
FIELD GUIDE FOR FAMILY PRAYER



FAMILY NAME HERE

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FOR
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Winfield and Kay Bevins



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*To our beautiful and special daughters,
Elizabeth, Anna Belle, and Caroline.
You make life around our family table delightful.*

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PREFACE

A great deal of life happens around the family table. In our household, the family table serves many purposes. For one, we learn around the table. We read history lessons aloud, work through math problems, and write paragraphs. We share daily meals and celebrate special occasions. Especially during the cold winter months we play board games, work puzzles, paint, and craft things with glue and construction paper. Our table has also many times been a place of hospitality where we have welcomed friends and family to gather. How grateful I am for all of this activity around our table and the fellowship that has taken place! I will tell you it is certainly worn and smeared with paint and glue, but I wouldn't have it any other way.

To me the family table represents something very stable, solid, predictable, and unchanging. I recall the kitchen table being one of the largest pieces of furniture to be carried in when we moved into our home a few years ago. It needed to be maneuvered in just the right way to fit into the door. Once in the door, there was really only one place suitable for the table: our kitchen. It fit just perfectly. Our table will not be one of those mobile pieces of furniture that we move

around at Christmastime to make room for the Christmas tree. It will most likely stay put. Over the years, the routines of activities like meals, conversation, prayer, and sharing God's Word together have become just as stable and solid as the table itself.

Most days, no matter what the day brings, there is dinner around the table. Depending upon the schedule of the day, one of our girls can usually be found chopping, stirring, mixing, or setting the table. Dinner is sometimes as simple as a grilled cheese sandwich, and the dinner hour in our home is certainly not the picture of perfection. However, the point is not perfection, but that we are together. We are preparing and sharing a meal and, therefore, creating an open space for fellowship with one another. This can be a very beautiful thing at the end of a busy day. Something as simple as dinner can bring so much comfort.

Honestly, our prayers around the table are usually pretty brief, mostly because those sitting around the table are sometimes grumpy and hungry. Really, it's true! Most of the prayer that we do together as a family actually takes place at bedtime. The entire family, including our sweet dog, piles up on someone's bed and we pray before we all get tucked in for the night. This is just naturally how it happens. It works for us. We have a particular prayer that we lift up together, which the girls now have memorized. It's an articulate little prayer containing the words "vesper light"; it's so lovely. There is something so beautiful about saying those words together in harmony to God. After we say our prayer we remember those in need, our family near and far, and any

other needs of which we have become aware. Within this routine somewhere Dad will usually read Scripture to us. This routine usually brings much peace and calm and it is very much depended upon by all of us.

Some days can be overwhelming and crazy. I believe it brings a bit of stability and grounding to our family if we have something within our lives that we can depend on, something solid and unchanging. This is, of course, not just something that we create within our homes. God's steadfast love is a gift to us. His promises are true. We have the opportunity each day to present God's promises to our families through prayer, Scripture, and just being together. In our ever-changing world, may God give us the wisdom, strength, courage, and patience to present His never-ending, never-changing love to our families. Gathering around the family table is a lovely place to start.

—Kay Bevins

INTRODUCTION

Never underestimate the formative power of the family supper table.

—JAMES K. A. SMITH

There are hundreds of rituals that we perform every day in our homes. Whether we realize it or not, we are creatures of habit. We all have rhythms, routines, and rituals that make up our daily lives. Most of us wake up in the morning, drink a cup of coffee, and brush our teeth. Or maybe we start the day off with a simple prayer and Bible reading. Routines and rituals are not a bad thing. They keep us on track and remind us of what matters most. In a spiritual sense, I believe that we need to have rhythms and routines to grow in our daily walk with Christ.

The truth is, your home is a domestic church, which is a term the early church used to describe the connection between the church and the family and our daily rituals. The home can be a place of Christian worship, learning, and discipleship when we bring the components of a worship service, which include reading the Bible, praying, and singing, into our homes through family liturgy.

The ordinary places that we inhabit most such as the family table, the living room, or even the car can become places of prayer and worship. Through simple daily activities like sharing meals with one another, our homes become sacred places of hospitality and thanksgiving that echo the very sacrament of the Lord's Table as we gather together to break bread, share stories, and give thanks. Something as ordinary as a bowl of soup or a grilled cheese sandwich can become a sacrament if it is made and received with love. How beautiful would it be if we offered up the ordinary times of the day and the spaces of our homes for the glory of God.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

Field Guide for Family Prayer is a field guide that offers prayers for everyday, ordinary families. We have written this for families as a simple guide containing tools for prayer and encouragement to find moments throughout the day to pray together as a family. These prayers have been used in our home, around our family table, in our living room, and in the evenings in our children's rooms as we gather together.

While some of these prayers are our own, many have been adapted from several different sources, especially the *Book of Common Prayer*. Some are very old, while others are new. *Field Guide for Family Prayer* is written to be a helpful guide for families that are looking for ways to integrate their faith in the home by praying with their children. You can use these

prayers at your own pace and adapt them to best suit your family and the age of your children.

As you begin, we encourage you to make time and set aside places for prayer in your routine. Search for moments throughout the day that fit into your family rhythms. Consistency is key, as it will become part of your day that your family will look forward to. Make space in your home for prayer. Gather around the table, share a meal, and make time for each other. Whether it be around the dinner table, in the living room, or in your children's rooms at bedtime, may your home become a house of prayer.

1

TABLE BLESSINGS

After he said this, he took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all. Then he broke it and began to eat.

—ACTS 27:35

So much of life happens when sharing a common meal around our dinner tables. Most of us eat three meals a day. That's about 1,095 meals each person has over the span of a year. Wow, that's a lot of meals! Therefore, we shouldn't be surprised to find that the Bible places a table at the center of the spiritual lives of God's people.

In the Old Testament we see the table of Passover; in the New Testament we find the table of Communion. Jesus Christ often used the context of sharing a meal to minister to people and to teach others important lessons about the kingdom of God. The Gospels show us that Jesus loved meals. In the book of Luke alone, there are ten stories of Jesus dining with various people. Each Gospel ends with Jesus breaking bread and sharing the Last Supper with His disciples (see Matthew 26:17–30; Mark 14:12–26; Luke 22:7–39; and John 13:1–17:26). Luke even records Jesus making a meal for His disciples after His resurrection (see Luke 24:42–43).

Table blessings find their origin in the ancient Jewish practice of saying a blessing before the beginning of a meal. The practice reminds us that we should give thanks to God who is the giver of everything. Often called “saying grace,” it is customary for Christians to say a short prayer or thankful phrase before or after a meal. Throughout the centuries, Christians have continued the practice of blessing their meals at dinner tables around the world. Table blessings help bring families, friends, and communities together in gratitude and thanksgiving to God, thus making a profound connection with God and one another.

Here is a collection of traditional and contemporary table blessings that can be used for meals throughout the day. Some of them are very old, while others are new. There are even a few shorter ones for on-the-go meals for busy families.

CONTEMPORARY BLESSINGS

For food and health and happy days
receive our gratitude and praise. *Amen.*

Thank You, God, for this food.

For rest and home.

And all things good.

For wind and rain and sun above.

But, most of all, those we love. *Amen.*

For food in a world where many walk in hunger;

For faith in a world where many walk in fear;

For friends in a world where many walk alone;
We give You thanks, O Lord. *Amen.*

Thank You for the food we eat,
Thank You for the world so sweet,
Thank You for the birds that sing,
Thank You, God, for everything. *Amen.*

God is great, God is good.
Let us thank Him for our food.
By His hands, we are fed.
Let us thank Him for our bread. *Amen.*

For this and all we are about to receive,
make us truly grateful, Lord.
Through Christ we pray. *Amen.*

For food that stays our hunger,
For rest that brings us ease,
For homes where memories linger,
We give our thanks for these. *Amen.*

For good food and
those who prepare it,
for good friends with whom to share it,
we thank You, Lord. *Amen.*

Lord, thank You for the food before us,
the family and friends beside us,
and the love between us. *Amen.*

TRADITIONAL BLESSINGS

Bless, O Lord, this food to our use
and us to Thy service, and
keep us ever mindful of the needs of others.
In Jesus' name. *Amen.*

Be present at our table, Lord.
Be here and everywhere adored.
Thy people bless, and grant that we
may feast in paradise with Thee. *Amen.*
—John Wesley

Come, Lord Jesus, our guest to be
And bless these gifts
Bestowed by Thee.
And bless our loved ones everywhere,
And keep them in Your loving care. *Amen.*

Great God, our gratitude we bring,
Accept our humble offering,
For all the gifts on us bestowed,
Thy name be evermore adored. *Amen.*

Lord, bless this food and grant that we
May thankful for Thy mercies be.
Teach us to know by whom we're fed;
Bless us with Christ, the living bread. *Amen.*

We thank You, God, for this our food,
for life and health and every good.
Let manna to our souls be given
the bread of life sent down from heaven. *Amen.*

We thank You, Lord, for all you give;
the food we eat, the lives we live;
and to our loved ones far away,
please send your blessings, Lord, we pray. *Amen.*

Bless us, oh Lord, and these Thy gifts
which we are about to receive
from Thy bounty through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

2

MORNING AND EVENING PRAYER

Read and pray daily. It is for your life. There is no other way.

—JOHN WESLEY

Over the centuries, Christians have followed unique corporate rhythms of morning and evening prayer. This practice originated from the Jewish practice of daily prayer in the Old Testament. As time went on, the Jewish people began to pray and sing Torah readings, psalms, and hymns at fixed hours of the day. By the time of the Roman Empire, Christians began to order their prayer life around these times of the day.

By the second and third centuries, early church fathers such as Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and Origen wrote of the practice of the Daily Office. The prayers were prayed both individually and in group settings, as in monasteries. Monasteries followed the fixed hours of prayer individually and corporately. As the monasteries continued to grow and spread throughout the ancient Near East and into Europe, the monks took the practice with them.

The most influential monastic rule was established by St. Benedict of Nursia in the sixth century for the community of monks at Monte Cassino. Saint Benedict established a “little rule for beginners” that brought together a balance of work and prayer. Pope Gregory the Great learned of Benedict’s simple rule of prayer and adopted it for the larger Roman church. These hours of prayer continued through the Middle Ages and into the Reformation. Thomas Cranmer condensed the Daily Office into Morning and Evening Prayer, which many Christians still observe today.

Today, many families find that praying the morning and evening prayer helps add a sense of regularity and balance to their prayer life. Morning and evening prayers can help center you in the morning before you begin your busy day and calm you as you prepare for the hours of the night.

MORNING PRAYER

Moment of Silence

Begin with a moment of silence to be still and aware of God’s presence, then open with the following prayer.

Opening Prayer

Dear Lord, You have brought us in safety to this new day;
grant us patience to do what we need to do today;
let our confidence not rest in our own understanding but in

Your guiding hand;
let our desires not be for our own comfort,
but for the joy of Your kingdom now and forever. Amen.

Opening Verses

Read one of the following scriptures to prepare your heart for morning prayer.

- SUN** I rejoiced with those who said to me, “Let us go to the house of the LORD.” (Ps. 122:1)
- MON** May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer. (Ps. 19:14)
- TUE** Send me your light and your faithful care, let them lead me; let them bring me to your holy mountain, to the place where you dwell. (Ps. 43:3)
- WED** The LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him. (Hab. 2:20)
- THU** Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. (John 4:23)
- FRI** For this is what the high and exalted One says—he who lives forever, whose name is holy: “I live in a high and holy place, but also with the one who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.” (Isa. 57:15)

SAT Give praise to the LORD, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done. (Ps. 105:1)

The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9–13)

Our Father 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.
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.
For Thine is the kingdom,
and the power
and the glory forever. *Amen.*

Pray for Special Needs

Take some time to pray for the needs of your family, friends, neighbors, local community, nation, and the world. Let the Spirit lead you and guide you as you pray.

The Reading

At this time, you may read one or more additional scriptures from the Old Testament, Psalms, New Testament, or the Gospels.

Closing Prayer

Close with the following prayer.

Heavenly Father, in You we live and move and have our
being:
We humbly pray You so to guide and govern us by Your
Holy Spirit,
that in all the cares and occupations of our life we may not
forget You,
but may remember that we are ever walking in Your sight;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

EVENING PRAYER

Moment of Silence

Begin with a moment of silence to be still and aware of God's presence, then open with the following prayer.

Opening Prayer

O gracious light, pure brightness of the ever-living Father
in heaven,
O Jesus Christ, holy and blessed!
Now as we come to the setting of the sun,
and our eyes behold the vesper light, we sing Your praises,
O God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
You are worthy at all times to be praised by happy voices,
O Son of God, O Giver of Life,
and to be glorified through all the worlds.

Opening Verses

Read one of the following scriptures to prepare your heart for evening prayer.

- SUN** May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice. (Ps. 141:2)
- MON** Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (Phil. 1:2)
- TUE** Worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness; tremble before him, all the earth. (Ps. 96:9)
- WED** The day is yours, and yours also the night; you established the sun and moon. It was you who set all the boundaries of the earth; you made both summer and winter. (Ps. 74:16–17)
- THU** I will praise the LORD, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me. I keep my eyes always on the LORD. With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken. (Ps. 16:7–8)
- FRI** He who made the Pleiades and Orion, who turns midnight into dawn and darkens day into night, who calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out over the face of the land—the LORD is his name. (Amos 5:8)

SAT If I say, “Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,” even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you. (Ps. 139:11–12)

The Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6:9–13)

Our Father 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.
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.
For Thine is the kingdom,
and the power
and the glory forever. Amen.

Pray for Special Needs

Take some time to pray for the needs of your family, friends, neighbors, local community, nation, and the world. Let the Spirit lead you and guide you as you pray.

The Reading

At this time, you may read one or more additional scriptures from the Old Testament, Psalms, New Testament, or the Gospels.

Closing Prayer

Close with the following prayer.

Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch,
or weep this night, and give Your angels charge over those
who sleep.

Tend the sick, Lord Christ;
give rest to the weary, bless the dying,
soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous;
and all for Your love's sake. *Amen.*

3

PRAYERS FOR SPECIFIC OCCASIONS

*To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible
than to be alive without breathing.*

—MARTIN LUTHER

There are times when we simply don't have the words to express ourselves in prayer. When we don't know how to pray or when we need encouragement to pray, we look to the church. The prayers of fellow Christians can inspire and encourage us whenever we find ourselves at a loss for words or when our desire to pray is not there. Many prayers and thanksgivings have been recorded and passed down since the days of the Bible to be used by others for mutual encouragement.

There is a great tradition of written prayers that goes back to Moses, David, Jesus, and Paul. The Psalms, in particular, have been the prayer book of God's people for thousands of years. One such prayer is found in Psalm 39:4: "Show me,

LORD, my life's end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting my life is." These prayers are literary masterpieces that are bold, daring, poetic, and rich in meaning.

The great prayer tradition did not stop in the Bible. Throughout the ages, Christians have continued to write down prayers to be used at different times and for different occasions. When we open the treasure chest of church history, we find that it is full of wonderful, awe-inspiring prayers that have been recorded and passed on to inspire future generations. The prayers of great men and women have laid the foundation for the devotional language of Western civilization. Written prayers can help us recover the power and meaning of the spoken word in our daily prayer lives.

The hope is that this collection of prayers will both enrich and deepen your family's prayer life. Some prayers are more for children, while the majority of them are timeless and will be relevant for adults and youth alike. In the following pages, you will find a prayer for just about any need.

You will find your entire family falling in love with these beautiful prayers and returning to them again and again throughout the days of the week.

PRAYERS FOR CHILDREN

Prayer for Morning

Now, before I run to play,

Let me not forget to pray.

To God who kept me through the night,

And waked me with the morning light.
Help me, Lord, to love You more,
Than I ever loved before.
In my work and in my play,
Be with me through the day. *Amen.*

God, Hear My Prayer

God in heaven, hear my prayer, keep me in Your loving care.
Be my guide in all I do, bless all those who love me too. *Amen.*

Happy Hearts

We thank Thee, Lord, for happy hearts, for rain and sunny
weather.
We thank Thee, Lord, for this our food, and that we are
together. *Amen.*

Bedtime Prayer

Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep.
May God guard me through the night and wake me with the
morning light. *Amen.*

Before School

Our Father in heaven, would You be with our children today
as they learn? We ask that You extend your sovereign hand
of love, guidance, and protection to our children wherever
they may go today and whatever the task before them may
be. Grant them courage and wisdom when it is needed. May

they learn and grow to fulfill the purposes that You have planned for them. *Amen.*

A Child's Grace

God is great and God is good, and we thank God for
our food;

By God's hand we must be fed,

Give us, Lord, our daily bread. *Amen.*

For a Pet

Dear Lord, thank You for the blessing of _____ (pet's name). We look forward to all of the memorable moments that are ahead. We recognize this new responsibility and we pray that we can tend to our new friend with great care. May he/she be kept in health and may our time together be filled with much companionship, joy, and love for many years to come. It's in Your name, we pray. *Amen.*

PRAYERS FOR VARIOUS OCCASIONS

Birthday

Dear Lord, we thank You for _____ (name) and we celebrate the gift of his/her life today. As he/she begins another year, we ask that you would continue to guide him/her in Your Word and help him/her trust in Your goodness and grace. Bless him/her with every blessing. In Jesus' name, we pray. *Amen.*

Home Blessing

Heavenly Father, we pray that You would bless this house. Bless the feet that walk here, bless the hearts of those who lie down to sleep here. Would everyone who comes through the door of this home feel Your love and Your goodness. May this place be filled with joy, peace, and love, and may every need within this home be provided for. All this we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The Care of Children

Almighty God, heavenly Father, You have blessed us with the joy and care of children. Give us calm strength and patient wisdom as we bring them up, that we may teach them to love whatever is just and true and good, following the example of our Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

The Gift of a Child

Heavenly Father, You sent Your own Son into this world. We thank You for the life of this child, entrusted to our care. Help us to remember that we are all Your children, and so to love and nurture her/him, that she/he may attain to that full stature intended for her/him in Your eternal kingdom, for the sake of Your dear Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For Young Persons

God our Father, You see Your children growing up in an unsteady and confusing world. Show them that Your ways give more life than the ways of the world, and that following You is better than chasing after selfish goals. Help them to

take failure, not as a measure of their worth, but as a chance for a new start. Give them strength to hold their faith in You, and to keep alive their joy in Your creation, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Graduation Prayer

Almighty God, today we celebrate the accomplishments of our graduate _____ (name). He/she has worked very diligently, and we thank You for Your provision, wisdom, and guidance for him/her along the way. May he/she continue to walk in Your will in the days ahead. Please bless his/her life with faith, hope, and love, and please help him/her to use his/her gifts wisely, all for Your glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Travel

O God, our heavenly Father, whose glory fills the whole creation, and whose presence we find wherever we go, preserve us as we travel; surround us with Your loving care; protect us from every danger; and bring us in safety to our journey's end, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Baptism

Heavenly Father, we thank You that by water and the Holy Spirit You have bestowed upon _____ (name) the forgiveness of sin, and have raised him/her to the new life of grace. Sustain him/her, O Lord, in your Holy Spirit. Give him/her the courage and will to persevere, a spirit to know

and to love You, and the gift of joy and wonder in all Your works. *Amen.*

Confirmation

Almighty and ever-living God, let Your fatherly hand ever be over Your servant, _____ (name); let Your Holy Spirit ever be with him/her; and so lead him/her in the knowledge and obedience of Your Word, that they may serve You in this life and dwell with You in the life to come, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Priestly Blessing

May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make His face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you. May the Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace (see Numbers 6:24–26). *Amen.*

For Those Who Mourn

O God, who brought us to birth, and in whose arms we die, in our grief and shock contain and comfort us; embrace us with Your love, give us hope in our confusion and grace to let go into new life, through Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

Joy in God's Creation

O heavenly Father, who has filled the world with beauty, open our eyes to behold Your gracious hand in all Your works; that, rejoicing in Your whole creation, we may learn to serve You with gladness for the sake of Him through whom all things were made, Your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Peace among the Nations

Almighty God our heavenly Father, guide the nations of the world into the way of justice and truth, and establish among them that peace which is the fruit of righteousness, that they may become the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

Agriculture

Almighty God, we thank You for making the earth fruitful so that it might produce what is needed for life. Bless those who work in the fields, give us seasonable weather, and grant that we may all share the fruits of the earth, rejoicing in Your goodness through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For the Poor and the Neglected

Almighty and most merciful God, we remember before You all poor and neglected persons whom it would be easy for us to forget: the homeless and the destitute, the old and the sick, and all who have none to care for them. Help us to heal those who are broken in body or spirit, and to turn their sorrow into joy. Grant this, Father, for the love of Your Son, who for our sake became poor, Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For Those We Love

Almighty God, we entrust all who are dear to us to Your never-failing care and love, for this life and the life to come, knowing that You are doing for them better things than we can desire or pray for, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For Guidance

Direct us, O Lord, in all our doings with Your most gracious favor, and further us with Your continual help; that in all our works begun, continued, and ended in You, we may glorify Your holy name. And finally, by Your mercy, obtain everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For Purity

Almighty God, to You all hearts are open, all desires known, and from You no secrets are hidden. Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love You and worthily magnify Your holy name, through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For God's Healing

O God, the source of all health, so fill my heart with faith in Your love that with calm expectancy I may make room for Your power to possess me and gracefully accept Your healing, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer for Leisure and Rest

O God, in the course of this busy life, give us times of refreshment and peace; and grant that we may so use our leisure to rebuild our bodies and renew our minds, that our spirits may be opened to the goodness of Your creation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

TRADITIONAL PRAYERS

Old Celtic Prayer

Deep peace of the running wave to you,
Deep peace of the flowing air to you,
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you,
Deep peace of the shining stars to you,
Deep peace of the Son of Peace to you, forever. *Amen.*

A Prayer of Self-Dedication

Almighty and eternal God, so draw our hearts to You, so guide our minds, so fill our imaginations, so control our wills, that we may be wholly Yours, utterly dedicated unto You. And then use us, we pray, as You will, and always to Your glory and the welfare of Your people, through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

A Prayer Attributed to St. Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy. O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. *Amen.*

John Wesley's Covenant Prayer

Lord, I am no longer my own, but Yours. Put me to what You will, rank me with whom You will. Put me to doing, put me to suffering. Let me be employed for You or laid aside for You, exalted for You or brought low for You. Let me be full, let me be empty. Let me have all things, let me have nothing. I freely and heartily yield all things to Your pleasure and disposal. And now, O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, You are mine, and I am Yours. So be it. And the covenant which I have made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. *Amen.*

4

FAMILY LITANIES

Words have the power to make things happen.

—FREDERICK BUECHNER

One of the best ways to learn is by repetition, saying words and phrases over and over, and children learn best by establishing these kinds of routines. Litanies form our faith through prayers that are repeated again and again. The repetitive nature of litanies allows the words and prayers to sink deep into hearts and minds. Week after week, day after day, the words become a part of the very fabric of their lives.

A litany is a form of responsive prayer that has its origins in the Hebrew Scriptures and comes from the Latin word that means “supplication.” They have traditionally been used in churches throughout the centuries, but can also be a helpful way to facilitate family prayer in the home. Usually there is an appointed leader who reads the first line and then everyone else responds with saying the italicized line together.

Using litanies can be a wonderful way for everyone, young and old, to participate in family prayer. Litany ensures that each person has the opportunity to participate in our

times of prayers, and it keeps us from being passive spectators who simply observe and consume knowledge. The rhythm of a litany invites us to join in the story of God and, perhaps surprisingly, prevents our worship and prayer from becoming static or growing stale.

The following litanies can be used to involve every member of your family in times of communal prayer.

LITANY 1

For the peace from above, for the loving-kindness of God,
and for the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the world, for the welfare of the
Holy Church
of God, and for the unity of all peoples, let us pray to
the Lord.
Lord, have mercy.

For our president, for the leaders of the nations,
and for all in authority, let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, have mercy.

For this city [town, village], for every city and community,
and for those who live in them, let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, have mercy.

For seasonable weather, and for an abundance of the fruits
of the earth, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the good earth, which God has given us,
and for the wisdom and will to conserve it, let us pray to
the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For those who travel on land, on water,
or in the air [or through outer space], let us pray to
the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the aged and infirm, for the widowed and orphans,
and for the sick and the suffering, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the poor and the oppressed, for the unemployed and the
destitute,
for prisoners and captives, and for all who remember and
care for them, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Defend us, deliver us, and in Thy compassion protect us,
O Lord, by Thy grace.

Lord, have mercy.

LITANY 2

Dear Lord Jesus, bless our family as we pray in Your name.
Lord, hear our prayer.

Guide the people of this land, and of all the nations, in
the ways of justice and peace; that we may honor one
another and serve the common good.
Lord, hear our prayer.

Give us all a reverence for the earth as Your own creation,
that we may use its resources rightly in the service of
others and to Your honor and glory.
Lord, hear our prayer.

Bless all whose lives are closely linked with ours, and grant
that we may serve Christ in them, and love one another
as He loves us.
Lord, hear our prayer.

Comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind, or
spirit; give them courage and hope in their troubles, and
bring them the joy of Your salvation.
Lord, hear our prayer.

LITANY 3

In peace, we pray to You, Lord God.
For all people in their daily life and work;
For our families, friends, and neighbors, and for those who
are alone.
Lord, hear our prayer.

For this community, the nation, and the world;
For all who work for justice, freedom, and peace.
Lord, hear our prayer.

For the just and proper use of Your creation;
For the victims of hunger, fear, injustice, and oppression.
Lord, hear our prayer.

For all who are in danger, sorrow, or any kind of trouble;
For those who minister to the sick, the friendless, and the
needy.
Lord, hear our prayer.

For the peace and unity of the church of God;
For all who proclaim the gospel, and all who seek the truth.
Lord, hear our prayer.

We thank You, Lord, for all the blessings of this life.
And praise Your name forever and ever.
Lord, hear our prayer.

A LITANY OF THANKSGIVING

Let us give thanks to God our Father for all His gifts so
freely bestowed upon us.

For the beauty and wonder of Your creation, in earth and
sky and sea.

We thank You, Lord.

For all that is gracious in the lives of men and women,
revealing the image of Christ,

We thank You, Lord.

For our daily food and drink, our homes and families, and
our friends,

We thank You, Lord.

For minds to think, and hearts to love, and hands to serve,
We thank You, Lord.

For health and strength to work, and leisure to rest
and play,

We thank You, Lord.

For the brave and courageous, who are patient in suffering
and faithful in adversity,

We thank You, Lord.

For all valiant seekers after truth, liberty, and justice,

We thank You, Lord.

Above all, we give You thanks for the great mercies and promises given to us in Christ Jesus our Lord; *to Him be praise and glory, with You, O Father, and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.*



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