**Prayers**

***for when you can’t get to church***

***or would like to pray at home***



**Introduction**

Perhaps you can’t get to church? Perhaps you find it hard to pray at home? You aren’t alone in this, but we hope this booklet will help.

Being stuck at home can be boring, frustrating, or lonely, even if there are other people in the house with you! And if you are unwell, or worried you might become unwell, being stuck at home can be frightening, too.

God is with us in these situations, whether we are conscious of his presence or not. Remembering this, and relying on him in prayer, can help us to keep going.

In normal circumstances, ministers and churches are pleased to arrange for sick or housebound people to receive Holy Communion at home, but where quarantine/self-isolation rules are in place, this isn’t always possible.

Common Worship reminds us in its Liturgy for the Sick that ‘Believers who cannot physically receive the sacrament are to be assured that they are partakers by faith of the body and blood of Christ and of the benefits he conveys to us by them.” Illness or self-isolation cannot separate us from Jesus’ love.

We hope this booklet will give you some ideas about how to maintain and deepen your faith and your prayers. God wants us to turn to him in all our troubles and perplexities, even if we can’t always find the ‘right words’. And remember - the rest of the church is praying for you!

*Fr Andrew Fisher, St mary the Virgin and All Souls Church, Bulwell*

*(with thanks to the North Wakefield Benefice Ministry Team*

*and contributions from Anne Elphick, Roy Hadfield and Kerry Palmer)*

**Simple Forms of Prayer**

* Lighting a candle before you pray can help you to focus and listen.
* Jesus taught us the Lord’s Prayer so that we would always have words to say:

***Contemporary Version***

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.

***Traditional Version***

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy 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 who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.

* Pray the ‘Examen’. Don’t let the name put you off! This is a very simple way to prayerfully review your day with God in five steps:
1. Become aware of God’s presence or ask God to help you remember he’s there with you.
2. Review the day with gratitude (as best you can!)
3. Pay attention to how you’re feeling about the day.
4. Choose one feature of the day and pray about it.
5. Look toward tomorrow. What do you expect the day to hold?
6. Ask God to help you remember he’s with you.
* Lectio Divina. Again, don’t let the name put you off! Lectio Divina helps you to read the Bible in a prayerful way:

1.Pick a short passage of Scripture (it can be anything you like, but

 if you’re stuck, parables of Jesus or the shorter Psalms are a

 good choice).

2. Read it through, slowly, two or three times. Notice what jumps

 out at you, and ask yourself, what is God saying to me here?

3. Reflect on this for a few minutes.

4. Read the passage again. Now ask yourself, what do I want to

 say to God? - then say it.

5. Lastly, sit quietly and know that God is with you.

**Some Collects and Other Prayers to Say**

Sovereign God,

the defence of those who trust in you

and the strength of those who suffer:

look with mercy on our affliction

and deliver us through our mighty Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen.

O God, our sovereign and our shepherd,

who brought again your Son Jesus Christ from the valley of death,

comfort us with your protecting presence

and your angels of goodness and love,

that we also may come home

and dwell with him in your house for ever. Amen.

Lord God, whose Son, Jesus Christ,

understood people's fear and pain

before they spoke of them,

we pray for those in hospital or sick at home;

surround the frightened with your tenderness;

give strength to those in pain;

hold the weak in your arms of love,

and give hope and patience

to those who are recovering.

we ask this through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God,

you see that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves:

keep us both outwardly in our bodies,

and inwardly in our souls;

that we may be defended from all adversities

which may happen to the body,

and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul.

through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

*A Prayer of Confession:*

Father eternal, giver of light and grace,

we have sinned against you and against our neighbour,

in what we have thought,

in what we have said and done,

through ignorance, through weakness,

through our own deliberate fault.

We have wounded your love

and marred your image in us.

We are sorry and ashamed

and repent of all our sins.

For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,

who died for us,

forgive us all that is past

and lead us out from darkness

to walk as children of light. Amen.

*The Collect for Purity/Prayer of Preparation:*

Almighty God,

to whom all hearts are open,

all desires known,

and from whom no secrets are hidden:

cleanse the thoughts of our hearts

by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,

that we may perfectly love you,

and worthily magnify your holy name;

through Christ our Lord. Amen.

God be in my head, and in my understanding;

God be in my eyes, and in my looking;

God be in my mouth, and in my speaking;

God be in my heart, and in my thinking;

God be at mine end, and at my departing. Amen

*Prayers before sleeping:*

Be present, O merciful God,

and protect us through the silent hours of this night,

so that we who are wearied

by the changes and chances of this fleeting world,

may rest upon your eternal changelessness;

through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Abide with us, Lord, for it is evening,

and day is drawing to a close.

Abide with us and with your whole Church,

in the evening of the day,

in the evening of life,

in the evening of the world;

abide with us and with all your faithful ones, O Lord,

in time and in eternity. Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God,

who at this evening hour lay in the tomb

and so, hallowed the grave

to be a bed of hope for all who put their trust in you:

give us such sorrow for our sins,

which were the cause of your passion,

that when our bodies lie in the dust,

our souls may live with you forever. Amen.

*Sometimes, just sitting in silence can be a powerful way to pray.*

*Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you.*

**An Acrostic Prayer for Daily Life**

**P**lace yourself into God’s hands

**R**est in his presence

**A**ccept that you belong to him

**Y**ou will be held safely

**E**nter into a time of silence

**R**elease all your worries and fears

**F**eel the stillness and peace

**O**ften come into your sacred space

**R**eceive the love of God

**L**et your heart dwell in his holiness

**I**nner peace will slowly fill your mind

**F**eel the gentle touch of God’s Holy Spirit

**E**xperience afresh his gift of new life

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**Prayer at the Beginning of the Day.**

I arise today through strength in the sky;

light of sun, moons reflection, dazzle of fire, speed of lightning,

wild wind, deep sea, firm earth, hard rock.

I arise today with

God’s strength to pilot me;

God’s might to uphold me,

God’s wisdom to guide me,

God’s eye to look ahead for me,

God’s ear to hear me,

God’s word to speak for me,

God’s hand to defend me,

God’s way to lie before me.

God’s shield to protect me,

God’s hosts to safeguard me.

*‘The Deer’s Cry’ from the Confession of St. Patrick,*

*translated by John Skinner*

**A Blessing for Troubled Times**

On the day when the weight descends upon your shoulders

and you stumble;

may the sunlight come dancing in your steps to balance you.

When eyes freeze like shuttered windows at your gaze

and the ghosts of loss and despair get into you;

may a palette of colours; indigo, red, green, mauve and blue,

come to awaken in you a whole rainbow of delight.

When the canvas frays and the Imago Dei within you fades,

May the Lord who heals the wounded touch you with his grace.

When a dark stretch of ocean blackens beneath you;

May there come across the waters a streak of yellow moonlight,

to guide you safely home.

May the nourishment of the earth be yours.

May the clarity of light be yours.

May the fluidity of water be yours.

And may a slow wind weave these words of love around you;

as a seamless cloak to cover your life.

Amen

*Adapted from the Irish original by Anne Elphick 2020*

**A Form of Prayer During the Day**

*This is a form of prayer, sometimes called an ‘office’, which you can use on its own, or use to expand your daily ‘quiet time’ with the Bible. If you are doing the latter, then replace the suggested readings with the ones your Bible notes/plan suggest. You might also choose to use the ‘Daily Eucharistic Lectionary’ readings, or the readings for Morning or Evening Prayer, which are available online (*[*http://almanac.oremus.org*](http://almanac.oremus.org)*).  You should always say a Psalm, but you could use a different scheme. The simplest is to work through the Book of Psalms using a Psalm a day (perhaps splitting some of them).*

*When saying this office alone, say both the parts in plain and in bold.*

O God, make speed to save us.

   **O Lord, make haste to help us.**

My heart tells of your word, ‘Seek my face.’

   **Your face, Lord, will I seek.**

*Praise - you could sing a hymn, listen to some spiritual music, or say*

We praise you, O God,

we acclaim you as the Lord;

all creation worships you,

the Father everlasting.

To you all angels, all the powers of heaven,

the cherubim and seraphim, sing in endless praise:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,

heaven and earth are full of your glory.

*Read a Psalm (see Appendix)*. *End the Psalm with:*

**Glory to the Father and to the Son**

**and to the Holy Spirit;**

**as it was in the beginning is now**

**and shall be for ever. Amen.**

*Bible Reading, e.g.*

*Sunday: Revelation 21.1-4,*

*Monday: Isaiah 49.1b-4,*

*Tuesday: Deuteronomy 28.1-6,*

*Wednesday: Matthew 9.35-end,*

*Thursday: John 17.18-23,*

*Friday: Luke 9.22-25,*

*Saturday: John 11.17–26a.*

*Intercessions: pray for the Church, the world, and for individuals.*

*This, or another collect is said:*

O Lord our God,

grant us grace to desire you with our whole heart;

that so desiring, we may seek and find you;

and so finding, may love you;

and so loving, may hate those sins from which you have delivered us;

through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*The Lord’s Prayer is said in its contemporary or traditional form.*

May God who made both heaven and earth bless us.

**Amen.**

*Appendix - a fortnight’s cycle of Psalms*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Sunday | 119.1-32 |
| Monday | 119.33-56 |
| Tuesday | 119.57-80 |
| Wednesday | 119.81-104 |
| Thursday | 119.105-128 |
| Friday | 119.129-152 |
| Saturday | 119.153-end |
|   |
| Sunday | 121, 122 |
| Monday | 123, 124 |
| Tuesday | 125, 126 |
| Wednesday | 127 |
| Thursday | 128 |
| Friday | 129, 130 |
| Saturday | 131, 133 |

*Adapted from Common Worship: Daily Prayer - Prayer During the Day*

**A Favourite Psalm…**

### Psalm 91

**1**Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High
    will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.
**2**I will say of the Lord, “He is my refuge and my fortress,
    my God, in whom I trust.”

**3**Surely he will save you from the fowler’s snare
    and from the deadly pestilence.
**4**He will cover you with his feathers,
    and under his wings you will find refuge;
    his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.
**5**You will not fear the terror of night,
    nor the arrow that flies by day,
**6**nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness,
    nor the plague that destroys at midday.
**7**A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand,
    but it will not come near you.
**8**You will only observe with your eyes
    and see the punishment of the wicked.

**9**If you say, “The Lord is my refuge,”
    and you make the Most High your dwelling,
**10**no harm will overtake you,
    no disaster will come near your tent.
**11**For he will command his angels concerning you
    to guard you in all your ways;
**12**they will lift you up in their hands,
    so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.
**13**You will tread on the lion and the cobra;
    you will trample the great lion and the serpent.

**14**“Because he loves me,” says the Lord, “I will rescue him;
    I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name.
**15**He will call on me, and I will answer him;
    I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honour him.
**16**With long life I will satisfy him
    and show him my salvation.”

**A Prayer for Assurance of Christ’s Presence**

**(“An Act of Spiritual Communion”).**

*Begin with the Collect for Purity/Prayer of Preparation, and then read the Gospel for Sunday, or another appropriate passage of Scripture (e.g.John 14: 1-7).*

*Examine your heart and confess your sins to God, using your own words or A Prayer of Confession, and then say:*

The Almighty and merciful Lord, grant me pardon and absolution of all my sins. Amen.

*Then say:*

In union, O Lord with the faithful at every altar of your Church,

where the Holy Eucharist is celebrated,

I desire to offer you praise and thanksgiving.

I present to you my soul and body

with the earnest wish that I may always be united to you.

And since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,

I ask you to come spiritually into my heart.

I unite myself to you and embrace you with all the affections of my soul. Let nothing ever separate you from me.

May I live and die in your love. Amen.

*You might like to sit in silence for a while. Finish your time of prayer by saying the Lord’s Prayer.*

*Adapted from ‘The Armed Forces Prayerbook’*

*(The Episcopal Church USA, 1951).*

**Creative Ways of Praying**

* You might find it helpful to listen to favourite hymns or worship songs, or other pieces of music that have a special meaning for you.
* Pictures can help prompt our prayers - for instance photos of loved ones, maps or pictures of our community or the wider world.
* If the news is getting you down, try praying for the people and situations that are mentioned.
* Why not try doodling, painting, or drawing as you pray?

**Online Resources**

* You can find services of Morning, Midday, Evening, and Night Prayer from the Church of England online at

<https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-daily-prayer>

The services are arranged for you with the readings of the day. There is also an app you can download to your smartphone or tablet. You can choose to pray in contemporary language, or to use the Book of Common Prayer. ‘Prayer During the Day’ is the shortest and simplest of the services, Morning and Evening Prayer have the longest portions of Scripture.

* An Ordinary Office: <http://anordinaryoffice.org.uk/>. ‘An Ordinary Office’ is designed to be very accessible (you can follow it through text, symbol, audio, or video). Easy to pray if you’re unwell or very tired. Morning, Midday, and Evening Prayer, plus ‘Nocturnes’ for those who can’t sleep.
* The Northumbria Community:

<https://www.northumbriacommunity.org/offices/how-to-use-daily-office/>.

Short but poetic forms of daily prayer in the ‘Celtic’ style.

* Pray As You Go:

<https://pray-as-you-go.org/>.

A short (11-12 minutes) daily act of prayer and worship, available online or as a tablet and smartphone app. This easy to use, beautifully produced site uses music and pictures to help you pray and reflect with a passage of Scripture. Follows the Roman Catholic calendar, but widely used by Christians of all traditions. There are also special seasonal meditations.

* Word Live:

<https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/wordlive/living-faith>.

Daily Bible study and prayer points from Scripture Union. Linked to a Facebook group where you can share your thoughts and prayers with other Christians.

**A Prayer Labyrinth**

You might find it helpful to ‘walk’ this labyrinth by tracing it with your finger as you pray:



**Prayers with Children**

*Before praying, it is suggested tha there is a discussion with the children about the people and places they wish to pray for…*

**A Prayer for When a friend is ill**

Dear God, *(name of friend)* is ill.

They are not allowed to go to school or come over to play.

I’m sad because I miss them.

They must be feeling miserable and lonely as well.

Please be close to them.

Please be with the people who are looking after them.

Please help them to get better and to know that you love them.

Amen.

**A Prayer for the World**

God of love and hope, you made the world and care for all creation,

but the world feels strange right now.

The news is full of stories about Coronavirus.

Some people are worried that they might get ill.

Others are anxious for their family and friends.

Be with them and help them to find peace.

We pray for the doctors and nurses and scientists, and all who are working to discover the right medicines to help those who are ill.

Thank you that even in these anxious times, you are with us.

Help us to put our trust in you and keep us safe.

Amen.

**A Prayer at Bedtime**

Before the ending of the day, Creator of the world, we pray that you,

with steadfast love, would keep Your watch around us while we sleep.

Tonight we pray especially for *(names family or friends who are affected by Coronavirus)* and the people of *(country or place which is affected by Coronavirus)*. Please give skill and wisdom to all who are caring for them.

Amen.

**A Prayer Remembering God is with us**

Lord God, you are always with me.

You are with me in the day and in the night.

You are with me when I’m happy and when I’m sad.

You are with me when I’m healthy and when I am ill.

You are with me when I am peaceful and when I am worried.

Today I am feeling *(name how you are feeling)* because *(reasons you are feeling this way)*. Help me to remember that you love me and are with me in everything today.

Amen.

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