

HOPE UMC SUMMER OF PRAYER 2017

WEEK #2

Supplies You May Want to Use

- ❖ Bible
- ❖ Prayer candle and lighter
- ❖ Pen, pencils, art supplies
- ❖ Journal or computer on which to write
- ❖ Reading glasses
- ❖ Church and friend/family directory
- ❖ Comfortable pillow or chair

You are invited to take part in this 6-week prayer event as individuals, as a family, as part of a faith group. Where and when you pray is up to you. You are encouraged, as part of the Hope faith community, to include the Hope prayer in your daily activities. This prayer is from the Hope for the Future Campaign, with some slight alterations:

HOPE PRAYER

Gracious God, we are blessed and we are grateful... and still we need. We come to you seeking guidance and wisdom as we go forward with our faith community, Hope. Give us the insight to understand your desires for us. Give us the faith to trust your will. Give us the realization that it is our responsibility to do our part to make this work and worship pleasing to you. Give us hope for the future. With confidence in your love and gratitude in our hearts, we pray in Jesus name. Amen!

PRAYER EACH DAY

Each day on this journey you will find a scripture and a prayer. Here is an example of arranging this prayer time:

- Begin your time by going to a place you have designated for prayer and get comfortable
- Light a candle to welcome Jesus into your prayer time.
- Take some deep breaths and become fully present in this time with God.
- Read the scripture for the day through slowly – what words or lines speak to you? Read the scripture again and then underline or write down in your journal those words that speak to you. Read another Bible interpretation if you would like to understand more.
- Read the insights for the day, then prepare yourself for prayer.
- Begin your prayer time with the daily prayer given. Then, if you feel you want to continue with your prayer, you can pray for your family, friends, yourself, your faith community – prayers of thanksgiving, of concerns. **BE SURE TO LEAVE A TIME OF SILENCE SO YOU CAN HEAR GOD TALKING AS WELL!**
- When you are finished, take a deep breath and give thanks for this day in your life.

Week 2: Monday – Set Free by the Spirit

Scripture: Romans 8:1-17

So now there isn't any condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ² The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death. ³ God has done what was impossible for the Law, since it was weak because of selfishness. God condemned sin in the body by sending his own Son to deal with sin in the same body as humans, who are controlled by sin. ⁴ He did this so that the righteous requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us. Now the way we live is based on the Spirit, not based on selfishness. ⁵ People whose lives are based on selfishness think about selfish things, but people whose lives are based on the Spirit think about things that are related to the Spirit. ⁶ The attitude that comes from selfishness leads to death, but the attitude that comes from the Spirit leads to life and peace. ⁷ So the attitude that comes from selfishness is hostile to God. It doesn't submit to God's Law, because it can't. ⁸ People who are self-centered aren't able to please God.

⁹ But you aren't self-centered. Instead you are in the Spirit, if in fact God's Spirit lives in you. If anyone doesn't have the Spirit of Christ, they don't belong to him. ¹⁰ If Christ is in you, the Spirit is your life because of God's righteousness, but the body is dead because of sin. ¹¹ If the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you, the one who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your human bodies also, through his Spirit that lives in you.

¹² So then, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation, but it isn't an obligation to ourselves to live our lives on the basis of selfishness. ¹³ If you live on the basis of selfishness, you are going to die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the actions of the body, you will live. ¹⁴ All who are led by God's Spirit are God's sons and daughters. ¹⁵ You didn't receive a spirit of slavery to lead you back again into fear, but you received a Spirit that shows you are adopted as his children. With this Spirit, we cry, "Abba, Father." ¹⁶ The same Spirit agrees with our spirit, that we are God's children. ¹⁷ But if we are children, we are also heirs. We are God's heirs and fellow heirs with Christ, if we really suffer with him so that we can also be glorified with him.

We are called to life in Christ and the Holy Spirit is here to help us live that out. We are only human and at times self-centered, but Paul tells us that living in selfishness leads to dying and living as God's children, heirs with Christ, we will live always with him. There will be suffering and sadness but the Spirit lives within us to help us away from fear and into life eternal with God.

Prayer

God, you are our parent who adopted us to keep us from death and into eternal life. Jesus told us to call you our parent because you love us so unconditionally. Thank you for sending the Holy Spirit to guide me and to turn me away from fear so I can live as Jesus calls me to live. Help me to feel the Spirit's presence and to continue to work for peace and justice in Your name. Amen.

Week 2: Tuesday – What In a Name?

Scripture: Matthew 1:1-17

A record of the ancestors of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham:

² *Abraham was the father of Isaac. Isaac was the father of Jacob.*

Jacob was the father of Judah and his brothers. ³ Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar. Perez was the father of Hezron. Hezron was the father of Aram.

⁴ *Aram was the father of Amminadab. Amminadab was the father of Nahshon.*

Nahshon was the father of Salmon. ⁵ Salmon was the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab. Boaz was the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth. Obed was the father of Jesse.

⁶ *Jesse was the father of David the king. David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had*

been the wife of Uriah. ⁷ Solomon was the father of Rehoboam. Rehoboam was the father of

Abijah. Abijah was the father of Asaph. ⁸ Asaph was the father of Jehoshaphat. Jehoshaphat

was the father of Joram. Joram was the father of Uzziah. ⁹ Uzziah was the father of Jotham.

Jotham was the father of Ahaz. Ahaz was the father of Hezekiah. ¹⁰ Hezekiah was the father of

Manasseh. Manasseh was the father of Amos. Amos was the father of Josiah. ¹¹ Josiah was the father of Jechoniah and his brothers.

This was at the time of the exile to Babylon. ¹² After the exile to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel. Shealtiel was the father of Zerubbabel. ¹³ Zerubbabel was the father of Abiud.

Abiud was the father of Eliakim. Eliakim was the father of Azor. ¹⁴ Azor was the father of Zadok.

Zadok was the father of Achim. Achim was the father of Eliud. ¹⁵ Eliud was the father of Eleazar.

Eleazar was the father of Matthan. Matthan was the father of Jacob. ¹⁶ Jacob was the father of

Joseph, the husband of Mary—of whom Jesus was born, who is called the Christ.

¹⁷ *So there were fourteen generations from Abraham to David, fourteen generations from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen generations from the exile to Babylon to the Christ.*

Whew! It makes me tired just reading all of those names and thinking about how to pronounce them! Isn't that boring? It might be until you realize that each of those names represents a person – someone who lived, laughed, felt joy and sadness, anger, forgiveness and love. This list is a summation of 42 generations of people including their relationships with others and their relationships to God.

And at the end? How they are all related to Jesus! They are all related through blood and also through faith. What about the names of those in your family? In your faith family? Your friends?

Close your eyes and breathe deeply. Feel Jesus, with his 42 generations surrounding you and being a part of you. When you feel comfortable with this, think about your own family members, your friends, your faith family. How are your relationships? How would you tie them all to your relationship with God? End by praying for all of them share God's peace and love.

Prayer

Jesus, you came from 42 generations. You came from Israel and you are now with me, and with all the people whose names I have named. I ask you to hold us tightly to you and save us. Help us to know that a name is a person and that we all come together in you. Help us all to move into a closer relationship with you. Amen.

Week 2: Wednesday – Reaching Out to Jesus

Scripture: Mark 5:24-34

A swarm of people were following Jesus, crowding in on him.²⁵ A woman was there who had been bleeding for twelve years.²⁶ She had suffered a lot under the care of many doctors, and had spent everything she had without getting any better. In fact, she had gotten worse.²⁷ Because she had heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his clothes.²⁸ She was thinking, If I can just touch his clothes, I'll be healed.²⁹ Her bleeding stopped immediately, and she sensed in her body that her illness had been healed.³⁰ At that very moment, Jesus recognized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and said, "Who touched my clothes?"³¹ His disciples said to him, "Don't you see the crowd pressing against you? Yet you ask, 'Who touched me?'"³² But Jesus looked around carefully to see who had done it.³³ The woman, full of fear and trembling, came forward. Knowing what had happened to her, she fell down in front of Jesus and told him the whole truth.³⁴ He responded, "Daughter, your faith has healed you; go in peace, healed from your disease."

Like the woman in this story, we all have places in our lives that our bleeding. What are your places? Are you lonely? Angry? Physically ill? Stressed out? Tired? Discouraged? Have you judged someone unfairly? Do you have relationships that need mending?

Read the story through again. What things in you do you need healed by God? If you are ready to do so, offer whatever is in need of healing to God. Reach out to touch Jesus and ask for his healing and his help.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, I offer you myself as I ask you to help heal in me what needs to be healed. Let me reach you and feel your loving grace. Thank you for your healing presence in my life. Amen.

Week 2: Thursday – For the Beauty of the Earth

Scripture: Genesis 1:26-2:3

²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make humanity in our image to resemble us so that they may take charge of the fish of the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the earth, and all the crawling things on earth.”²⁷ God created humanity in God’s own image, in the divine image God created them, male and female God created them.

²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, “Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and master it. Take charge of the fish of the sea, the birds in the sky, and everything crawling on the ground.”

²⁹ Then God said, “I now give to you all the plants on the earth that yield seeds and all the trees whose fruit produces its seeds within it. These will be your food.”³⁰ To all wildlife, to all the birds in the sky, and to everything crawling on the ground—to everything that breathes—I give all the green grasses for food.” And that’s what happened.³¹ God saw everything he had made: it was supremely good. There was evening and there was morning: the sixth day.

² The heavens and the earth and all who live in them were completed. ² On the sixth^l day God completed all the work that he had done, and on the seventh day God rested from all the work that he had done. ³ God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all the work of creation.”

Let’s take a prayer walk!! We know God loves creation. God made us, the animals, the trees, this beautiful earth. We can join God in this joy and caretaking that God requested of us by taking a walk around the neighborhood, in a park, in a shopping mall, wherever you connect to God’s creation best. Walk slowly and try to see this place through God’s eyes. Then stop, close your eyes and feel God’s love surrounding you and all of creation where you stand. Then, as you walk, bless the people, the homes and businesses, the animals you see along the way. Pray wherever the Spirit leads you to pray.

Did you notice anything on this walk that you might have missed before? Write down any new feelings and/or connections from your walk.

Prayer

Holy One, thank you for a glimpse of the way you see us and your amazing world. I pray again for each person and animal I saw on my walk, as well as for their needs and their loved ones. Please help us to see one another more clearly so we can work together with you to heal the brokenness in our world and help the transformation to the peace and love of your kingdom. Amen.

Week 2: Friday – The Gift of Love

Scripture: 1 John 3:14-18

¹⁴ *We know that we have transferred from death to life, because we love the brothers and sisters. The person who does not love remains in death.* ¹⁵ *Everyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him.* ¹⁶ *This is how we know love: Jesus laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.* ¹⁷ *But if a person has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need and that person doesn't care—how can the love of God remain in him?* ¹⁸ *Little children, let's not love with words or speech but with action and truth.*

Is Jesus with you in your prayer time? If not, consider lighting a candle before you start. The candle represents Jesus' presence with you and the light he brings into the world and into our hearts.

"Let's not love with words or speech but with action and truth." Seems simple but that is very hard to do in our daily lives. It's much easier to say "I love you" than to take the time to do something special to show it. It can also be hard to show your love for someone through the truth. Sometimes we just don't want to hear the truth and sometimes it is painful to be the bearer of the truth, but we are called to this action by Jesus. As followers we need to be fearless – letting ourselves be vulnerable to be open to the love of others and the truth that may be told. When we open ourselves in this way we let God in even more deeply and we then have strong relationships built upon integrity.

Today try to follow the promptings of the Spirit and show love to someone even if it's awkward or uncomfortable. How did they react? How do you feel? Be sure to bless them even if it doesn't turn out the way you expected. In doing so we give Jesus' gift to others.

Prayer

Beloved Jesus, please let me know your love and know how to give that love to others in a meaningful way. Help me to show your face to people who need to see you and not be held back by my fear. Amen.

Week 2: Saturday – The Art of Receiving

Jesus and Paul tell us over and over again that we must let go of everything to have everything, that we must get past our human fears and our pride to live a life that is humble and serving as well as abundant and loving.

Below are two passages by Henri Nouwen from his book “Bread for the Journey”. Read them both and see if one seems more applicable than the other. (Be honest!) Then reread the one that resonates with you and think about how you can let go enough so that your weakness becomes a strength. End with a prayer that fits with the key words or phrases you find in the messages.

#1 The Importance of Receiving

Receiving is often harder than giving. Giving is very important: giving insight, giving hope, giving courage, giving advice, giving support, giving money, and most of all, giving ourselves. Without giving there is no brotherhood or sisterhood.

But receiving is just as important, because by receiving we reveal to the givers that they have gifts to offer. When we say, “Thank you, you gave me hope; thank you, you gave me a reason to live; thank you, you allowed me to realize my dream,” we make givers aware of their unique and precious gifts. Sometimes it is only in the eyes of the receiver that givers discover their gifts.

(Is it a challenge for you to let people help you, give to you? If so, why?)

#2 Daring to Become Dependent

When someone gives us a watch but we never wear it, that watch is really not received. When someone offers us an idea but we do not respond to it, that idea is not truly received. When someone introduces us to a friend but we ignore him or her, that friend does not feel well received.

Receiving is an art. It means allowing the other to become part of our lives. It means daring to become dependent on the other. It asks for the inner freedom to say, “Without you I wouldn’t be who I am.” Receiving with the heart is, therefore, a gesture of humility and love. So many people have been deeply hurt because their gifts were not well received. Let us be good receivers.

(Have you been hurt by having a gift not well received? Are you a good receiver?)

Week 2: Sunday – How to Pray

Scripture: Matthew 5:5-15

“When you pray, don’t be like hypocrites. They love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners so that people will see them. I assure you, that’s the only reward they’ll get. ⁶ But when you pray, go to your room, shut the door, and pray to your Father who is present in that secret place. Your Father who sees what you do in secret will reward you. ⁷ “When you pray, don’t pour out a flood of empty words, as the Gentiles do. They think that by saying many words they’ll be heard. ⁸ Don’t be like them, because your Father knows what you need before you ask.

⁹ Pray like this: Our Father who is in heaven, uphold the holiness of your name.

¹⁰ Bring in your kingdom so that your will is done on earth as it’s done in heaven.

¹¹ Give us the bread we need for today. ¹² Forgive us for the ways we have wronged you, just as we also forgive those who have wronged us. ¹³ And don’t lead us into temptation, but rescue us from the evil one. ¹⁴ “If you forgive others their sins, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you don’t forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your sins.

Today is another check in – how is your prayer journey going? Sunday is also a great day to look back over the week. If you have missed a day or want to try again, today is a wonderful time to do just that.

If you are in worship today, check in with your fellow travelers and see how they are doing. Then, during prayer time, be sure to pray for one another, for your family and friends, and for the faith community. This is your time to intercede for those around you and bring your cares and blessings to God. If you cannot make it to church you can say these prayers on your own, but know that you are being prayed for by the faith community!

Prayer (Doxology from 1674)

Praise God from whom all blessings flow,

Praise God all creatures here below.

Praise God, ye heavenly hosts.

Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.