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DEAR PRAYER WARRIOR,

Welcome to “RHYTHMS OF PRAYER.” This resource explores several different prayer disciplines. Some are familiar, some will be new, all of them hold the potential to enrich your prayer life. Through this resource, you are invited to join us and others in prayer. As you pray, we pray together. Your voice joins many others.

We have included some historical and biblical background with each prayer experience. In this book, you will find the Lord’s Prayer, the Jesus Prayer, Intercessory Prayer/Praying In Color, Praying the Scriptures, Prayer and Fasting, and Silence and Solitude.

Think of it, our prayers all rising together throughout the day, praying the same words and listening to or reading the same scriptures. What a beautiful chorus of prayer that will be.

It’s our sincere desire that you would enter in to this week and set aside a few sacred moments to meet with God in profound ways. We’re looking forward to this experience with you. Thank you, from the depths of our hearts, for spending some time with “RHYTHMS OF PRAYER.”
“We ought to encourage the growth of the spirit of personal piety in our Soldiers— the spirit of prayer and faith and love to God and man.”

— William Booth

“We should seek not so much to pray but to become prayer.”

— Francis of Assisi

“The knowledge of God’s love comes to us through our prayer. It comes through our spending time in intimate relationship with God. It comes by our deliberately choosing to seek God and to make time to be with God in a personal one-on-one meeting.”

— Christine Faragher, Other Voices: Exploring the Contemplative in Salvationist Spirituality

“Our prayers may be awkward. Our attempts may be feeble. But since the power of prayer is in the one who hears it and not in the one who says it, our prayers do make a difference.”

— Max Lucado

“We need contemplative prayer, in which we simply let go of our passing ego, so something Eternal can take over.”

— Richard Rohr

“There are parts of our calling, works of the Holy Spirit, and defeats of the darkness that will come no other way than through furious, fervent, faith-filled, unceasing prayer.”

— Beth Moore

“O pure delight of a single hour
That before thy throne I spend,
When I kneel in prayer, and with thee, my God,
I commune as friend with friend!”

— Fanny Crosby, “Draw Me Nearer” SASB 586
Day 1
The Lord’s Prayer (Excerpted from Living the Lord’s Prayer, by Albert Haase O.F.M.)

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.” (Luke 11:1)

Surprisingly, Jesus did not respond with a method or a technique. Rather, he responded with words that captured the essence of his teaching and ministry. This prayer quickly became a treasure of the early church. Jews and Gentiles preparing for Christian baptism found out about it rather late in their formation and then, like all Christians, committed to praying it three times a day.

Many people have looked on this text as more than simply a prayer. In his commentary on the Lord’s Prayer composed around 198-200 C.E., Tertullian, a priest of the Christian community of Carthage in North Africa, referred to it as a brevarium totius evangelii, “an abridgment of the entire Gospel.”

Consider the prayer as a trustworthy guide for spiritual formation and a compact handbook for holiness. Viewed in this way, the prayer offers both interesting insights and practical tips for growing more deeply in our commitment to become Christian, which literally means “little Christ.” To live—rather than to simply say—the words of the Lord’s Prayer is to walk in the way of the disciple.

“Our Father”
A healthy image of God reflects Jesus’ experience of God as Abba. It should exude God’s unconditional love for us and call forth selfless acts of sacrificial love for others.

“The right way to pray is to stretch out our hands and ask of One who we know has the heart of a Father.”
- Dietrich Bonhoeffer
Abba is a Jewish child’s name for a father. It is used when the child is calling for a father’s attention. It is also an adult’s name for an elderly person who has earned reverence and respect. In both cases, the name suggests immediacy, familiarity, approachability, trust, respect and love.

We, too, are called to stand before Abba with the world in our blood streams. Our truest identity feels pity and compassion for the worries and concerns of others—and as “little Christs”, we intercede for the world. Intercessory prayer is an expression of our engagement with the world. It proclaims that Abba is “our” Father and spiritual formation is about God, others and me.

“Who Art in Heaven”
To seek and find the God in heaven here on earth demands that we be awake and alert to the here and now. Tragically, many of us do not live in the present and thus, according to [Thomas] Merton, suffer from amnesia.

So much of our suffering originates in our lack of attention to the present. We are rarely present to where we physically are. Convinced that the real action is someplace else, we rarely experience just this particular moment, pregnant with its own annunciations.

“Hallowed Be Thy Name”
To hallow God’s name is to walk the way of humility as we adore God’s presence with the awareness of our sinfulness. Praying the name of Jesus has the power to open us to the experience of unceasing prayer.

In keeping God’s name holy, we experience the paradox between the awe-inspiring presence of God and our awful unworthiness, between the adoration of the divine presence and the abomination of our sinful presence. Adoration and abomination walk hand-in-hand in spiritual formation. This paradox gives birth to the virtue of humility.
"Thy Kingdom Come"
The kingdom can come in the slightest of circumstances. All it takes is an awareness of God’s love for us, the love of others in a manner appropriate to our lifestyle, surrender to the present and living joyfully and peacefully.

The early church lived out the practical implications of the kingdom’s characteristics. (See Acts 2:43-47) Consequently, everyone thrived because all were again woven in the tapestry of relationships. God’s intention, sometimes with effort and labor as we read elsewhere in Acts, had once again become a reality—and it all started with each individual walking the way of the disciple.

"Thy Will Be Done on Earth as It Is in Heaven"
Doing the will of God is allowing our commitment to influence every decision. Such faith-based decisions are made with awareness, assessment and action.

The full realization of the kingdom of God and doing his Abba’s will were virtually synonymous for Jesus. In the Gospel of John, Jesus proclaims, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work” (John 4:34). He made reference to God’s will when teaching his disciples to pray, when talking about the nature of discipleship, when encouraging disciples to seek out those who had strayed and when confronting the reality of his imminent death on the Mount of Olives (see Matthew 6:10; 7:21; 18:14; Luke 22:42). Clearly, his daily spiritual nourishment and ministerial momentum came precisely from knowing that the will of God was being accomplished in his life and ministry.

"Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread"
To pray for daily bread is to follow the way of spiritual childhood. It is also to commit to becoming the bread of life for the hungry of the world.

“Waiting in prayer is a disciplined refusal to act before God acts.”
– Eugene Peterson

THE LORD’S PRAYER

Waiting in prayer is a disciplined refusal to act before God acts.
– Eugene Peterson
Jesus reminded us that the divine Almsgiver is invested in our needs. Abba is on our side and wants what is good and acceptable and perfect for the common good. Though trivial worries or personal tragedies sometimes test our faith in the providence and goodness of God, we nevertheless remain the beloved children of God.

“Forgive Us Our Trespasses”
Praying for forgiveness is a vivid reminder that God frees us from debilitating guilt and forgets our past. No sin is written with indelible ink.

In the Hebrew Scriptures, the primary verb salah, “to forgive,” is used only of God; forgiveness is therefore a divine prerogative reserved exclusively to God. A synonym for this verb, nasa, means “to bear, to remove, or to carry away.” And so, when God forgives, God “carries away” the sin. And not only that: divine mercy also “removes the straightjacket of debilitating guilt that the ego forces us to wear.

“As We Forgive Those Who Trespass Against Us”
Jesus is remembered as saying that justice is served not by getting revenge and balancing the ledger but by generously sharing with others what we ourselves have experienced in the alms of God. Indeed, forgiving our neighbor and performing selfless acts of sacrificial love is our response to God’s forgiveness (see Luke 7:47.)

“Lead Us Not into Temptation”
To pray, “Lead us not into temptation,” is to confront the power of evil, which stands in direct opposition to God. It is a commitment to become aware of the tempting thoughts in our lives and to resist them. It also implies a dedication to living a life of virtue

“Prayer makes a godly man, and puts within him the mind of Christ, the mind of humility, of self-surrender, of service, of pity, and of prayer. If we really pray, we will become more like God, or else we will quit praying.”

- E.M. Bounds
that helps to transform us into the people God created us to be.

“Deliver Us From Evil”
A time of spiritual darkness purifies us from the ego and can help transform us into little Christs. As a cross, it challenges us to surrender to God with trust.

The Lord’s Prayer summarizes the important attitudes and teachings that Jesus lived and preached to his followers. It reminds us that God is an Abba who provides us with everything we have. God lavishes heavenly love on us in creation, enfleshes it in our neighbor and dreams the reality of its fullness in Jesus’ kingdom of peace, love and justice. God forgives all our sins with mercy and compassion. And this loving God never abandons us in times of temptation, testing or trial. No matter the situation or circumstance, God is as close to us as a father is to his beloved children.

Such divine lavishness and generosity sets the benchmark for a disciple’s behavior and response. We live lives of selfless, sacrifical love as we claim everyone as family; we live lives of humility as we claim everything as from the divine Almsgiver. We dedicate ourselves to bringing about the fullness of the kingdom by working for peace, love and justice. We allow our baptismal commitment to influence every decision we make, and we forgive those who trespass against us. We resist temptations and live virtuously. Aware of God’s abiding and continual presence, we surrender with trust and hope to every cross that comes our way.

May you live the Lord’s prayer and walk the way of the disciple.
As you pray the Lord’s Prayer today and moving forward, may these words bless and challenge you.

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.
Forgive Us Our Trespasses,
As We Forgive Those Who Trespass Against Us.
Lead Us Not into Temptation
But Deliver Us From Evil.
For Thine is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory
Forever and ever.
Amen.

Scripture on The Lord’s Prayer: Matthew 6:9-15, Colossians 3:12-17, Psalm 103

Later tonight, reflect on your day and consider spending a few moments praying the Prayer of Examen (Found on page 35).
THE JESUS PRAYER – excerpted from SLD Resources and https://www.orthodoxprayer.org

“Lord Jesus Christ, son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.”

The “Jesus Prayer” has been a part of several branches of Orthodox Christianity for a very long time. Its roots are in the Eastern Orthodox tradition, but both Latin Orthodox and the Anglican Church have incorporated it in various ways with authorities in each branch celebrating it. It has often been taught as a ‘Beginner’s prayer.’

“The Jesus Prayer, says Metropolitan Anthony Bloom, “more than any other,” helps us to be able to “stand in God’s presence.” This means that the Jesus Prayer helps us to focus our mind exclusively on God with “no other thought” occupying our mind but the thought of God. At this moment when our mind is totally concentrated on God, we discover a very personal and direct relationship with Him.”¹

¹ From www.orthodoxprayer.org

For prayer is nothing else than being on terms of friendship with God.” — Teresa of Avila

The practice of saying it likely has roots in the desert mothers and fathers of the 5th century. These were monks and nuns who had become disillusioned with the influence of government on the church and set out to live a more reclusive life of deeper purity and simplicity. This led these seekers on a pilgrimage to the Egyptian desert, therefore removing all outward trappings to help them engage in more intimate communion with God.

The scriptural basis likely comes from an amalgamation of similar prayers in Luke 18 and Mark 10. There are four simple parts, each one a profound theological truth. Some church fathers have called “The Jesus Prayer” the most powerful prayer in Christianity. As we explore these words, we will also explore how they so perfectly
express our relationship with Jesus and His daily mercies for us.

“The prayer begins with the name of our God and Lord, Jesus Christ. In the book of Acts we are told, “There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12) The power in the prayer comes from our proclaiming the Lord’s name. In its simple form we confess our faith in Jesus Christ as our God and Lord.”

Traditionally, the Jesus Prayer has three movements. The prayer of the lips, the prayer of the mind, and the prayer of the heart. As much as we’d like to declare from the start that we automatically do all three at once, the truth is that we rarely let our minds slow down to the speed our lips move, and often our hearts are in many places at once and not focused on our prayers.

Prayer of the Lips:
We begin by uttering the words a few times. They begin as a recitation on our lips. We don’t speak too fast so that we are racing ourselves to get to the end. Nor too slowly that we get bored. We feel the words as we say them.

Prayer of the Mind:
We slow our minds and focus on the words, hearing ourselves say them and at the same time taking them into ourselves. We begin to understand the words as if they are being said to us. We “chew” on them as we hear them, savoring them in ourselves.

Prayer of the Heart:
The aim is to eventually speak them as if they are our own words. Once our mind focuses on them, our heart will soon fall in line as well. The prayer itself moves from something we do to who we are.

“Jesus won’t try to speak over the noise in our lives. The more we shout, the more He whispers.”
– Bob Goff
We choose to pray the same words that have been prayed by many in the faith for thousands of years and connect to a community that goes well beyond our geographical and generational boundaries. Since this prayer is directly rooted in Scripture, we are filling ourselves with God’s Word as we pray it. Theologically speaking, the Jesus Prayer is a full summation of the entire narrative of the Gospel.

“Praying the Jesus Prayer reminds me that I am not alone in these from-the-gut cries. It reminds me that to such cries Jesus responds with compassion and healing, and it gives me courage. This is a very different way of using words (or allowing God to use words) from what most of us are familiar with, but it connects us with God in the most intimate places of our lives and relieves us of the need to figure out how to pray.”

Sit comfortably. Focus on the presence of God with you wherever you are. Let the distractions of the day pass you by. Simply sit as if listening to a close friend. Closing your eyes may help if you’re still struggling with focus.

“Lord Jesus Christ, son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.”

Practice:

The Jesus Prayer is a simple, comprehensive prayer that gives proper attention to the redemptive work of Jesus and our relationship with him and the ongoing need for that work to be applied in the life of both saint and sinner.

“Lord Jesus Christ...” – It is imperative to note that this prayer begins by giving Christ his rightful place as Lord. When we call him “Lord” we are bowing to his supremacy in an act of submission.

This is done willingly and without reservation.

“...Son of God...” – Acknowledging Christ’s place in the Trinity indicates we have a growing understanding of his work on the cross, our ongoing need for that work, and the fact that it liberates us from sin and sets us free.

“...have mercy on me...” – This is a request for God’s compassionate cleansing. This plea is for the application of God’s mercy to be continuous. As we bow to the supremacy of Jesus and acknowledge his cleansing work on the cross, we realize our moment-by-moment need for the application of his mercy on our lives. This is not and cannot be a one-time request. This phrase also recognizes that this supply of mercy is limitless and liberally given just for the asking.

“...a sinner.” – May we never forget our propensity to sin! This is not some self-deprecating tag at the end of this prayer, but a reminder that this is the life from which we have been delivered. It reminds us of our constant need of the Savior and without this enduring reminder we can fall back into a life that is contrary to God.


Later tonight, reflect on your day and consider spending a few moments praying the Prayer of Examen (Found on page 35).
DAY 3
PRAYING IN COLOR/INTERCESSORY PRAYER

“For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.” (Ephesians 3:14-19, NIV)

Intercession is a consistent pattern of prayer in Paul’s writings. As he encourages and admonishes the fledgling church, he also prays for them. They are more than co-workers. They are friends, fellow believers and people living life and facing struggles just like we do. Intercession is a biblical prayer model mentioned throughout scripture. Acts, Colossians, Daniel, Ephesians, Philippians, Psalms, Job, Romans, James, Jeremiah, Matthew and 1 Samuel, both letters to Timothy, and Romans all mention intercessory prayer in some way. Jesus models intercessory prayer with His very life and specifically in the Garden of Gethsemane. Read the ways that He prays for others in John 17.

This is the kind of prayer our minds often go immediately to when we stop to pray. We pray for the long list of needs of those in our lives. Intercessory prayer is prayer for others and an intercessor is one who takes the place of another or pleads another’s case. If not careful, this form of prayer can become rote to even the most sincere intercessor if not continuously aware of our level of attention and motive. In a desire to become an engaged

“Our humble, sacrificial adoration and intercession is empowered by his power at work within us!”
– Janet Munn and Stephen Court, Army on its Knees
intercessor we can involve our entire being – spirit, soul and body – in this valuable form of prayer.

Bookstore shelves are filled with coloring books for adults these days. This craze has served to help people, through the simple act of coloring, to relax and allow a creative outlet. This has not gone unrecognized by the praying community. In her book *Praying in Color: Drawing a New Path to God*, Sybil MacBeth opens up a whole new way of intercessory prayer. This form of praying helps the intercessor who is unsure of who to pray for, finds it hard to sit still and concentrate, fumbles for the “right” words to pray, or help with concentration. After *Praying in Color*, we have a colorful design or drawing that is a visual reminder of the time spent in prayer. . .a prayer journal in pictures.

It is important to note that you don’t have to be an artist. Instead, allow the Holy Spirit to take control of your mind *and* hand in this act of “holy doodling” that can bring others to the throne of God.

If you are a visual or kinesthetic learner, an easily distracted or impatient soul, a word-weary pray-er or just a person looking for a new way to pray, this practice may prove to be helpful.

**Preparing yourself:**
- Read scripture that is applicable to this practice – i.e. Romans 8:26, “…the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the very spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words”
- Spend some time considering that your body, soul and spirit will be part of this time of prayer.
- Recognize that this may be a little outside your comfort zone, but in doing something different it may help you focus in ways you never have before.
- Don’t rush through these steps, but rest with each bullet point until you believe the Holy Spirit is leading you on in drawing in color as an act of worship.
- Remember, this is an all-day prayer event. Drawing is only half the prayer. The other half is transporting the visual memories –
either in your mind or on paper – so you can pray throughout the day. The images are visual alarm clocks that remind you to pray.

How to “Pray in Color”:

• Draw any shape on the page – a triangle, trapezoid, squiggly object or imperfect circle.

• Write in that object a name for God (Jesus, Jehovah, Father, etc.) This serves as a reminder that God is ever-present in your prayers and your work.

• Write the name of someone you feel led to pray for (for this week, this particular exercise is meant to be intercessory, but you can also use it to pray for yourself).

• Add some detail to the drawing. This might be dots, lines, circles, zigzags, or whatever your hand wants to do. Don’t analyze what you are creating.

• Continue to enhance the drawing. Think of each stroke and each moment as time that you spend with the person in prayer.

• Add color to the picture. Choose colors that will stay in your memory, that you particularly like, or that remind you of the person for whom you pray. When the drawing and praying for the first person are completed (you run out of things to pray for that person) start over again with a new shape close to the first one and repeat the drawing process until you feel you have completed your visual prayer list for the day.

• Draw with pen and colors until you have created an image or icon for all of the people for whom you want to pray.

• Linger with the page in front of you. Let the names, images and colors imprint themselves on your brain. Spend another moment with each person in silence or say a short verbal prayer or “Amen” if that

“Rather than set aside daily time for prayer, I pray constantly and spontaneously about everything I encounter on a daily basis. When someone shares something with me, I’ll often simply say, ‘Let’s pray about this right now.’”

– Thomas Kinkade
seems appropriate. Take the journal or page with you, if you can. Place it on your desk, refrigerator or someplace where your eyes will scan it during the day.

Selected scripture for Intercessory Prayer/Praying in Color: John 17, Genesis 18:16-33, Psalm 8

Later tonight, reflect on your day and consider spending a few moments praying the Prayer of Examen (Found on page 35).

Free Space to “Pray in Color” (space also available on both inside covers)
DAY 4
PRAYING SCRIPTURE

Have you ever wished you could pray like one of the psalmists or could form the words like some of the Bible greats? You can! When a portion of scripture captures your attention you can take the verses of scripture, personalize it, and form prayer that is God-honoring and edifying to your soul.

Praying scripture is not new. St. Augustine of Hippo (354 –430) was an early Christian theologian and philosopher from North Africa whose writings influenced the development of Western Christianity and Western philosophy. Many of his writings are prayers developed from scripture. In fact, Augustine meditated on and prayed with scripture to such an extent that even his own writings took on a scriptural style.

Here are some simple steps to help you get started in your journey to pray the scriptures:

• Read the verse to God – God doesn’t need a reminder of what His Word says, but He loves the fact that we are reading it, saying it, and learning His Word.
• Rephrase the verse using your own words – Sometimes changing a word or two to help make it easier for you to understand and remember. This gives a sense of ownership to our prayers.
• As you meditate and pray, focus on and further define a broad term in a personal way. (Change “he” or “who” to “I” or insert your name, for example.)
• Substitute synonyms in place of one word of a verse as you pray – “The only thing that **counts** is faith expressing itself through love.” (Galatians 5:6) You could choose any one word in this phrase to substitute like words and meditate on the meaning. So what word would you substitute for “counts”? Here’s an example, “The only thing that **matters** is faith expressing itself through love.”
“Praying the Scripture” is a unique way of dealing with the Scripture; it involves both reading and prayer. Turn to the Scripture; choose some passage that is simple and fairly practical. Next, come to the Lord. Come quietly and humbly. There, before Him, read a small portion of the passage of Scripture you have opened to.

Be careful as you read. Take in fully, gently and carefully what you are reading. Taste it and digest it as you read. In the past it may have been your habit, while reading, to move very quickly from one verse of Scripture to another until you have read the whole passage. Perhaps you were seeking to find the main point of the passage.

But in coming to the Lord by means of “praying the Scripture,” you do not read quickly; you have read very slowly. You do not move from one passage to another, not until you have sensed the very heart of what you have read. You may then want to take that portion of Scripture that has touched you and turn it into prayer.

After you have sensed something of the passage, and after you know that the essence of that portion has been extracted and all the deeper sense of it is gone, then, very slowly, gently, and in a calm manner begin to read the next portion of that passage. You will be surprised to find that when your time with the Lord has ended, you will have read very little, probably no more than half a page.

“Praying the Scripture” is not judged by how much you read but the way you read. If you read quickly, it will benefit you little. You will be like a bee that merely skims the surface of a flower.

“Have you ever tried to spend a whole hour doing nothing but listening to the voice that dwells deep in your heart?”

– Henri Nouwen
Instead, in this new way of reading with prayer, you become as the bee who penetrates into the depths of the flower.

Plunge into the very depths of the words you read until revelation, like a sweet aroma, breaks out upon you. I am quite sure that if you will follow this course, little by little you will come to experience a very rich prayer that flows from your inward being.

(For more on Madame Jeanne Guyon, see the appendix.)

**Madame Guyon shares four simple steps to praying the scriptures:**

- **Choose a simple passage.**
- **Read it slowly.**
- **Try to sense the heart of each verse and/or phrase before moving on.**
- **When something strikes you as particularly meaningful, turn it into a prayer and journal your prayer**

Selected scripture on **Praying Scripture**: Mark 12:28-34, Deuteronomy 6:1-9, Psalm 119:9-24

Later tonight, reflect on your day and consider spending a few moments praying the **Prayer of Examen** (Found on page 35).
DAY 5
PRAYER AND FASTING

FROM SLD RESOURCE – Praying and Fasting for Discernment

“Well wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.” Psalm 27:14

Why fast?
Fasting is voluntarily going without food (or other fixed rhythm of life, i.e. – technology, TV) in order to focus on prayer and fellowship with God. When prayer and fasting are combined and dedicated to God’s glory, it helps us focus and rely on God for strength, provision and wisdom. An added benefit is that it makes the prayerer aware of those things in life that may have control over them.

When people think of fasting often their minds go to the most austere form of fasting. When thinking of fasting from food we are led to believe it must be nothing by mouth for an exorbitant amount of time. This kind of thinking immediately puts a negative spin on this wonderfully helpful discipline and we miss out on its personal and corporate values.

• Consider fasting for a period of time from one item you enjoy consuming like chocolate, caffeine, or sugar.

“Today most societies in the West are prone to overeating. It might even be said of us what Paul said of the ‘enemies of the cross of Christ. Their god is their stomach’ (Philippians 3:18-19). In such a context, fasting is a radical practice. Through fasting we put the flesh in its place and the Holy Spirit in first place. We teach our bodies and our appetites patience. We affirm that we do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God. By fasting we declare that our hunger for God is greater than our hunger for our next meal.”

– Janet Munn and Stephen Court, Army on its Knees
• Think about a manageable time period – i.e. fasting from lunch for a few days, fasting from dinner to dinner the next day. These are great “first steps” in this discipline.
• Pray/read your Bible during the mealtimes you are fasting.
• Every time your stomach growls use it as a reminder that we do not “live by bread alone” (Matthew 4:4) and pray for two-thirds of the world that lives with growling stomachs every day.
• **Be sure to hydrate. Water is best. Fruit juices will help. Monitor your caffeine intake.

Fasting is a time to be humble and patient as we listen to God. David said, “I humbled myself with fasting” (Psalm 69:10). In Matthew 6:16-18, Jesus talked about the motive of fasting. It is not about getting God to do what we want. Fasting focuses on God and is initiated by God.

- Richard Foster reminds us that “More than any other discipline, fasting reveals the things that control us.” (Celebration of Discipline)
- Marjorie Thompson notes that fasting reveals our excessive attachments and the assumptions that lie behind them. Fasting brings us face to face with how we tend to put the material world before our Creator. (Soul Feast)

In Acts 13: 1-3 & 14:23, Paul and Barnabas taught Christian communities to pray and fast as they discerned God’s will and appointed elders for leadership in the church. Fasting is a practice for individuals and groups as an act of repentance, mourning, and self-examination. A heightened awareness of God’s presence leads to humility, reconciliation, justice and forgiveness and can lead groups to listen to God and to each other as they discern God’s will concerning a difficult decision; concerns about war, sickness, famine, job loss.......

“Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; on You I wait all the day.” (Psalm 25:5)
*Caution: Diabetics, expectant mothers, and heart patients should not fast from food all day. If you have any questions about your physical ability to fast, please ask your doctor. For those unable to fast from food, choose other things from which to abstain, such as non-essential foods or the computer or TV.

**While you are fasting:**
- Include worship opportunities to stay focused on God, i.e. sing worship songs, listen to quiet music, light a candle, sit in a sanctuary, find a quiet place.....
- Meditate on a scripture verse that speaks to you during this time of fasting.
- Consider journaling your thoughts and prayers.
- When you are hungry, remember that fasting is a spiritual practice that affects your entire being. It is a time to enter into a deeper relationship with God. It will help you become more intimate with God, let go, be silent with God and listen to God.
- Remember that God loves you and desires to spend time with you. (John 3:16)

**When you are finished fasting:**
- In celebration of what you have just experienced, break bread with your family, friends or church family.
- Take time to thank God for His blessings and for the fact that you can eat. Some people continue to suffer from the hunger pains that you have experienced during this time of fasting.
- If you wrote down your thoughts, review what you wrote. If your insights imply concrete changes in lifestyle or important actions, continue to trust and wait upon the Lord. God will direct your next steps with other members of the body who are praying and discerning with you.

"But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." Isaiah 40:31
Scripture for Meditation and Prayer

- Discernment – Philippians 1:1-11
- Peace – Romans 5:1; 8:6; 12:18; 16:20
- Faith – 1 Peter 1:5; Ephesians 6:16; Luke 17:2; 2 Thessalonians 3:3
- Truth – Ephesians 6:14; John 8:44; 2 Thessalonians 2:10; John 16:13; Psalm 51:6
- Spiritual blessing for our children
  Intimacy with God – Exodus 33:11; Psalm 27:8, 42:1-2
  Guidance – Proverbs 3:5-6; John 16:13
  Protection – James 5:14-16; John 17:15; 2 Thessalonians 3:3; 1 Corinthians 10:13
  Provision – Matthew 6:11, 25-33; Philippians 4:19
- Prayers for the Prodigal – Job 1:10; Hosea 2:6-7, Jeremiah 31:16-17; 1 Peter 5:8-9; Genesis 3:12-13; James 4:10; Romans 6:13; John 15:5; 2 Corinthians 5:7; Hebrews 11:1; 2 Corinthians 10:5
• People in Authority – Proverbs 9:10; Romans 10:14; 1 Timothy 2:4; Ephesians 1:17-23; Psalm 51:17; John 8:9; Psalm 119:11; Colossians 3:2; Psalm 19:7-11; John 8:31-32; Proverbs 24:6; 1 Corinthians 6:9-20; Titus 2:12; Romans 1:21; Proverbs 29:25; 2 Timothy 1:7

Selected scripture on Prayer and Fasting: Matthew 6:16-18/Mark 1:18-22, Esther 4:1-17,

Later tonight, reflect on your day and consider spending a few moments praying the Prayer of Examen (Found on page 35).
“The soul is like a wild animal – tough, resilient, resourceful, savvy, self-sufficient. It knows how to survive in hard places. But it is also shy. Just like a wild animal, it seeks safety in the dense underbrush. If we want to see a wild animal, we know that the last thing we should do is go crashing through the woods yelling for it to come out. But if we will walk quietly into the woods, sit patiently by the base of the tree, and fade into our surroundings, the wild animal we seek might put in an appearance.” Parker Palmer

We are living in a driven age and society. We are known by what we have accomplished and produced. This mindset has found its way into the church and is a hallmark of The Salvation Army. Being known as the “action arm of the church” is an honored position to be in and is an important role that God has called us to, but we must constantly check how healthy and full our source is from which we draw to continue this kind of ministry.

One way to make sure we are ministering (and living) from a healthy place is through the spiritual discipline of silence and solitude. Simply put, silence and solitude is a moment of intentional time in the quiet to be alone with God. In the modern era, this just might be the first step to a life well lived.

Certainly your soul resonates with the benefits of such a practice because we are wired for intimate relationship with Christ, but you may be feeling some resistance as you list the obstacles in your life that make the rhythm seem impossible to realize. This has been every person’s battle throughout the centuries and there are

“Come in, my Lord, come in
And make my heart thy home;
Come in and cleanse my soul from sin,
And dwell with me alone.
Thyself to me be given,
In fullness of thy love;
Thyself alone wilt make my Heaven
Though all thy gifts removel.”
– Bramwell Booth (Come In, My Lord, Come In SASB 411)
many spiritual greats, with Jesus as our greatest example, who have lived spiritually profound lives that have incorporated this discipline with victory over the push back from the world around them.

So...where are you when it comes to this sacred rhythm? Where would you like to be? Maybe the greatest question is, “Where is God calling you in this area of your life”?

“We enter into silence and solitude on the basis of our desire for God, and it becomes a place for being with our desire in God’s presence. Even if we also experience some resistance (which is quite normal, especially in the beginning), when the desire is deep enough to overcome our resistance, we are on our way. The most essential question in solitude is ‘How have I been wanting to be with God, and how has God been wanting to be with me?’” Ruth Haley Barton

How to get started:

• To the best of your ability, find a time and place that will minimize outward noise and distraction.
• Sit comfortably. Often it is helpful to sit in an upright position with feet flat on the floor and hands open – palms up – in your lap. This suggested position keeps our bodies alert and minds in an attitude of expectancy.
• Begin with a simple phrase that resonates with your desire as you meet with God in solitude and silence (“Speak Lord, your servant is listening”, “Be still and know that I am God”, “I am here”).
• Be aware of the inner distractions. Do not “beat yourself up” over those thoughts or try, by sheer willpower, to rid your mind of them. As they come simply embrace them and give them over to the Lord for his keeping during this time together. Do not be discouraged if you need to do this many times. The Lord is patient and will receive your request and wait with you until your mind can begin to center down to hear from him.
• Pay attention to what is stirring in your soul. Sit in God’s presence and wait for him to reveal why he is making you aware of a mind picture, verse of scripture, feeling or situation. Saturate your mind - in his presence - with what has been brought to mind.
• What is he wanting you to glean from what has come to mind and what is he inviting you to do with this stirring?
• Rest in what he has revealed to you knowing he will be faithful to follow through with what he is requesting.

Keep in mind that it is OK not to get through all of the steps mentioned above. God may be calling you to “camp” on a step for a long time as you practice solitude and silence. Do not rush!

Silence and solitude is a journey and is not learned overnight. A good piece of advice in practicing this discipline is, when you are ready to give up and leave...don’t. This is oftentimes when the breakthrough comes!

Suggested Exercises (From Unveiled Faces, by Keith Drury)
Choose one or more of the following.
1. Set aside fifteen minutes a day for solitude and silence. Relax from strain and stress and simply rest in God’s presence.
2. It is important to cultivate an “attitude” in our life before God. Here is a list of eight attitudes that unite us to God: faith, openness, attention, reverence, expectation, supplication, trust, and joy. During your times of reflection, choose one of these attitudes and nurture it by concentrating on offering short simple prayers. For example, in faith, simply say, “Lord, I believe in you. I know that you can do all things...”
3. Take an inventory of your “bag of spiritual tricks”, such as ingenuity, self-confidence or self complacence. What magical methods have you relied on in the past, or used as a way of manipulating God? Refuse to come before God with a false sense of control, or confess to God the sin of having reduced your relationship to mere formalism.
4. The psalmist pledges, “I will guard my ways that I may not sin with my tongue; I will keep a muzzle on my mouth as long as the wicked are in my presence.” Make a pledge, by going through a portion of your day in silence. Silence will free you from the compulsion to control others.

Selected scripture on **Silence and Solitude**: Mark 1:35-39/Matthew 6:1-6, Daniel 6:1-28, Psalm 42

Later tonight, reflect on your day and consider spending a few moments praying the **Prayer of Examen** (Found on page 35).
“The reality is, my prayers don’t change God. But, I am convinced prayer changes me. Praying boldly boots me out of that stale place of religious habit into authentic connection with God Himself.” - Lysa TerKeurst

“Is prayer your steering wheel or your spare tire?” - Corrie ten Boom

“To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing.” - Martin Luther

“The Christian life is not a constant high. I have my moments of deep discouragement. I have to go to God in prayer with tears in my eyes, and say, ‘O God, forgive me,’ or ‘Help me.’” - Billy Graham

“True prayer is neither a mere mental exercise nor a vocal performance. It is far deeper than that - it is spiritual transaction with the Creator of Heaven and Earth.” - Charles Spurgeon

“If you believe in prayer at all, expect God to hear you. If you do not expect, you will not have. God will not hear you unless you believe He will hear you; but if you believe He will, He will be as good as your faith.” - Charles Spurgeon

“Let no one profess to trust in God, and yet lay up for future wants, otherwise the Lord will first send him to the hoard he has amassed, before He can answer the prayer for more.” - George Muller

“Prayer does not change God, but it changes him who prays.” - Soren Kierkegaard

“God is looking for people to use, and if you can get usable, he will wear you out. The most dangerous prayer you can pray is this: ‘Use me.’” - Rick Warren

“Any concern too small to be turned into a prayer is too small to be made into a burden.” - Corrie Ten Boom

“Prayer is not asking. Prayer is putting oneself in the hands of God, at His disposition, and listening to His voice in the depth of our hearts.” - Mother Teresa

“The prayer offered to God in the morning during your quiet time is the key that unlocks the door of the day. Any athlete knows that it is the start that ensures a good finish.” - Adrian Rogers
“God shapes the world by prayer. The more praying there is in the world the better the world will be, the mightier the forces against evil.” - Mother Teresa

“To get nations back on their feet, we must first get down on our knees.” - Billy Graham

“Prayer should not be regarded as a duty which must be performed, but rather as a privilege to be enjoyed, a rare delight that is always revealing some new beauty.” - E.M. Bounds

“If the only prayer you ever say in your entire life is thank you, it will be enough.” – Meister Eckhart

“May you grow still enough to hear the stir of a snowflake in the air, so that your inner silence may turned into hushed expectation.” – David Steindl-Rast

“Silence is God’s first language; everything else is a poor translation.” – Thomas Keating

The trouble with nearly everybody who prays is that he says ‘Amen’ and then runs away before God has a chance to reply. Listening to God is far more important than giving Him your ideas.” – Frank Laubach

“A life that is pleasing to God is not a series of religious duties. We have only one thing to do, namely, to experience a life of relationship and intimacy with God.” – Richard Foster

“We tend, too, to feel comfortable and ‘at home’ with certain styles of prayer, most often those that are familiar to us, and can be suspicious or apprehensive of other styles. Other people’s ‘models’ do not always, at first glance, seem right to us. However, as we experience different aspects of prayer, we can become comfortable with a variety of approaches.” – Christine Faragher, Other Voices: Exploring the Contemplative in Salvationist Spirituality

“‘Ask the Lord for rain in the springtime’ (Zechariah 10:1). This verse counsels us that we should not hesitate to turn to God in our times of need. God is our provider and he wants us to rely on him.” – Janet Munn and Stephen Court, Army on its Knees
MORE SCRIPTURE ON PRAYER

1 Chronicles 16:11 - Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always.

2 Chronicles 6:19-21 - Yet, Lord my God, give attention to your servant’s prayer and his plea for mercy. Hear the cry and the prayer that your servant is praying in your presence. 20 May your eyes be open toward this temple day and night, this place of which you said you would put your Name there. May you hear the prayer your servant prays toward this place. 21 Hear the supplications of your servant and of your people Israel when they pray toward this place. Hear from heaven, your dwelling place; and when you hear, forgive.

Ephesians 6:18 - And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.

Jeremiah 29:12-13 - Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. 13 You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

Psalm 17:6 - I call on you, my God, for you will answer me; turn your ear to me and hear my prayer.

Psalm 102:17 - He will respond to the prayer of the destitute; he will not despise their plea.

Psalm 141:2 - May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice.

Proverbs 15:29 - The Lord is far from the wicked, but he hears the prayer of the righteous.

Philippians 4:6 - Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

James 5:16 - Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.
DAILY EXAMEN

St. Ignatius encouraged people to talk to Jesus like a friend. End the Daily Examen with a conversation with Jesus. Ask forgiveness for your sins. Ask for his protection and help. Ask for his wisdom about the questions you have and the problems you face. Do all this in the spirit of gratitude. Your life is a gift, and it is adorned with gifts from God. End the Daily Examen with the Lord’s Prayer.

For this practice
• A comfortable and relatively quiet location is likely most conducive for reflecting
• The experience doesn’t need to be a certain length—as little as ten minutes could be sufficient, and you could spend more time on certain portions compared to others
• It might be helpful to journal your thoughts and recollections or to write out what you notice during your times of prayer
• Consider sharing your experiences: allow encouragement and insight from others to influence you and cheer you on, and when appropriate give the same, together striving to be an ever-faithful “community of solitudes”

Presence
Begin this practice by recognizing the presence of God. Remind yourself of God’s presence with you and His desire to be with you. Consider praying for the Holy Spirit to help you be attentive to God’s presence.

1. Become aware of God’s presence. Look back on the events of the day in the company of the Holy Spirit. The day may seem confusing to you—a blur, a jumble, a muddle. Ask God to bring clarity and understanding.

“Cultivate the spirit of prayer. Beware not to quench it. When you feel God wooing you into His presence, and calling you to secret prayer, go! He has a blessing for you....”

— Samuel Logan Brengle, The Officer, 1916
2. **Review the day with gratitude.** Gratitude is the foundation of our relationship with God. Walk through your day in the presence of God and note its joys and delights. Focus on the day’s gifts. Look at the work you did, the people you interacted with. What did you receive from these people? What did you give them? Pay attention to small things—the food you ate, the sights you saw, and other seemingly small pleasures. God is in the details.

3. **Pay attention to your emotions.** One of St. Ignatius’s great insights was that we detect the presence of the Spirit of God in the movements of our emotions. Reflect on the feelings you experienced during the day. Boredom? Elation? Resentment? Compassion? Anger? Confidence? What is God saying through these feelings?

   God will most likely show you some ways that you fell short. Make note of these sins and faults. But look deeply for other implications. Does a feeling of frustration perhaps mean that God wants you consider a new direction in some area of your work? Are you concerned about a friend? Perhaps you should reach out to her in some way.

4. **Choose one feature of the day and pray from it.** Ask the Holy Spirit to direct you to something during the day that God thinks is particularly important. It may involve a feeling—positive or negative. It may be a significant encounter with another person or a vivid moment of pleasure or peace. Or it may be something that seems rather insignificant. Look at it. Pray about it. Allow the prayer to arise spontaneously from your heart—whether intercession, praise, repentance, or gratitude.

   "In prayer it is better to have a heart without words than words without a heart."  
   — John Bunyan

MORE ON PRAYING SCRIPTURE – Madame Jeanne Guyon

A proponent of Praying Scripture, Madame Jeanne Guyon lived from 1648-1717 in the north of France. Born Jeanne Bouvier, her parents were wealthy and deeply religious. As a result of her parents’ convictions, she spent much of her childhood being trained in a Convent. Because Jeanne was often ill as a child, her training was frequently interrupted. She is said to have moved back and forth from the convent to the home of her parents at least nine times in ten years.

At the age of 15, she was forced into an arranged marriage with a 38-year old invalid, Jacques Guyon. They were married for twelve years, until his death in 1676. Throughout the marriage, she was mistreated by her household, most notably her new mother-in-law. Grief and suffering followed Jeanne through her entire life. She bore five children to Jacques in that time, three of which survived. Also during her marriage, she lost her half-sister, mother and father. Her father and her daughter both died in July 1672 within days of each other. At 28, she found herself to be a parentless widow who had buried two children and most of her family.

After a few quiet years to herself, she experienced her third “mystical experience” and her own convictions and pious devotional life led her from convent to convent while she developed and taught a theology of the inward life, focusing on constant, conversational prayer. Her audiences were always a mix of fellow nuns, monks, friars and especially local congregants. She adored those that God brought into her ministry and felt a special calling to teach prayer.

By God’s blessing, her following grew, championed by François Fénelon, but bishop after bishop grew suspect of her influence and the appeal of her teachings. She was repeatedly asked to leave. For several years, the church debated her ideas and even condemned her writing and teaching. Throughout, however, her
ideas spread in and through the convents she had visited leading to numerical growth and spiritual depth that had not been seen in some time. Guyon was eventually arrested and imprisoned in the Bastille from 1695-1703 where she continued to write and her works continued to be sought out by publishers and readers alike.

Madame Jeanne Guyon demonstrated a deep inward life while consistently and faithfully ministering to others. She cherished Scripture and prayer, especially together. Our prayer exercise today is a gift from the Spirit given to us through her conviction and dedication.

“We believe that enduring, intimate, extraordinary prayer generates spiritual power, advance and victory.”
– Janet Munn and Stephen Court, *Army on its Knees*
BREATH PRAYER

It goes without saying that life can get complicated. We start out to complete a seemingly simple task and we unearth layers of steps that must be taken to get the task done correctly. This can be true whether it is a home-improvement project, organizing a family get-together, or rearranging our schedules to take on an added responsibility. These examples may have you whispering to yourself, “Why does life have to be so complicated?” Sometimes these extra hurdles, whether willingly added or unforeseen, suck the life out of the project.

If you are finding it hard to concentrate on the Lord during prayer time or any time of the day, a breath prayer may be the answer to your crowded thoughts or flighty emotions. A breath prayer is a straightforward sentence that God leads you to create to help you center your heart, mind and soul on Him.

Breath prayer is an ancient Christian prayer practice dating back to at least the sixth century. Historically, it is associated with the Eastern Church, particularly Greek and Russian Orthodox churches. One of the earliest breath prayers known is the Jesus Prayer, “Lord Jesus Christ, son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.” Over time, it was shortened. “Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy” “Jesus, have mercy” or “Christ, have mercy.”

“In this quiet moment, 
Still before your throne, 
Conscious of your Presence, 
Knowing I am yours. 
In this quiet moment, 
Set my spirit free, 
In this quiet moment, 
In this quiet moment, 
Make me a better me.”

— Ivor Bosanko
A METHOD FOR CREATING A PERSONAL BREATH PRAYER
(Excerpts from The Breath of Life: A Simple Way To Pray, by Don DelBene)

Finding it hard to concentrate on the Lord during prayer time or any time of the day? That is what a simple “breath prayer” is all about. A straightforward sentence that God leads you to create to help you center your heart, mind and soul on Him.

Sit for a moment in silence and remember that God holds you in a loving presence. You may want to close your eyes and recall the words, “Be still, and know that I am God.” (Psalm 46:10) or “Whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” (Matthew 6:6)

Listen as God calls you by name and asks: “(Your name), what do you want?”

Answer the Lord simply and directly. Write down your answer. You may write several responses if you have several answers.

Select a name of your choosing for the Divine (Abba, Father, Loving Savior, Good Shepherd)

Combine your desire and name into a six-to-eight-syllable prayer such as “Jesus, teach me how to love” or “More of you, Lord, less of me.”
Centering Prayer grew out of the reflections and writings of the Desert Fathers. John Cassian (ca. 360-ca. 430) came from the West and made a pilgrimage to the desert to learn the ways of contemplative prayer. After almost 20 years in the desert, Cassian was appointed a deacon in Constantinople, and by 415 he had returned to France where he established two monasteries, one for men and one for women. Cassian was deeply influenced by his time in the desert, and he wrote his book *The Conferences* about his conversations with the Desert Fathers to acquaint Western Christians with their teachings.

Cassian writes about one conference he had with Abba Isaac who taught him the essence of “true prayer.” “To maintain an unceasing recollection of God, this formula must be ever before you,” Abba Isaac told Cassian., “The formula is this: ‘O God, come to my assistance; O Lord, make haste to help me.’” The result, Isaac said, is that “by God’s light the mind mounts to the manifold knowledge of God, and thereafter feeds on mysteries loftier and more sacred... like a spark leaping up from a fire, the mind is rapt upward, and, destitute of the aid of senses of or anything visible or material, pours out its prayers to God.”

Cassian’s approach to contemplative prayer was the primary monastic practice for 10 centuries in the West, influencing Benedict, among others. In the 14th century, just as the form of the Jesus Prayer was becoming concrete in the East, a mystic in England who remained anonymous by choice, wrote the
first spiritual classic in our language, *The Cloud of Unknowing.* Rebelling against the intellectual currents of the day, the author urges a return to “Prayer of the Heart.”

The basic method promoted in *The Cloud* is to move beyond thinking into a place of utter stillness with the Lord:

*Here is what you are to do: lift your heart up to the Lord, with a gentle stirring of love desiring him for his own sake and not for his gifts. Center all your attention and desire on him and let this be the sole concern of your mind and heart. Do all in your power to forget everything else, keeping your thoughts and desires free from involvement with any of God’s creatures or their affairs in general or in particular. Perhaps this will seem like an irresponsible attitude, but I tell you, let them all be; pay no attention to them.*

**A note on “Quietism.”** In the 17th century, some in France took the writings of St. Theresa of Avila, who promoted a “prayer of quiet,” to extremes. Quietists taught the pray-er to become utterly passive, to the point of annihilating the will. Any thought, even of Christ or the Cross or one’s own salvation, was rejected. This led to great moral laxity, since outward behaviors had no influence on the inner quiet of the person. For good reason, Quietism was condemned in 1687 and died out shortly thereafter.**

Centering prayer isn’t quietistic. The pray-er moves into God’s presence and rests there. The human will isn’t destroyed; to the contrary, it finds peace in its true home. The contemplative person first acknowledges the love that God has for creation and then quiets the mind in order to rest in, center on, and contemplate that love.

A modern method of Centering prayer, developed by M. Basil Pennington and other Trappist monks of St. Joseph’s Abbey in Spencer, Massachusetts, moves through several steps outlined below.
1. Sit comfortably with your eyes closed. Let yourself settle down. Let go of all the thoughts, tensions, and sensations you may feel and begin to rest in the love of God who dwells within.

2. Effortlessly, choose a word, the symbol of your intention to surrender to God’s presence, and let the word be gently present within you.

3. When you become aware of thoughts or as internal sensations arise, take this as your signal to gently return to the word, the symbol of your intention to let go and rest in God’s presence. (It is not a *mantra*, we choose the word/s and say it/them as an intentional guide to restore our focus.)

4. If thoughts subside and you find yourself restfully aware, simply let go of even the word. Just be in the stillness. When thoughts begin to stir again, gently return to the word. Use the one word as your only response to thoughts, questions, or anxieties that arise in your mind.

5. At the end of the prayer time (10 minutes is a good starting place, 20 is a good target), take a couple of moments to come out of the silence – even if you don’t feel you need it. Many people find this is a perfect time to internally express to God their thanks and to pray for others in need of God’s grace. Slowly reciting the Lord’s Prayer is another gentle way to come out of the prayer.

“The fewer the words, the better the prayer.”
— Martin Luther
Tongsung Kido, which literally means “praying together out loud,” is an important part of prayer life that the Korean Christians have cultivated in their practice of faith. Tongsung kido is a significant and almost universal spiritual practice that has been a distinctive way of experiencing the Spirit filled prayer life among Korean Christians. As a unique form of prayer, it is used both in public and private settings of prayer intentionally. Whether practiced in a setting of personal prayer or in public worship, tongsung kido is offered in a loud voice.

Tongsung kido has value as an example of a fervent, persistent and earnest way of crying out to God. It is a prayer experience of completely liberating oneself to God in total surrender, and in unflinching desperation giving to God anything and everything that can be expressed to Him. The person praying is freed from any awareness of his surrounding and relinquishes his sufferings and joys to God, who hears his voice.

The purpose of tongsung kido can be crystallized in two functions: First, as tongsung kido is defined as a passionate form of individual and communal prayer of lament, tongsung kido functions as a practice of confession of one’s sins and an assurance that sins are forgiven. Second, as tongsung kido has a biblical character of a visceral struggle with God, tongsung kido embodies a radical channel for transforming one’s prayer life into the life of a new creature requiring the discipline of the body as well as the mind.

The spiritual and cultural reference of tongsung kido is anchored to the idea of Han, which is unique to the experience of Korean people; in particular in a socio-historical context, including the
experiences of Japanese colonization (1909-1945), the Korean war (1950-1953), the institutionalized oppression caused by the military dictatorship (1961-1992) in the history of Korea. In a special way, Han is significant in relation to the suffering experience of Korean women who are economically oppressed, politically repressed, and socio-culturally victimized under the “age-old Confucian system of ethics, which inculcates male domination.”

Andrew S. Park defines Han as “frustrated hope, the collapsed feeling of pain, letting go, resentful bitterness, and the wounded heart” (Andrew S. Park, *The Wounded Heart of God*, 1993, 15-30.). James H. Cone attempts to compare Han with the concept of “blues.” For him, the experience of Han as “the crystallization of suffering and unresolved feelings owing to injustice” might be compared to the blues in the U. S. Afro-American experience (The Commission on Theological Concerns of the Christian Conference of Asia, ed. ‘Minjung’ Theology: People as the Subjects of History , 1981, xi.).

There is no one way to practice tongsung kido, but there are certain patterns one can observe. Individual tongsung kido may take place in a private place or in a church sanctuary when no one is around in order to allow oneself to be immersed into fervent prayer with a loud cry to God. As a public collective prayer, tongsung kido might be practiced in various places such as in early Morning prayer meeting, regular Sunday worship service, revival meetings, and group prayer meetings. During worship, usually at the time of special prayer request, the minister or the worship leader will call the congregation to pray in unison. The whole congregation joins together to pray aloud individually but spontaneously at the same time in unison. Some time, in the beginning of prayer the congregation may shout, “Lord! Lord! Lord!” in unison as a corporative sign of engaging the prayer warfare. Usually the congregation is given a specific time period, with a common theme of petition or supplication.

(Editor’s note: For more on the practice of Tongsung Kido in the
Some Biblical References on *Tongsung Kido*:

* **Tongsung kido** as a lament:
  Isaiah 29:13-14
  Jeremiah 33:3
  Lamentation 2:11-12
  Joel 2:12
  Rachel’s cry – Jeremiah 31:15; Matthew 2:18

* **Tongsung kido** as a passionate faith practice:
  The Israelites’ experience of the Exodus - Exodus 2:23b-25
  Jesus’s example – Luke 22:44

* **Tongsung kido** as a unique form of fervent prayer:
  Jacob’s wrestling with Angel – Genesis 32:22-32
  Acts 4:23-24
  James 5:13-15, 17a, 18a

Selected References:


― Janet Munn and Stephen Court, *Army on its Knees*
PRAYER OF LETTING GO – from Invitation to Solitude and Silence, by Ruth Haley Barton.

“Psalm 46:10 tells us there is a kind of knowing that comes in silence and not in words—but first we must be still. The Hebrew word translated “Be still” literally means “Let go of your grip.” Let go of your grip on your own understanding. Cease striving at the level of human effort, and in so doing open yourself to a whole new kind of knowing.”

“Take three long, deep breaths to help yourself settle into the silence. Notice how the breathing helps you release any physical tension that might be distracting you. Notice (if you can) the different levels of your being, particularly the difference between your mind and your heart. Give yourself a few moments to notice and experience what is going on in your mind and what is going on in your heart.

What is it you need to know in the stillness that you haven’t been able to know in the noisiness and busyness of your mind? What is the “I don’t know” place in your life that no amount of thinking and wordiness has been able to touch with any kind of answer?

Sit with God with your question. Say it out loud. Tell him how it feels not to have the answer, but resist the urge to grasp for answers, to force clarity that isn’t there or cling to mental processes for figuring things out. Allow related issues, concerns and thoughts to present themselves, but don’t dwell on them. Let them pass by like clouds in the sky. Rather than trying to figure anything out or grasp for anything, rest in God’s presence with your question.

If you notice yourself becoming impatient, ask, Am I willing to be patient with this thing that is unsolved in my heart? What would it look like for me to stop working so hard on this and trust God to work in his way and his time?

Sit in silence for as long a time as you have allotted. Close your time of silence by praying the Lord’s Prayer, allowing the words and phrases to shape your response to your question and to the next activity you engage in.”
PRAYING THE SHEMA

“4 Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 5 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.” (Deuteronomy 6:4-5)

In Hebrew, the first half is Sh’mah Yisrael Adonai Eloheinu Adonai Echad. It’s known as the Shema, and it’s an important part of the Jewish prayer life. Jesus quotes it as the greatest commandment. This prayer is said multiple times throughout the day, as instructed by the surrounding verses in Deuteronomy. It’s a waking up prayer and a falling asleep prayer. It’s a walking along prayer and a sitting down to eat prayer. It’s a prayer meant for every moment of life. It’s a prayer of attentiveness.

It’s an easy prayer to memorize. Take it one line at a time and repeat until it’s lodged in your mind. Keep going, line by line, until the whole thing flows. You can pray the Shema on your way to work or as you’re walking down the hall.

Hear, O Israel
The Shema starts unlike any other prayer, ever. It starts with “Hear, O Israel” better translated for us as “Listen, church.” Instead of praying as if God has just walked in the door, or that we have just begun something, this prayer opens by reminding us that something is already happening. There’s a connection waiting for us that’s better than any connection ever. There’s a voice that’s been speaking and it’s time for us to listen to it. It’s a bigger voice, with bigger plans and with bigger promises than anything we can have on our own.

The Lord our God,
Who is that bigger voice? Who’s on the other end of this prayer? This isn’t some divine telemarketer. It’s not a click-thru buzzfeed list. It’s not a “which Star Wars character are you” or “What
disciple would you be.” You don’t just do the steps and post a status and cruise through to next Sunday. The One who has been speaking is none other than the creator of the universe. None other than the author of everything. And in the time He took to author everything, He has also authored each one of us, in His image and given us a sacred place and task in Creation. It’s a connection that knows us better than we know ourselves. So why are we afraid of it?

_The Lord our God, the Lord is one._

We let other things get in the way. It’s not a matter of “if,” it’s a matter of when. We all have garden of Eden moments when we look at the shiny, tasty thing right before us and think “This will make me like God.” At one point in time or another we all put things, or people, or ourselves on the pedestal, and push God out of the way. There’s only room in the garden for one, though. God spends more time in the Old Testament, and in the New in different ways, working against our tendencies toward replacing Him than anything else. God is One. To receive His best blessings and to follow in the best obedience means to keep Him in the center. This connection will feed every other one in our lives, if we let it.

_5 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength._

It’s a commandment. Love is an action that requires commitment. But it’s also a natural response when we see everything that comes before. It’s a price we can afford to pay. It’s a thing we can choose. He’s asking for something that can be immensely difficult, but God is not asking for something we cannot do. He’s asking us to love with all of ourselves. This is the center of making every connection the Best connection it can be. He’s asking us to see that He loved us with all of Himself... and we can choose to do the same for Him, for others and for ourselves.

If you spend some time with it and let the words move within you, you might find yourself praying this ancient prayer as you breathe.
Join your voice with those across the millennia and pray this beautiful reminder that God has been and continues to speak and work in our lives.