

Guided Prayer Experience

Rich Villados said, “Life with God is impossible without prayer. Prayer, simply stated, is the act of opening ourselves up to God’s presence and love, through verbal and non-verbal communication.” Over the next 45 minutes, you will be invited into a time of silence and prayer. This handout is designed to help you have some guidance during this time. Feel free to use as much or as little as you’d like during your time.

Types of prayer included in this guide:

SILENCE

Purpose: In the practice of silent prayer, we are prioritizing prayer as “being with God.” Prayer is often seen in transactional ways (we pray, and God provides something). While this kind of prayer is warranted, being with God, for the sake of being with God, is an important first step.

Tips: When we are silent, our minds will get distracted. That’s okay. Before beginning your time in silence, take a deep breath, and use the name “Jesus” or a phrase like, “here I am” whenever you find yourself thinking about something else. The goal of this kind of prayer is to be present to the presence of God, not seeking anything.

CONSOLATIONS and DESOLATIONS

Purpose: Consolations and Desolations are a chance for us to reflect on our week, and begin to see patterns in our lives. Many of us have things we do consistently that help us become aware of the presence of God. Consolations and Desolations help us, as we’re reflecting on our week, see activities, events, conversations, and patterns that helped us draw near to God (Consolations), and that made God feel distant (Desolations).

Tips: Whether in your phone or in a journal, actually write down your consolations and desolations. This way, you can look back at your lists in a week, a month, or a few months, and see patterns. Also, don’t think of actions that would be considered specifically “sacred”. We can experience God in a worship gathering, we can also experience him at coffee with a friend, reading a book in the backyard, playing with our family, or going for a bike ride.

SCRIPTURE

Purpose: Prayerfully reading Holy Scripture is an important part in learning to pray. Whether we are praying the Psalms, or reading a Gospel narrative, God’s word as found in scripture immerses us in God’s life and action. Slowly reading through a portion of scripture during a time of prayer helps to renew our minds (Romans 12:2).

Tips: People often have a hard time deciding what to read from the Bible. Start with the book of Psalms and one of the gospels. Slowly read a Psalm and/or a section from one of the gospels. As you read, underline or highlight a word or phrase that speaks to you.

SUPPLICATION

Purpose: In supplication, we are offering the particular requests on our heart to God. In this act, we are recognizing our limitations as well as God’s provision. This is a time to move beyond “functional atheism” to a concrete dependence upon God.

Tips: Ask yourself, what do I need grace for today? Name the challenge before you, and ask God to help. Another question to ask is, “who do I know that needs God’s grace in their lives. Offer words of prayer to God on their behalf.

Lets begin:

Find a place to quiet your soul. For some, this might be finding a place to sit. For others, it might be walking for a while. Some might sit in silence among friends, others might walk in silence by themselves. Do whatever you need to do to quiet your soul.

Take 5-10 minutes to be silent.

Take some time to reflect on your week.

Write down (if you brought a journal and a pen) your consolations and desolations.

Take time to pray through Scripture

Scripture Prayers:

Psalm 130

You can pray this Psalm if you are waiting on God, longing for something, or confused about life. You can use this Psalm to pray through times where you can remember God being faithful, and other confusing times where God showed up!

Psalm 103

You can pray this Psalm if you are wanting to sit in awe of God. David writes this Psalm praising God, but then speaks why he praises God. You can use this Psalm to begin a prayer through your own “because” of praise.

Psalm 13

You can pray this Psalm if you are trying to find words to express your feelings to God. After praying this Psalm, it might help you express how you’re feeling in your own life.

Psalm 5

You can pray this Psalm if you are in a season of depression, loneliness, anxiety, worry, etc. After praying this Psalm, you can come to God with brutal honesty with your own life setting. You can acknowledge your brokenness, and his love and presence simultaneously, even if they feel absent.

Prompts for prayers of supplication:

Jesus, I know I haven’t engaged my neighbors in this season like I should....

Jesus, I know I’ve been resisting your call to....

Jesus, I know I need to reconcile with...

Jesus, I know I’ve been harboring anger towards...

Jesus, I want to thank you for...

Jesus, I want to pray for our church leadership...

Jesus, I want you to show up in this part of my life...

Jesus, I want you to show me what to do with this decision...

Finish your time with another few minutes of silence. Allow yourself to feel God’s presence, to sit in this moment and not be moved somewhere else. After a few minutes, at the set time, make your way to the place your group decided to reconvene.