



**MOMENT
to MOMENT**
An Invitation to Prayer

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PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE

This retreat is designed in seven modules—an introductory module plus two modules under each of three different headings:

- Knowing God
- Being Known
- Knowing One Another

Depending upon the design of your particular retreat, between four and seven of these sections will be used by the group gathered from your congregation.

We have included all seven in this guide, as each Facilitator will prayerfully decide which to use for your retreat setting. And, we also wanted to make these exercises available to you—even without the input and group experience to go along with them.

It is our prayer that these materials will help to deepen and broaden your own understanding and experience of prayer.

*May the goodness and grace of God,
the self-sacrificing love of Jesus,
and the powerful, enlivening presence of the Holy Spirit
richly bless and strengthen you
as you walk through this booklet.*

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INTRODUCTION

Extending the Invitation

GROUP EXERCISE: WORD ASSOCIATION—PRAYER

1) Prayer Practices modeled in the retreat:

GOALS FOR THIS RETREAT EXPERIENCE...

- ✓ that each person will hear God speak to them personally.
- ✓ that each person will feel more deeply connected to others.
- ✓ that each person will discover, or re-discover, a longing to continue this level of prayer, both personally and communally.
- ✓ that each person will become more attentive to the Spirit in the midst of everyday activity.
- ✓ that such continued, deep, and rich prayer experiences will filter outward, empowering each person and each community through the Spirit to live as disciples of Christ, impacting the church and the world.

STORYTELLING: UNPACKING 1 SAMUEL 3:1-4:1A—*Samuel*

The LORD Calls Samuel

¹The boy Samuel ministered before the LORD under Eli. In those days the word of the LORD was rare; there were not many visions.

²One night Eli, whose eyes were becoming so weak that he could barely see, was lying down in his usual place. ³The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the house of the LORD, where the ark of God was. ⁴Then the LORD called Samuel.

Samuel answered, “Here I am.” ⁵And he ran to Eli and said, “Here I am; you called me.” But Eli said, “I did not call; go back and lie down.” So he went and lay down.

⁶Again the LORD called, “Samuel!” And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, “Here I am; you called me.” “My son,” Eli said, “I did not call; go back and lie down.”

⁷Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD: The word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.

⁸A third time the LORD called, “Samuel!” And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, “Here I am; you called me.”

Then Eli realized that the LORD was calling the boy. ⁹So Eli told Samuel, “Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, ‘Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.’” So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

¹⁰The LORD came and stood there, calling as at the other times, “Samuel! Samuel!” Then Samuel said, “Speak, for your servant is listening.”

¹¹And the LORD said to Samuel: “See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make the ears of everyone who hears about it tingle. ¹²At that time I will carry out against Eli everything I spoke against his family—from beginning to end. ¹³For I told him that I would judge his family forever because of the sin he knew about; his sons blasphemed God, and he failed to restrain them. ¹⁴Therefore I swore to the house of Eli, ‘The guilt of Eli’s house will never be atoned for by sacrifice or offering.’”

¹⁵Samuel lay down until morning and then opened the doors of the house of the LORD. He was afraid to tell Eli the vision, ¹⁶but Eli called him and said, “Samuel, my son.” Samuel answered, “Here I am.”

¹⁷“What was it he said to you?” Eli asked. “Do not hide it from me. May God deal with you, be it ever so severely, if you hide from me anything he told you.” ¹⁸So Samuel told him everything, hiding nothing from him. Then Eli said, “He is the LORD; let him do what is good in his eyes.”

¹⁹The LORD was with Samuel as he grew up, and he let none of Samuel’s words fall to the ground. ²⁰And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba recognized that Samuel was attested as a prophet of the LORD. ²¹The LORD continued to appear at Shiloh, and there he revealed himself to Samuel through his word.

¹And Samuel’s word came to all Israel.

Notes:

PERSONAL PRAYER PRACTICE: GUIDED LISTENING/ WRITTEN CONVERSATIONAL PRAYER

“Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.”

Quiet yourself by settling into a comfortable posture, closing your eyes and breathing deeply and slowly, letting go of the buzzing that goes on in your head and heart, releasing the cares of the day to our Good Shepherd. Gently repeat these words from 1 Samuel, allowing space between the words and at the end of the sentence. Then begin to journal what you hear. Do this as a dialogue between you and God, as suggested in the outline below:

1) What do you hear/sense God saying to you?

2) How do you respond? (Thanksgiving? Clarifying question? Surprise?)

3) What further do you hear?

4) And how do you respond?

5) God continues to say:

6) You reply:

Continue this dialogue as long as you need to, putting no pressure on yourself, gently relaxing into the loving presence of God.

REFLECTION: INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP

1) What does this experience feel like to you?

2) What adjectives would you choose to describe it to someone else?

KNOWING GOD: PART ONE

The Holiness of God

GROUP EXERCISE: Q & A—EXPERIENCING THE PRESENCE OF GOD

1) How do you know you are experiencing God's presence?

2) When and where do you experience God's presence?

3) What helps you to experience God's presence?

4) What gets in the way?

STORYTELLING: UNPACKING EXODUS 33:12 - 34:10 AND ISAIAH 6:1-8—*Moses and Isaiah*

Exodus 33—Moses and the Glory of the LORD

¹²Moses said to the LORD, “You have been telling me, ‘Lead these people,’ but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You have said, ‘I know you by name and you have found favor with me.’ ¹³If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people.”

¹⁴The LORD replied, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”

¹⁵Then Moses said to him, “If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. ¹⁶How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?”

¹⁷And the LORD said to Moses, “I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name.”

¹⁸Then Moses said, “Now show me your glory.”

¹⁹And the LORD said, “I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. ²⁰But,” he said, “you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live.”

²¹Then the LORD said, “There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. ²²When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. ²³Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen.”

Exodus 34—The New Stone Tablets

¹The LORD said to Moses, “Chisel out two stone tablets like the first ones, and I will write on them the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke. ²Be ready in the morning, and then come up on Mount Sinai. Present yourself to me there on top of the mountain. ³No one is to come with you or be seen anywhere on the mountain; not even the flocks and herds may graze in front of the mountain.”

⁴So Moses chiseled out two stone tablets like the first ones and went up Mount Sinai early in the morning, as the LORD had commanded him; and he carried the two stone tablets in his hands. ⁵Then the LORD came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the LORD. ⁶And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, ⁷maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation.”

⁸Moses bowed to the ground at once and worshiped. ⁹“Lord,” he said, “if I have found

favor in your eyes, then let the Lord go with us. Although this is a stiff-necked people, forgive our wickedness and our sin, and take us as your inheritance.”

¹⁰Then the LORD said: “I am making a covenant with you. Before all your people I will do wonders never before done in any nation in all the world. The people you live among will see how awesome is the work that I, the LORD, will do for you.

Isaiah 6:1-8—Isaiah’s Commission

¹In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. ²Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. ³And they were calling to one another: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.”

⁴At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

⁵“Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.”

⁶Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. ⁷With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.”

⁸Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”

Notes:

PERSONAL PRAYER PRACTICE: CORPORATE PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND BEING WITH GOD (CENTERING PRAYER)

Corporate Prayer of Confession

Offered in preparation for encountering our holy, glorious God.

LEADER: As we reflect on our own lives, lived over the last day or two, where have we failed to keep the two great commandments—the ones Jesus gave us—to love God with our whole selves and to love our neighbor as ourselves? Look first at: the attitudes of our hearts;

Observe silence.

PEOPLE: **We have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.**

LEADER: our words;

Observe silence.

PEOPLE: **We have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.**

LEADER: our thoughts;

Observe silence.

PEOPLE: **We have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.**

LEADER: our actions;

Observe silence.

PEOPLE: **We have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.**

LEADER: Hear our confession, O Lord. Touch our lips with the burning coal of your deep forgiveness;

PEOPLE: **Make your covenant with us once again; and point us in the direction of love and obedience**

LEADER: that we might delight in your will and walk in your ways, for Jesus' sake.

ALL: **Amen.**

Being with God (Centering Prayer)

It is easy to get distracted in our busyness, isn't it? We need to relax and simply focus on God. I would encourage you to try this form of being with God. If any of you discover that you are uncomfortable with this approach, simply sit and read your Bible.

- Sit comfortably, breathe easily and regularly, gently quiet your heart and mind. If you find it helpful, go ahead and close your eyes. Picture yourself as a gift to God—an unhurried, unflustered gift to God. Form no words, just simply be in the quiet, recognizing that God is closer to you than the very air that you breathe. As a newly forgiven, much-loved and redeemed human person, you are the gift God so deeply desires. Breathe in and out, believing that truth—and simply rest in God's presence.
- Concentrate gently on your breathing—oxygen in, CO2 out. As we breathe in, we're breathing in healthy oxygen. As we breathe out, we're breathing out unhealthy CO2. We need to breath in and out for our physical health—why not our spiritual health?

- Now, if it's helpful, choose one or two words that describe for you who God is in your life—perhaps a biblical name for God, like My Rock, Redeemer, Mighty One, Good Shepherd. Or perhaps a single descriptive phrase comes to mind—like Shalom, Peace, Love, Joy.
- Silently (or just barely aloud) repeat that word (or words) with each breath in and out.
- If distracting thoughts come, be gentle with them. Acknowledge their presence and imagine them coming into the sheltering presence of God. Resist frustration, acknowledge your own humanity, and relax into the regularity of breathing in and out and repeating your chosen word, short phrase or prayer.

REFLECTION: GROUP RE-GATHERING

KNOWING GOD: PART TWO

The Goodness & Beauty of God

GROUP EXERCISE: RESPONSE TO PSALM 34:1-10 AND PHILIPPIANS 4:8

Psalm 34:1-10

- ¹I will extol the LORD at all times;
his praise will always be on my lips.
- ²I will glory in the LORD;
let the afflicted hear and rejoice.
- ³Glorify the LORD with me;
let us exalt his name together.
- ⁴I sought the LORD, and he answered me;
he delivered me from all my fears.
- ⁵Those who look to him are radiant;
their faces are never covered with shame.
- ⁶This poor man called, and the LORD heard him;
he saved him out of all his troubles.
- ⁷The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him,
and he delivers them.
- ⁸Taste and see that the LORD is good;
blessed are those who take refuge in him.
- ⁹Fear the LORD, you his holy people,
for those who fear him lack nothing.
- ¹⁰The lions may grow weak and hungry,
but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.

Philippians 4:8

⁸Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

STORYTELLING: UNPACKING LUKE 24:13-15—*Emmaus*

On the Road to Emmaus

¹³Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles [a] from Jerusalem. ¹⁴They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. ¹⁵As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; ¹⁶but they were kept from recognizing him.

¹⁷He asked them, “What are you discussing together as you walk along?”

They stood still, their faces downcast. ¹⁸One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, “Are you only a visitor to Jerusalem and do not know the things that have happened there in these days?”

¹⁹“What things?” he asked.

“About Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied. “He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. ²⁰The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; ²¹but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. ²²In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning ²³but didn’t find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. ²⁴Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see.”

²⁵He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” ²⁷And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

²⁸As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther. ²⁹But they urged him strongly, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them.

³⁰When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. ³¹Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. ³²They asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?”

³³They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together ³⁴and saying, “It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.” ³⁵Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

Notes:

PERSONAL PRAYER PRACTICE: PRAYER WALK AND SENSORY PRAYER

1) Take a few moments of quiet to list on this sheet some of the ways in which you generally experience goodness and beauty in your life. Your list will be as unique as you are—God provides a plethora of evidence that he is both good and beautiful, at least some of which are perfectly in tune with your own particular set of receptors. Some suggestions—just to spur your own imaginative remembering—might include:

- flowers (some in particular or all in general)
- birds
- people
- foods
- music

Add or expand your own particular list here:

2) You may begin this exercise anywhere you like, but it is suggested that you start with one or more of the optional experiences of goodness and beauty being offered on campus. Keep this sheet with you as you begin and, using your list as a reminder, keep your eyes, ears, all of your senses, open and alert to the presence of God in things, people or circumstances that cross your path in the next half hour or so. If you choose to walk, walk slowly around the retreat space, maybe even out into the neighborhood a little, and note (either mentally or on this sheet) ways in which you are reminded of God's goodness, God's beauty. You might even bring something back—a reminder of God's goodness, God's beauty—to add to our altar.

3) As you walk or sit, and as you take note, offer words of thanksgiving and praise to God for each reminder, each sight, each smell, each taste—whatever you find that causes your heart to say, "Thank you!"

4) As time allows (remember to return to the gathering space within 40 minutes), include prayers on behalf of others whom you know who may need to be reminded of God's goodness and beauty today. Jot their names down here and return to this sheet sometime later this week to continue to be thankful and to pray for God's good and beautiful gifts in the lives of others.

REFLECTION: INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP

1) What was the highpoint of this Prayer Walk and/or Sensory Prayer experience for you?

2) What was most difficult or awkward about it?

3) What spoke most strongly to you of God's goodness?

4) What spoke most strongly of God's beauty?

5) For what are you most thankful?

BEING KNOWN: PART ONE

Struggle

GROUP EXERCISE: Q & A—BEING REAL

1) Who do you feel knows you?

2) What did it take for you to be known?

STORYTELLING: UNPACKING GENESIS 32:22-32—*Jacob*

Jacob Wrestles with God

²²That night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two female servants and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. ²³After he had sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions. ²⁴So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. ²⁵When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. ²⁶Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me."

²⁷The man asked him, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered.

²⁸Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with human beings and have overcome."

²⁹Jacob said, "Please tell me your name." But he replied, "Why do you ask my name?" Then he blessed him there.

³⁰So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life

was spared.”

³¹The sun rose above him as he passed Peniel, and he was limping because of his hip.

³²Therefore to this day the Israelites do not eat the tendon attached to the socket of the hip, because the socket of Jacob’s hip was touched near the tendon.

Notes:

PERSONAL PRAYER PRACTICE: STORY-SHARING AND MUTUAL ENCOURAGEMENT THROUGH PRAYER

“...one of the solutions for...being downcast and disturbed is to gather together with God’s people. Praising God with others will usher in again a time of hope. The rejoicing of God’s people carries us, even when we are too discouraged to feel much of anything.”¹

1) As you find your way to a group of three, please read through these first few questions and begin to think about how you might answer them. The goal of this exercise is twofold:

- to practice ‘being real’ with two fellow travelers on the journey; and
- to be reminded of both the gift and the power of praying with and for others.

2) Please choose a timekeeper for your group of three. Allow enough time for each person to respond to one of the three questions listed below (approximately fifteen minutes total).

- As you ponder the topics of ‘struggle’ and ‘wrestling with God,’ what situations in your own life come to mind? (This can be something current or something remembered from the past.)

¹Marva Dawn, *My Soul Waits: Solace for the Lonely in the Psalms*, (IVP Books, 2007).

- What kinds of things has God used in your life to slow you down, to teach you more of himself and yourself?

- Where are you wrestling with God right now?

3) After each person has shared a story, being as 'real' as is comfortable in so doing, take the last 10 minutes to pray for one another. Some approaches to prayer might be:

- Each person could pray for one other person.
- One person could pray on behalf of all.

Remember, this is a “do not fix” zone—it’s not up to us to solve the struggles/problems—only to listen and to pray.

REFLECTION: REPORT TO LARGER GROUP

BEING KNOWN: PART TWO

Lament

GROUP EXERCISE: WORD ASSOCIATION—LAMENT

STORYTELLING: LOOKING AT LAMENTS—*Psalm 130 & Psalm 12*

Psalm 130—An Individual Lament¹

¹Out of the depths I cry to you, LORD

²Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy.

³If you, LORD, kept a record of sins, Lord, who could stand?

⁴But with you there is forgiveness, so that we can, with reverence, serve you.

⁵I wait for the LORD, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope.

⁶I wait for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning,
more than watchmen wait for the morning.

⁷Israel, put your hope in the LORD,
for with the LORD is unfailing love and with him is full redemption.

⁸He himself will redeem Israel from all their sins.

¹Other Psalms of personal lament include #: 6, 13, 38, 39, 43, 69, 70, 88, 130, 142, 143 (and #22 and 42, which are included in this guide for your perusal, if you wish). Psalms 38 and 39 are particularly powerful expressions of what it feels like to have little or no sense of God's presence and help.

Psalm 12—A Community Lament²

¹Help, LORD, for no one is faithful anymore;

those who are loyal have vanished from the human race.

²Everyone lies to their neighbor; they flatter with their lips but harbor deception in their hearts.

³May the LORD silence all flattering lips and every boastful tongue—

⁴those who say, “By our tongues we will prevail;

our own lips will defend us—who is lord over us?”

⁵“Because the poor are plundered and the needy groan, I will now arise,” says the LORD.

“I will protect them from those who malign them.”

⁶And the words of the LORD are flawless,

like silver purified in a crucible, like gold refined seven times.

⁷You, LORD, will keep the needy safe and will protect us forever from the wicked,

⁸who freely strut about while depravity is honored by the human race.

Notes:

PERSONAL PRAYER PRACTICE: WRITING A PSALM OF LAMENT

“There is no literature in all the world that is more true to life and more honest than the Psalms, for here we have warts-and-all religion. Every skeptical thought, every disappointing venture, every pain, every despair that we can face is lived through and integrated into a personal, saving relationship with God, which relationship also has in it acts of praise, blessing, peace, security, trust and love. Good poetry survives not when it is pretty or beautiful or nice but when it is true: accurate and honest. The Psalms are great poetry and have lasted not because they appeal to our fantasies and our wishes but because they are confirmed in the intensities of honest and hazardous living.”³

²Other Psalms of community lament include #: 12, 74, 80, 83, 90 and 137

³Eugene Peterson, *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction: Discipleship in an Instant Society*, (InterVarsity Press, 2000).

Using your answers to these questions, write a prayer of lament; cry out to God for help, assert your willingness to trust in God, despite the circumstances, and assert your intention to ‘wait’ and to ‘hope’ in God’s deliverance.

Two additional laments to use as points of reference in composing your own:

Psalm 42

- ¹As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God.
²My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?
³My tears have been my food day and night,
while people say to me all day long, “Where is your God?”
⁴These things I remember as I pour out my soul:
how I used to go to the house of God under the protection of the Mighty One
with shouts of joy and praise among the festive throng.
⁵Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me?
Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.
⁶My soul is downcast within me;
therefore I will remember you from the land of the Jordan, the heights of Hermon—
from Mount Mizar.
⁷Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls;
all your waves and breakers have swept over me.
⁸By day the LORD directs his love, at night his song is with me—a prayer to the God of my life.
⁹I say to God my Rock, “Why have you forgotten me?
Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy?”
¹⁰My bones suffer mortal agony as my foes taunt me,
saying to me all day long, “Where is your God?”
¹¹Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me?
Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.

Psalm 22

- ¹My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning?
²My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer, by night, but I find no rest.
³Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One; you are the praise of Israel.
⁴In you our ancestors put their trust; they trusted and you delivered them.
⁵They cried to you and were saved; in you they trusted and were not disappointed.
⁶But I am a worm, not a human being; I am scorned by everyone, despised by the people.
⁷All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads.
⁸“He trusts in the LORD,” they say, “let the LORD rescue him.
Let him deliver him, since he delights in him.”
⁹Yet you brought me out of the womb; you made me feel secure on my mother’s breast.
¹⁰From birth I was cast on you; from my mother’s womb you have been my God.
¹¹Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help.

- ¹²Many bulls surround me; strong bulls of Bashan encircle me.
- ¹³Roaring lions that tear their prey open their mouths wide against me.
- ¹⁴I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint.
My heart has turned to wax; it has melted within me.
- ¹⁵My mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth;
you lay me in the dust of death.
- ¹⁶Dogs surround me, a pack of villains encircles me; they pierce my hands and my feet.
- ¹⁷All my bones are on display; people stare and gloat over me.
- ¹⁸They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment.
- ¹⁹But you, LORD, do not be far from me. You are my strength; come quickly to help me.
- ²⁰Deliver me from the sword, my precious life from the power of the dogs.
- ²¹Rescue me from the mouth of the lions; save me from the horns of the wild oxen.
- ²²I will declare your name to my people; in the assembly I will praise you.
- ²³You who fear the LORD, praise him! All you descendants of Jacob, honor him!
Revere him, all you descendants of Israel!
- ²⁴For he has not despised or scorned the suffering of the afflicted one;
he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help.
- ²⁵From you comes the theme of my praise in the great assembly;
before those who fear you I will fulfill my vows.
- ²⁶The poor will eat and be satisfied;
those who seek the LORD will praise him—may your hearts live forever!
- ²⁷All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD,
and all the families of the nations will bow down before him,
- ²⁸for dominion belongs to the LORD and he rules over the nations.
- ²⁹All the rich of the earth will feast and worship;
all who go down to the dust will kneel before him—those who cannot keep themselves alive.
- ³⁰Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord.
- ³¹They will proclaim his righteousness, declaring to a people yet unborn: He has done it!

Part 2: A Personal Song of Lament

After about 20 minutes or so, take the pipe cleaners you picked up as you left the group space and try to make some sort of representation of the pain you are feeling. You may choose to connect the stems at odd angles, or you may choose to join and then to break apart some part of the structure you are building—whatever will help you to begin to physically describe the pain you are feeling, either personally or on behalf of someone(s) else. Bring your creation with you when you return to the gathering space.

REFLECTION: INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION EXERCISE

KNOWING ONE ANOTHER: PART ONE

Intercession

GROUP EXERCISE: Q & A—INTERCESSION

STORYTELLING: UNPACKING MARK 2:1-12—*JESUS AND THE PARALYZED MAN*

Mark 2:1-12

¹A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. ²They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. ³Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. ⁴Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on. ⁵When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, “Son, your sins are forgiven.”

⁶Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, ⁷“Why does this fellow talk like that? He’s blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

⁸Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, “Why are you thinking these things? ⁹Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up, take your mat and walk’? ¹⁰But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” So he said to the man, ¹¹“I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.” ¹²He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this!”

Notes:

PERSONAL PRAYER PRACTICE: GUIDED GROUP INTERCESSION

As you pray together for others today, have in the forefront of your mind the words of Jesus in Matthew 6:10, “Thy will be done.” Part of our role as intercessors is to recognize the sovereignty of God, the wisdom of God and the will of God. Our prayers on behalf of others are necessary and important, and God promises to hear and answer those prayers. They are always to be offered, however, within the context of God’s overriding will for good and with a heartfelt submission to his purposes, trusting that those purposes are larger than any picture of the future we can envision on our own. Here is a brief list of suggestions as you go to prayer together:¹

- Be bold, but not presumptive.
- Go with the flow—of the Spirit, that is.
- Remember that you are talking to God with others, not talking to one another.
- As you pray, try in some way to find and to feel the pain of the person or the situation for whom you are praying. The focus of this time together is outward, but finding some space for inward connection is helpful.

Suggested Group Prayer Worksheet

Local Needs

1)

2)

¹Robert Longman, Jr. “Intercessory Prayer: Standing in the Gap.” *Spirituality and Faith Resources*, www.spirithome.com.

3)

National Needs

1)

2)

3)

Worldwide Needs

1)

2)

3)

REFLECTION: LARGE GROUP RESPONSE TO PRACTICE

KNOWING ONE ANOTHER: PART TWO

Communion

GROUP EXERCISE: WORD ASSOCIATION—COMMUNION

STORYTELLING: UNPACKING MARK 14:12-26 AND 1 CORINTHIANS 11:23-29—*The Last Supper*

The Last Supper

¹²On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb, Jesus' disciples asked him, "Where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover?"

¹³So he sent two of his disciples, telling them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him. ¹⁴Say to the owner of the house he enters, 'The Teacher asks: Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' ¹⁵He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there."

¹⁶The disciples left, went into the city and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.

¹⁷When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve. ¹⁸While they were reclining at the table eating, he said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me—one who is eating with me."

¹⁹They were saddened, and one by one they said to him, "Surely not I?"

²⁰"It is one of the Twelve," he replied, "one who dips bread into the bowl with me. ²¹The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born."

²²While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and

gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body."

²³Then he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it.

²⁴"This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them.

²⁵"Truly I tell you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

²⁶When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

1 Corinthians 11:23-29

²³For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, ²⁴and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." ²⁵In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." ²⁶For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

²⁷So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink of the cup. ²⁹For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves.

Notes:

1) What is Communion?

- A Sacrament
- Worship
- Remembrance
- Thanksgiving

- Obedience
- Community

PERSONAL PRAYER PRACTICE: A SUGGESTED SERVICE FOR COMMUNION

This service of communion may or may not be used by the facilitator of your prayer retreat. It is included here as a suggested devotional aide for your own personal reading and reflection. The bold print represents reading in unison.

Call to Communion

LEADER: It is now our sacred privilege to celebrate the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. All who humbly put their trust in Christ and desire his help that they may lead a holy life; all who are truly sorry for their sins and would be delivered from them; all who would walk in love with their neighbors and intend to live a new life, following the commandments of God and walking from now on in his holy ways, are invited to draw near with faith and to receive this holy sacrament.

Invitation to the Lord's Supper

LEADER: Friends, this is the joyful feast of the people of God! Many will come from east and west and from north and south and sit at the table in the kingdom of God. This is the Lord's Table. Our Savior invites those who trust him to share the feast he has prepared. According to Luke, when our risen Lord was at the table with his disciples, he took the bread, and blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognized him.

Confession of Sin

LEADER: Let us pray...

PEOPLE: Merciful and loving God, we confess that we have sinned against you in our thoughts, through our words and by our actions. Please forgive us LORD for we have not loved you with all our heart, soul and strength, nor have we loved our neighbor as ourselves. Help us O God not to give into temptations that pull us away from you and your will. Have mercy on us and help us turn way from sin, and to embrace your son Jesus. For we acknowledge that it is only through your son Jesus that we are able to walk in your ways, and fulfill your will. And it is only through Jesus that we are redeemed from sin and receive everlasting love, and grace. Amen

Words of Assurance

LEADER: If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. May Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. Amen.

Words of Institution

LEADER: Hear the words of our Lord Jesus Christ as they are delivered by the apostle Paul: “For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, ‘This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’ In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.’ For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.”

PEOPLE: His dying we proclaim; Alleluia! Amen!
His rising we declare. Alleluia! Amen!
His coming we await, now as these gifts we take.
Glory to God on high! Alleluia! Amen!

Together pray the Lord’s prayer.

ALL: Our Father who art in heaven, may your name be held holy.
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 sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

REFLECTION: TIME FOR THANKSGIVING AND CELEBRATION