

Saturday

Prayer at Dawn

PREPARE

Take time to be quiet and still. Notice your breathing and slowly greet the new day. When you are ready, continue by praying:

In the name of the Father of all, in the name of the Son who came, lived, died, and rose, and in the name of the Spirit who empowers the Church. Amen.

INVITE

You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

Thank you, Father, for including us in your mission of restoring all you have made. We pray that we might be filled afresh with your Spirit so our lives may witness to the reality of your love for all you have made and that we might reliably relay your invitation for all to be a part of the family of God. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

CONFESS

Eternal and good God, in whom we live and move and have our being, we admit that we forget your mercy and by our sin we become blinded to you and your gifts. We confess that we take for granted your loving pursuit of us and too easily fail to remember your active presence in our lives made possible by your Son, Jesus. Forgive us our evil deeds and all of our ways that offend you. Now with whole hearts may we again draw near to you, committing ourselves to your grace and your good works, through Jesus Christ, your Son. Amen.

PSALM 20

May the LORD answer you when you are in distress;
may the name of the God of Jacob protect you.
May he send you help from the sanctuary
and grant you support from Zion.
May he remember all your sacrifices
and accept your burnt offerings.
May he give you the desire of your heart
and make all your plans succeed.

We will shout for joy when you are victorious
and will lift up our banners in the name of our God.
May the LORD grant all your requests.

Now I know that the LORD saves his anointed;
he answers him from his holy heaven
with the saving power of his right hand.
Some trust in chariots and some in horses,
but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.
They are brought to their knees and fall,
but we rise up and stand firm.

O LORD, save the king!
Answer us when we call!

Pause. Be quiet and reflect on the psalm. If necessary, read through it again.

PRAISE

Tell me the story of Jesus, write on my heart every word;
tell me the story most precious, sweetest that ever was heard.
Tell how the angels in chorus sang as they welcomed his birth,
“Glory to God in the highest! Peace and good tidings to earth.”

Fasting alone in the desert, tell of the days that are past,
how for our sins he was tempted, yet was triumphant at last.
Tell of the years of his labor, tell of the sorrow he bore,
he was despised and afflicted, homeless, rejected and poor.

Tell of the cross where they nailed him, writhing in anguish and pain;
tell of the grave where they laid him, tell how he liveth again.
Love in that story so tender, clearer than ever I see:
stay, let me weep while you whisper, love paid the ransom for me.⁴⁸

We praise you, God, for this story that restores us; we are blessed that we might be a blessing by sharing with others how love has paid our ransom. Amen.

DECLARE

We affirm that Christ sends his redeemed people into the world as the Father sent him, and that this calls for a similar deep and costly penetration of the world. We need to break out of our ecclesiastical ghettos and permeate non-Christian society. In the Church's mission of sacrificial service evangelism is primary. World evangelization requires the whole Church to take the whole gospel to the whole world. The Church is at the very center of God's cosmic purpose and is his appointed means of spreading the gospel. But a church which preaches the cross must itself be marked by the cross. It becomes a stumbling block to evangelism when it betrays the gospel or lacks a living faith in God, a genuine love for people, or scrupulous honesty in all things including promotion and finance. The church is the community of God's people rather than an institution, and must not be identified with any particular culture, social or political system, or human ideology.⁴⁹

READ

As we approach God's message today, may this prayer help us see with fresh and new vision:

Almighty God, may we read and mark in the Holy Scriptures the tale of your loving purposes—from the beginning of our disobedience, to the promise of your restoration, to the coming of your holy child, who made it possible to become your adopted daughters and sons. Soften our hearts and minds to hear afresh these words; help us honor them in our words, actions, and attitudes. Amen.

Slowly and prayerfully read today's selections as found in the Devotional Lectionary and/or in one or more of the passages below:

Exodus 3
1 Thessalonians 1:2-10
John 3:5-21

PRAY**Prayer of the Day**

Good and gracious eternal God, we pray this morning that we might share your story of love and restoration with all those we meet. Since we sinned with Adam and Eve, you have been pursuing us and preparing a way for us to be your image once again among creation. Your love for us moved you to send your very own Son to be among us and ultimately to die on our behalf.

By hanging on a cross, your Son, our savior, declared to us your unmatched love and your willingness to forgive. Beside him hung a thief, beneath him waited Mary the forgiven, and all around watched so many people to whom you gave hope and a chance for forgiveness and restoration.

To us you are a restored life and hope. As forgiven sinners, we become your body and a part of your Church, joining the mission of restoring your creation to its intended purpose. May this hope and this story we now embody bring your good news to all the world.

Eternal God, by your power we are created and by your love we are redeemed and restored; guide and strengthen us by your Spirit, that we may give ourselves to your service and live this day loving you and each other.

Jesus, you knew rejection and disappointment. Help and empower us if our work seems distasteful or if a task seems too demanding; help us decide what best to do, what next to do, or what to do at all. Give us courage and cheerfulness to go the second mile and all the miles ahead as your followers and witnesses. Amen.⁵⁰

The Lord's Prayer**Closing Prayer**

Lord God, you accepted the perfect sacrifice of your Son upon the cross. Hear us during the times of trouble and protect us by the power of his name, that we who share his struggle on earth may share in his victory in the life to come, where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.⁵¹

BLESS

To God the Father, who first loved us, and made us acceptable in the beloved Son;

To God the Son, who loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood;

To God the Holy Spirit, who sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts;

To the one true God be all love and all glory for time and eternity. Amen.⁵²

Dawn to Dark
A Book of Christian Prayer

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