



Themes for Prayer

Thirteen Themes for Praying with the Scriptures

Adapted from
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Prayer Theme 1: God loves me and cares for me.

Grace: Deep confidence and trust in God's care.

Luke 11:1-13

Lord, teach us to pray; how much more will God give the Holy Spirit to those who ask.

Luke 12:22-31

Lilies of the field; seek first the kingdom of God.

1 John 4:7-19

Love consists in this, not that we have loved God but that God has loved us.

Psalm 121

The Lord is your guardian, beside you at your right hand.

Supplementary readings

Psalm 23. The Lord is my shepherd.

Psalm 62. Trust in God alone.

Psalm 63:1-8. O God, you are my God whom I seek.

Psalm 91. You who dwell in the shelter of the Most High.

Psalm 131. O Lord, my heart is not proud; like a child at its mother's breast.

Psalm 145. Praise God for his greatness; you open your hand and satisfy every living things.

Deuteronomy 32:1-14. Song of Moses praising God for delivering Israel.

Isaiah 25:1-9. On this mountain the Lord will provide for all peoples.

Isaiah 41:8-16. Israel, I grasp your right hand.

John 14:16-28. I will not leave you orphaned; peace is my gift to you.

Romans 5:1-11. The love of God has been poured out into your hearts.

Romans 8:26-34. The Spirit helps us in our weakness.

Ephesians 3:14-21. May God strengthen you inwardly through the working of the Spirit; his power can do in us more than we can ask or imagine.

Prayer Theme 2: God creates me.

Grace: Deep wonder and awe at my personal existence.

Psalm 139:1-18

O Lord, you have searched me and know me.

Psalm 8

What are human beings that you are mindful of them?

Isaiah 45:9-12

Dare the clay say to its modeler, "What are you doing?"

Exodus 3:1-14

Moses bows down before the burning bush.

Supplementary readings

Psalm 104. Praise God the creator; I will sing to the Lord all my life.

Job 38 and 39. Where were you when I made the universe?

Jeremiah 18:1-10. The potter's vessel; rise and be off to the potter's house where I will give you my message.

Daniel 3:51-90. Canticle of praise.

Genesis 1:24-2:3. God created human beings in God's image.

Romans 9:19-21. Does not the potter have the right to make poor vessels and richer ones?

Job 1:21. Naked I came from my mother's womb, naked I shall return.

Prayer Theme 3: God comes to me in a relationship of love.

Grace: Amazement that God relates to me personally.

Isaiah 43:1-4

You are precious in my eyes.

Hosea 11:1-9

When Israel was a child.

Luke 22:14-20

Jesus gives the eucharist.

Romans 8:26-39

The Spirit helps us in our weakness.

Supplementary readings

Deuteronomy 1:29-33. The Lord goes before you and will fight for you.

Deuteronomy 7:7-9. Not because you are the largest of nations does God love you.

Isaiah 49:13-16. Can a mother forget her infant; your name is written on my palms.

Isaiah 54:5-10. For he who has become your husband is your maker.

John 3:16-17. For God so loved the world.

John 14:16-28. I will not leave you orphans; peace is my gift to you.

Ephesians 1:3-14. God's plan of salvation; in him we were chosen.

Deuteronomy 8:1-5. God's care as manifested in the Exodus; God disciplines you as a father his child.

Prayer Theme 4: All I have comes from God.

Grace: Deep-felt knowledge that all is gift.

James 1:17-18

Every worthwhile gift comes from above.

Job 1:21

Naked I came from my mother's womb.

1 Corinthians 4:7

Name something you have not received.

Ephesians 1:3-14

God's plan of salvation; in God we were chosen.

Supplementary readings

Deuteronomy 8:6-20. For the Lord is bringing you into a good land; do not forget where your prosperity comes from.

Luke 12:22-31. Which of you by worrying can add a moment to your life span?

Matthew 10:29-33. Every hair on your head has been numbered.

John 15:1-8. Apart from me you can do nothing.

Ephesians 2:1-10. It is due to God's favor that salvation is yours through faith; it is not your doing but is God's gift.

Philippians 2:13. It is God who creates in you any measure of desire or achievement.

Romans 9:19-21. Does not the potter have the right to make poorer vessels or richer vessels?

2 Corinthians 4:5-18. This treasure we possess in earthen vessels to make it clear that power comes from God.

1 Peter 2:9-10. You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a people God claims personally.

Job 38:1-40:5. Where were you when I made the universe?

Titus 3:3-8. God saved us not through any righteous deeds of our own.

Prayer Theme 5: God desires to forgive me.

Grace: Deep awareness of God's eagerness to forgive me.

Psalm 103

For as the heavens are high above the earth,
so surpassing is God's kindness.

Luke 15:11-32

Parable of the loving father.

Luke 5:12-14

Healing of the leper.

1 John 1:5-2:2

If we acknowledge our sins, God is faithful to
forgive our sins and cleanse us.

Supplementary readings

Psalm 130. Out of the depths I cry to God.

Psalm 107. God saves those in distress.

Psalm 116. Thanksgiving to God for help in
need.

Psalm 136. Thanksgiving for the everlasting
kindness of God.

Isaiah 55:1-13. All who are thirsty, come.

Ezekiel 16:1-22, 59-63. Allegory of the faithful
spouse.

Luke 15:1-10. Parables of the lost sheep and
the lost coin.

Luke 18:9-14. Parable of the Pharisee and the
tax collector.

John 10:7-18. I am the good shepherd.

Romans 5:12-21. Human sin through Adam;
grace and life through Jesus.

Romans 8:28-39. If God is for us, who can be
against us?

2 Corinthians 5:17-21. If anyone is in Christ,
there is a new creation; everything old is fin-
ished and gone, everything becomes new.

Revelation 7:9-17. Springs of life-giving water;
God will wipe away every tear.

Prayer Theme 6: Jesus desires to save me personally.

Grace: To appreciate more deeply that Jesus is my savior.

Luke 19:1-10
Story of Zacchaeus.

Luke 7:39-50
Sinful woman anoints the feet of Jesus.

Mark 5:21-43
Woman with a hemorrhage; daughter of Jairus.

John 13:1-9, 12-17
Jesus washes the feet of his disciples.

Supplementary readings

Luke 23:32-43. Three helpless people on the cross, one of whom is our savior.

John 8:3-11. Woman caught in adultery.

Acts 3:1-16. Cure of the cripple.

Romans 5:6-11. While we were helpless, Jesus died for us.

Romans 7:14-25. What happens is that I do not the good I want to do but the evil I do not intend.

Colossians 1:15-23. He is the image of the invisible God; you yourselves were once alienated from him.

Ephesians 2:1-10. God is rich in mercy and brought us to live in Christ; this is not your own doing.

Ephesians 2:12-22. You were without hope, but Christ broke down the barrier and now you are strangers no longer.

Galatians 4:3-7. God sent into our hearts the spirit of Christ; you are no longer a slave but a child of God.

Titus 2:11-14. God cleanses a people to be God's own.

Prayer Theme 7: God calls me in freedom and radically.

Grace: To appreciate the freedom necessary to respond to God's call.

Genesis 22:1-19
Abraham and Isaac.

Philippians 3:7-16
I count everything as loss except knowing Christ Jesus.

Luke 9:27-62
Let the dead bury the dead.

Mark 10:17-27
Call of the rich man.

Supplementary readings

Psalms 42. As a deer longs for running waters, so longs my soul for you.

Psalms 63:1-8. Ardent longing for God.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

Jeremiah 17:5-11. Cursed are those who seek their strength in the flesh; blessed are those who trust in the Lord.

Matthew 4:18-22. Call of the first disciples, who left all things.

Matthew 9:9-13. Call of Matthew, who left all things.

Matthew 13:44-46. Parables of the treasure and the pearl.

Matthew 25:14-29. Parable of the talents.

John 15:1-8, 16-17. The vine and the branches.

Ephesians 3:14-21. May Christ's love be the root and foundation of your life.

Hebrews 11:8-19. The faith of Abraham.

Prayer Theme 8: God calls me beyond everything.

***Grace:* To appreciate how Jesus' love sets me free to help in building up the kingdom.**

Luke 1:26-38

Let it be unto me according to your will.

Luke 5:1-11

The call of Peter and the first disciples.

John 3:22-30

He must increase; I must decrease.

Luke 18:18-34

The call of the rich man and the prediction of the passion.

Supplementary readings

Genesis 12:1-9. Call of Abraham.

Jeremiah 1:1-10. Call of Jeremiah.

Isaiah 6:1-10. Call of Isaiah.

John 1:35-51. Call of the first disciples.

Philippians 1:18-26. Indifference of Paul: it doesn't matter what I prefer – life or death – for it is all in Christ.

2 Corinthians 12:1-10. Called in spite of our weakness.

Ephesians 3:14-21. To him whose power at work in us can do more.

Prayer Theme 9: Following Jesus.

Grace: To ask for an intimate knowledge of Jesus, that I may love and follow him more closely.

Matthew 3:13-17

Jesus leaves home and is baptized.

Matthew 4:1-11

Jesus is tested in the wilderness.

Matthew 14:22-33

Jesus walks on the water.

Luke 18:15-43

Jesus and the children; Jesus calls the rich man; prediction of the passion; the disciples' misunderstanding; healing of the blind man.

Supplementary readings

Matthew 5:1-16. The beatitudes; your light must shine before others.

Matthew 8:18-27. The Son of man has nowhere to lay his head; Jesus calms the storm.

Matthew 15. Jesus and the Pharisees; inner cleanliness; Caananite woman; Jesus heals the suffering; Jesus feeds the multitude.

1 Corinthians 1:17-31. Wisdom and folly of the cross; let the person who would boast do so in the Lord.

Matthew 20:20-28. Can you drink the cup I am to drink?

Prayer Theme 10: I am called to help build a kingdom of justice.

Grace: To appreciate more deeply how I am being called today to be an instrument for justice in the world.

Luke 4:16-22

Jesus' inaugural sermon in Nazareth.

Matthew 25:31-46

The Last Judgment; whatever you do to the least of these, you do unto me.

Matthew 23:1-12

Jesus confronts the unjust structures of his day.

Luke 16:19-31

Parable of Lazarus and the rich man.

Supplementary readings

Leviticus 19:1-2, 11-18. You must not exploit or rob; you must love your neighbor as yourself.

Isaiah 1:10-26. What does God care about your sacrifices?; make justice and redress the wronged.

Isaiah 58. The religious observance that pleases God is to correct the injustices in society.

Isaiah 61. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me to proclaim justice.

Isaiah 65:17-25. A vision of a renewed world.

Psalms 34. When the afflicted called out, the Lord heard.

Matthew 14:13-21. Jesus feeds the 5,000.

Acts 4:32-36. Life of the early Christians, who held all things in common.

Acts 6:1-6. The apostles appoint assistants to help in the service of the poor and distressed.

Prayer Theme 11: I am called to take my part in the paschal mystery.

Grace: A growing desire to discover my part in the paschal mystery.

Luke 22:14-20
The Eucharist.

Luke 22:39-46
Agony in the garden.

Luke 23:32-49
Jesus dies on the cross.

Luke 24:13-35
Jesus appears to two disciples on the way to Emmaus.

Supplementary readings

Luke 9:23-27, 44-50, 57-62. Conditions of discipleship; prediction of the passion; apostolic requirements.

Matthew 10. Jesus calls the twelve and instructs them.

John 12:24-26. Unless a grain of wheat dies.

Acts 5:40-42. The apostles left, full of joy that they had been worthy to suffer.

1 Corinthians 1:17-31. The wisdom and folly of the cross.

2 Corinthians 4:5-18. Treasure in earthen vessels; we are afflicted but not crushed; our inner being is renewed each day.

Philippians 1:27–2:18. It is your privilege to suffer with him; your attitude must be that of Christ, who humbled himself.

1 Peter 4:12-19. Happy are you when you are insulted for the sake of Christ.

Romans 6:3-11. Through baptism we are incorporated into his death, so we might walk with him in his life.

Philippians 3:7-11. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection.

Prayer Theme 12: The body of Christ.

***Grace:* A deep appreciation of how we are integrated into the body of Christ and depend upon each other; a growing desire to serve Jesus in his members.**

Romans 12:3-21

Many members, one body; do not think more highly of yourself than you ought.

Luke 22:24-32

Who is the greatest?

John 13:1-17

Jesus washes the feet of his disciples.

John 21:15-23

Feed my lambs, my sheep; how does my plan for another disciple concern you?

Supplementary readings

Mark 6:30-44. Return of the disciples; feeding of the 5,000.

Luke 10. Mission of the seventy-two; the good Samaritan; Martha and Mary.

John 15:9-17. This is my commandment, that you love one another.

1 Corinthians 12, 13. The variety and unity of gifts; analogy of the body; a more excellent way.

2 Corinthians 1:3-7. If we are afflicted, it is for your consolation.

Colossians 1:24-29. In my own flesh I fill up what is lacking in the suffering of Christ.

Ephesians 4:1-16. There is one body, one Spirit; the diversity of functions.

Philippians 2:1-11. Look to the interests of others rather than to your own; your attitude must be that of Christ.

Acts 9:1-9. The vocation of Paul; Saul, why do you persecute me?

Prayer Theme 13: The Spirit works through me and the events of my life.

Grace: Deeper awareness of the presence and power of the Spirit in all aspects of my life.

John 14:15-20, 25-28

I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate; the Spirit will teach you everything.

Matthew 28:16-20

Ascension; I am with you, even to the end of the age.

Acts 2:1-13

The Day of Pentecost.

Acts 4:5-22

Peter and John speak in the power of Christ before the Sanhedrin.

Supplementary readings

John 7:37-39. Rivers of living water will flow from within.

Matthew 5:13-16. You are salt of the earth.

John 15:1-8. The vine and the branches.

Romans 8:1-27. Living according to the Spirit; a Spirit not of fear but of adoption; the Spirit prays in our weakness.

2 Corinthians 5. The love of Christ impels us; ministers of reconciliation, ambassadors for Christ.

2 Corinthians 12:1-10. My power is at work in weakness.

Ephesians 3:14-21. Inward strength through the Spirit.

Ephesians 4:17-32. You must no longer live as the Gentiles live; you must acquire a new way of life, a new way of thinking.

Philippians 3:7-21. I count all things as rubbish except knowing Christ and the power of his resurrection; pushing on to what lies ahead.

Philippians 4:4-13. Rejoice in the Lord always, in him who is the source of our strength in everything.

Galatians 5:13-25. The proper use of freedom; the fruit of the Spirit.

