

# Lent Prayer Journal



Lenten greetings from Mars Hill Bible Church!

The path that we travel on our spiritual pilgrimage from Ash Wednesday to Easter is both specific to this season and in some ways, representative of our Christian lives. Having chosen to live our own way and finding our identity in the many idols of this world, Lent is our journey from the far country to the heart of God whose compassionate love welcomes us into God's household once again. It is in this season that we are beckoned to come home, remain in Christ's love, and be transformed by his redeeming work. Throughout the history of the Church, prayer has been one of the faithful guides on this path. Praying invites us to praise God with adoration, confess our sins, name our need for God, and seek God's reign in our midst. This journal was created to help each of us individually, and us collectively as a church, move deeper into prayer this Lenten season.

Each week within the prayer journal is structured the same way: An introduction to the week, an invitation to dwell in a specific part of the Lord's Prayer, an intentional prayer practice, and then opportunities to reflect throughout the week using the given prompts. Since this guide is written with the entire community in mind, but with particular attentiveness to kids and students, the prayer practice will be introduced in Mars Hill Kids + Students each Sunday to provide another opportunity for practice. Additionally, a video of a staff member demonstrating the prayer practice will be made available midweek on Instagram.

If this prayer journal stirs something in you or your family, please let us know! We also invite you to check out the virtual prayer wall [[marshill.org/prayerwall](http://marshill.org/prayerwall)] and to access our other prayer resources [[marshill.org/prayer](http://marshill.org/prayer)]. A gentle encouragement - we are all novices when it comes to prayer. There are no experts. In that spirit, let us begin again as we pray with and for the world.

**Our Father in heaven**

**Hallowed be your name**

Your Kingdom come,

Your will be done,

On earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts,

As we also have forgiven our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation,

But deliver us from evil.

For yours is the kingdom, and the power,

And the glory forever.

Amen.

# UPWARD

## *Adoration*

“You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being” [Revelation 4:11]. The Lord’s Prayer opens with adoration of our Father God - recognizing God as worthy of all our affection and devotion. Our adoration is a direct response to the one we declare as our God, the only God. As we worship God, we are formed and transformed - God is given the glory, majesty, power, and authority in our lives. As we center ourselves around the first part of the prayer this week, we are invited to turn our hearts toward our loving Father with praise.

# INTERACTIVE PRAYER PRACTICES

## *Names of God*

As we read Scripture, we come to know God more. Scripture is filled with stories, names, and attributes of God that help us understand who our God is. Names hold a particular significance in the Bible by revealing something of the bearer’s identity. Take time to explore the many names ascribed to God throughout Scripture [searching the Scriptures or finding a list online]. Notice what these names tell you about the character, presence, and authority of God. As you come to know God more, allow your heart to naturally be drawn into praise.

## *Postures of Praise*

Our words are not the only way to express ourselves; our body language is also an outward expression of an inward reality. Our bodies can display love, celebration, admiration, honor, awe, reverence, submission to our God. Throughout Scripture, we see people adopting postures that display their inward disposition. As you praise God with your voices, try adapting a posture that expresses your adoration of God with your body. You could raise your arms, kneel, stretch your arms out wide, bow, uplift your eyes, lay face down, or dance.

# PRAYER JOURNALING

What is a name, attribute, or characteristic of God that particularly draws you into praise right now? Take time to express your love and adoration as it relates to that particular aspect of God's being.

# PRAYER JOURNALING

Psalm 40:3 says, "He put a new song of praise in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God..." Write your own psalm of praise to God. If you don't know where to start, take time to read through some Psalms for inspiration. You could even combine parts of different Psalms that capture your heart to make a new one or rewrite one in your own words.

# PRAYER JOURNALING

As you imagine God, what words, phrases, stories, and pictures come to your mind? What is it about them that draws you into adoration of God?

Our Father in heaven  
Hallowed be your name

**Your Kingdom come,**

**Your will be done,**

**On earth as it is in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts,

As we also have forgiven our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation,

But deliver us from evil.

For yours is the kingdom, and the power,

And the glory forever.

Amen.

# OUTWARD

## *Intercession*

The word Intercession can sound intimidating, but it simply means asking God to take notice and hear other people's needs or situations. This powerful tool shows you care and is available to anyone to change the world. God has designed the world so that our human wills work in partnership with God, and our choices make a difference. In prayer, we have the power to make a difference for others. When God's people intercede, God intervenes.

# INTERACTIVE PRAYER PRACTICES

## *Prayer Walk*

Alone or with others [neighbors, friends, family], go on a walk through a specific area to pray on behalf of others in that space. You can walk the streets of a neighborhood, downtown [or even through the mall if you want to stay warm]. Have you ever walked somewhere and experienced a peace you cannot quite explain? Maybe that is a time that others have been there and prayed in that spot, allowing God's kingdom to come.

Here are some methods for ways to prayer walk your neighborhood. These are by no means comprehensive. Use them as starting points and grow your practice from there.

**Use Scripture as Your Guide:** Consider using Lord's Prayer to guide your prayers household, focusing on the lines, "Your kingdom come, your will be done," as you contend for that house and the people who call it home.

**Focus on Two Words:** Try repeating the words, "your will," as you walk - praying one word for each step. With every step, you are covering the space with those words, and whoever enters that territory is now entering a space of faith.

**Use What You See to Guide Your Prayer:** If there is a playground in front of you, thank God for being a playful God who loves children and promises the kingdom. Say a blessing over the children who are present. If you pass a garden, thank God for tending to their souls, and ask God to continue being the Good Gardener. Be attentive to what God is showing you. Seek to notice and join in the work God is already doing in each of those spaces.

# PRAYER JOURNALING

Spend time in intentional prayer for others in your family, school, workplace, or neighborhood. Use this space to guide your prayer with the following tools.

**Begin by learning about the people or situations you're praying for. Ask others how to pray for them or use things from conversations you've had with them to make your prayers more specific.**

**Next, get inspired by opening your Bible. What is God saying about this? Invite the Holy Spirit to speak into the situations for which you're interceding.**

**Finally, get indignant. Engage your heart and allow yourself to think and feel honestly as you pray. Allow the things that break God's heart to break your heart.**

# PRAYER JOURNALING

Focus your intercession on God's purpose in the world. Where are you trying to bring your kingdom rather than God's? Attune your heart instead toward God's kingdom. Think of your intercession as a partnership with God.



# PRAYER JOURNALING

Use your imagination. Find a quiet space and come into the presence of God. As people or places come to mind, picture yourself bringing them before Jesus. Does Jesus have something specific to say to you about these people? Write the names, situations, or places here [or draw a picture of them with Jesus]. This list can be revisited or added to throughout the week.

Our Father in heaven  
Hallowed be your name  
Your Kingdom come,  
Your will be done,  
On earth as it is in heaven.

**Give us today our daily bread.**

And forgive us our debts,  
As we also have forgiven our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil.

For yours is the kingdom, and the power,  
And the glory forever.

Amen.

# BACKWARD

## *Gratitude*

This week we will focus on praying the line “Give us this day our daily bread.” Doing so is an act of gratitude. We thank God for providing for us and we also look back, recalling all the times we have seen God’s faithfulness in our lives. Since God has sustained us in the past, we trust that when tomorrow becomes today we will again have the bread we need.

# INTERACTIVE PRAYER PRACTICE

## *Gratitude by the Spoonful*

This is a simple practice that comes directly from this week’s line of the Lord’s Prayer. You will need a meal, a snack, or favorite beverage and plenty of time to enjoy it slowly.

Before you take your first bite, notice and appreciate the food before you. Note its appearance. How does it smell? Take a moment to wonder how it was made. Think about the effort required for it to be made and put before you for your consumption.

As you eat, do so slowly. Allow yourself time to savor each mouthful. Notice the textures and subtle flavors that you might otherwise rush past. When you are finished, give thanks to God for nurturing you today. Also, thank God for a world full of delicious food to be savored and enjoyed, rather than just eaten for sustenance.

# PRAYER JOURNALING

What are you thankful for today?

# PRAYER JOURNALING

Jesus explains to his disciples that the Father already knows what they need [Matthew 6:8], and yet he also asks Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, “What do you want me to do for you?” [Mark 10:51]. What does God know you need, but perhaps you've been too afraid to ask for in your life?

# PRAYER JOURNALING

When teaching about prayer, Jesus told his disciples to ask, seek, knock and they will be better off because of their persistence. [Luke 11:9-10] What are the things that over time you could devote yourself to pray for with that type of tenacity?

Our Father in heaven  
Hallowed be your name  
Your Kingdom come,  
Your will be done,  
On earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
**And forgive us our debts,**  
**As we also have forgiven our debtors.**  
And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil.  
For yours is the kingdom, and the power,  
And the glory forever.  
Amen.

# INWARD

## *Confession*

"If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." - 1 John 1:8-9

"Our greatest need and God's greatest gift are the same thing: forgiveness of sins." - Pete Greig, *How to Pray* [pg 170]. The good news is, in order to receive this gift we simply need to ask for it, and to pass it on to others. In the pages that follow, you will have the opportunity to respond to prompts inviting you to ask for God's forgiveness, to extend forgiveness to others, and to be reminded that whenever we confess, we receive God's gracious forgiveness.

# INTERACTIVE PRAYER PRACTICES

## *Hands Up, Hands Down*

This is a prayer practice that helps us embody what we are seeking to do when we confess in prayer, take what we are holding onto or carrying, and release it into the loving and grace-filled arms of God.

To begin, place your hands in front of you, palms up. This could be resting on a table, or on top of your legs. While in this posture, confess to God [silently or out loud] for what you are seeking forgiveness. Think of this as filling your open palms with what you are confessing, preparing to hand it over to God.

Once you have finished your time of confession, turn your hands over, palm down, releasing from your grasp the things you have confessed. Keep your hands turned down and take a moment to breathe deeply and rest in the truth that God has removed these things from you, "as far as the east is from the west". [Psalm 103]

## *Scripture Assuring us of being forgiven*

The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. - Psalm 103:8-12

Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy. - Proverbs 28:13

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. - John 3:16-17

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. - Ephesians 2:1-2b, 4-5

When you were dead in your sins and in your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. - Colossians 2:13-14

If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. - 1 John 1:9

This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. - 1 John 4:9-10

# PRAYER JOURNALING

Has there been a time recently that you found yourself more focused on what you do not have [money, friends, clothes, skills + abilities, etc.] than what you do have? Take a moment to confess this to God, and then spend time thanking God for the good things you do have.

# PRAYER JOURNALING

Jesus has instructed us to love our neighbors as ourselves. Think about the people you have interacted with over the last few days. Have there been times when your thoughts or actions towards any of these people have fallen short of loving them the way you hope to be loved?

# PRAYER JOURNALING

A shared confession throughout church history has invited us to confess things we have done and things we have left undone. Can you think of a time recently when action would have been the right choice, but you chose not to act? Write about it here and how you will act differently next time.

Our Father in heaven  
Hallowed be your name  
Your Kingdom come,  
Your will be done,  
On earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts,  
As we also have forgiven our debtors.  
**And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil.**  
For yours is the kingdom, and the power,  
And the glory forever.  
Amen.

# WITHWARD

## *Help*

Bad things happen. They do. Sometimes those bad things are because of choices we make that land us in a sticky situation. Sometimes those bad things happen to us or around us because the world is messy. Sometimes the bad things are happening to someone else, but we recognize the hurtfulness of them and our hearts and minds feel and think things. At times, we may even want to DO things because of that badness. Here's what God tells us. God's ways are better than our ways. God will lead us. God is always with us.

This week, we can pay attention to our choices and pray for God to show us the way out of darkness and into light.

# INTERACTIVE PRAYER PRACTICES

## *Labyrinth Walk*

Walk an outdoor labyrinth, prayer path, or woodland walk - Notice how many different choices there are to make as you walk, and how making those small decisions of going either left or right can dramatically change the length, difficulty, opportunities, or even safety of your journey. How is this similar to our own lives and the small choices we make that lead to bigger troubles? Maybe you want to ask God to help you to pause and listen to help you make choices that honor God's way. Or maybe you are already in a sticky situation and you want to ask God to rescue you. God promises He will always be with you.

### **Local Outdoor Labyrinths [Always Open]**

**Holy Trinity Episcopal Church - Wyoming, 49509**

**Orchard Hill Church - Grand Rapids, 49544**

**Frederik Meijer Gardens - Grand Rapids, 49525**

## Finger Labyrinth

Breathe in and out slowly as you trace through the labyrinth with a finger. Pray a simple prayer as your breath inhales and exhales and you follow the line to the center of the labyrinth, pause, and then follow the line back out again. Maybe your prayer is “Deliver Us, God” or “Your word lights our path”. Know that God will.

*Additional finger labyrinths can be found online.*



## *Weaving Prayer*

Choose a ribbon or string that looks like your prayer might look [if prayers looked like ribbons or strings]. What color would it be? Would it be long or short? Rough or smooth? Very heavy or very delicate? Hold it in your hand. Feel the fabric as you think of your prayer. Now let the Spirit lead you as you pray, weaving it in and out of a frame. There is no “right” way to do this. Try and let your prayer and your body decide which way to pull the ribbon. When you are finished, can you see how your prayers are beautiful?

*You can find examples of this by prayer practice by searching for “weaving prayer” or “prayer loom” online.*

# PRAYER JOURNALING

Where are you in need of God's rescue?

# PRAYER JOURNALING

What is a choice I made today that I know was because of God's voice?

# PRAYER JOURNALING

Where are you longing for God to show you the way?

Our Father in heaven  
Hallowed be your name  
Your Kingdom come,  
Your will be done,  
On earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts,  
As we also have forgiven our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil.  
**For yours is the kingdom, and the power,  
And the glory forever.  
Amen.**

# FORWARD

## *Kingdom*

Welcome to Holy Week, which begins with the crowds lining the pathway to Jerusalem and shouting, "Hosanna!" and "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD!" These are words of anticipation and expectation that Jesus is indeed the one who brings the kingdom and has the power, and to whom will be given glory. Yet, Holy Week reminds us that Jesus' kingdom, power, and glory is one that leads to and through the cross.

This week we will draw on our previous intentional prayer practices to pray, "For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen." This final statement invites us back to adoration of the God in whose kingdom we dwell, yet it is a kingdom that has not come in fullness and so we intercede for the world. We do, however, get faint glimpses as though looking through a fog, which brings us to savor those moments and confess when we have left the path chasing after other kingdoms or have longed for an easier way. This brings us to calling out to God for confidence and protection as we slowly journey toward the heart of God. Try revisiting one prayer practice each day from Palm Sunday to Good Friday.

# PRAYER JOURNALING

What do you find challenging about the way of God's kingdom, power, and glory? What do you find freeing or encouraging?

# PRAYER JOURNALING

Where in your life have your thoughts and actions not lined up with God's kingdom? Bring that to God in confession. What cross is Jesus inviting you to carry this week?

