health, friendships, living arrangements, and work. Needless to say, our anxious thoughts are seldom productive and frequently only serve to intensify our level of worry. In seeking to transform anxiety into prayer, it is not simply a matter of talking to God instead of talking to ourselves, for that may simply result in talking anxiously to God. Rather we are challenged to recognize the limitations of our worrying and the possibilities of what Prayer isn't a "*spare wheel*" you pull out when in trouble, it's a "*steering wheel*" that directs the right path throughout your life. When we lose hope and think it's the end, God smiles and says, "*It's just a bend, not the end*".

All are capable of prayer, and it is a dreadful misfortune that almost all the world have conceived the idea that they are not called to prayer. We are all called to prayer, as we are all called to salvation. Prayer is nothing but the application of the heart to God, and the internal exercise of love. St. Paul has enjoined us to "*pray without ceasing;" (1Thess.5:17)* and our Lord bids us *watch and pray (Mk.13:33,37)*: all therefore may, and all ought to practise prayer. *Madame Guyon (1648–1717) Short and Very Easy Method of Prayer*

"Does Prayer Work?" the Daily Mail asked. But whose prayer? What about? The newspaper and television people seem to think that prayer generates some kind of power that might cure the sick, a measurable but mystical energy. The more the prayer the higher the calibration? The only way prayer works is if God answers it, but He doesn't care for newspaper people testing Him to see if He does. *George Canty*

DEAL PENTECOSTAL CHURCH

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A Local Church with a World Vision

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