

The Great 50 Days of Prayer

Easter is not just one Sunday but is celebrated for a 50-day period. The season of Easter or Eastertide begins at sunset on Easter day and goes through Pentecost Sunday, the day we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the church (Acts 2). This season is also known as The Great 50 Days. In this season Christians reflect on their spiritual growth and renewal, remember their baptism and how we are to live as faithful disciples. We offer you a spiritual practice each day between Easter Sunday and Pentecost to help us all rejoice in Christ's resurrection and experience what it means to say, "Christ is risen!" Please join us in this community spiritual practice we call The Great 50 Days of Prayer.

Easter Sunday, April 4 | Start a prayer journal. Write down the prayers of your heart and date each page. Write down people, places, events that you are praying for. Note answers to prayer.

Monday, April 5 | Declare a digital-free time period in each day or week. Let people know when you are available and will get back to them.

Tuesday, April 6 | Write a non-electronic letter to a friend and mail it with a stamp. Be mindful of what feelings are evoked from writing a letter with pen and paper. What did you gain by this personal exercise?

Wednesday, April 7 | We often feel anxious and rushed about our lives. When you wake up, before your head leaves the pillow, offer God your day – all of your day – the good and not so good. Offer God three central concerns of the day and ask God to care for these things as you go about your daily tasks. When worry creeps in, return to the moment when you handed God your concerns.

Thursday, April 8 | "In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials." 1 Peter 1:6

- a. Pray for fellow Christians who are suffering persecution because of their trust in God through Jesus Christ.
- b. Pray for the greater world-wide church to grow in the face of suffering.

Friday, April 9 | Today, intentionally drive in the slow lane, intentionally choose the longest line, intentionally sit longer over your meal, intentionally chew your food, intentionally take a longer shower, and or intentionally spend a longer time with your spouse/children. Relish the time and be aware of being in the presence of God. What rises to the surface in your mind? What does this tell you about yourself?

Saturday, April 10 | *"Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
in light inexpressible hid from our eyes.*

Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,

Almighty, victorious, the great Name we praise." UMH 103, vs. 1

- a. As you reflect on these words from this great hymn of praise, consider meditating on the many names of God from scripture.

Sunday, April 11 | "Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf." 1 Corinthians 10:17. Pray for the unity of the church and enter into Jesus' prayer in John 17

Monday, April 12 | Take a trip to the grocery store with no intention of buying anything. As you enter, gaze upon the beauty of the colorful fruits and vegetables, their fragrance

and their texture and take a moment to take in their beauty and diversity. Stop and give thanks to God for the abundance of fruits and vegetables and the bounty before your eyes.

Tuesday, April 13 | As you prepare to eat one of your meals, enter into silence.

Intentionally look at your food, the colors, textures, and the tastes that you imagine.

Consider the hands that prepared it, the food suppliers, the truckers and other persons transporting it, the growers, and the workers in the fields who picked and sorted it, the fisherman, the farmer, the butcher and baker. Give thanks to God for each hand who had a turn in providing this meal. Chew slowly and give thanks for each bite of food and the nourishment it gives. Savor your food and taste it, giving thanks.

Wednesday, April 14 | Let go of things today. Clean out a drawer, a closet, your attic or garage and let go of things that you no longer use or are broken or are unnecessary. What was it like to let things go?

Thursday, April 15 | Give things away today. Look at the many things, clothes or foodstuffs you have and carefully, prayerfully, gently, place unused or nearly new objects in a bag or box to give away to the food bank or resale shop for others to use. What was it like to give something you still used and liked away?

Friday, April 16 | Make a list of all your gifts and graces, of the things you like about yourself. Thank God for making you uniquely you and very special. God created you and called you, “very good.” Give thanks for this gift of life.

Saturday, April 17 | Sit quietly in a comfortable position. Breathe slowly and notice any tightness in your body. What is your body saying to you right now? Listen to it and don’t scold or shame it. How would Jesus want you to care for yourself right now? Show and give yourself mercy.

Sunday, April 18 | Intentionally place yourself in the presence of God, then take a nap, go for a walk, talk to a friend, play a game, or do something else that delights your soul. Receive this gift of rest. Tell God what happens within you when you try to rest.

Monday, April 19 | Keep a record of how much you sleep. Are you respecting your God-given need for rest and recreation? Ask God to reveal to you how much sleep your body needs to stay healthy, heal and have energy. Is it more or less? Readjust your sleeping or resting patterns for a week. What does it mean for you to pay attention to how and when you rest and sleep? What difference does it make?

Tuesday, April 20 | Prayerfully consider fasting from the news, social media, blogs, etc. In what ways do you struggle in abstaining from these things? What do you think this tells you about yourself?

Wednesday, April 21 | Pray the fixed hours of prayer – early morning, noon, early evening and bedtime. What was it like to intentionally stop during the day to sit with God and listen?

Thursday, April 22 | Read a psalm today and sit with it all day. Read and reread it out loud. Consider each word and phrase. What is God saying to you through this psalm? Rewrite this psalm in your own words.

Friday, April 23 | Play today. Play with others – a sport, cards, games an adventure. Play alone – crossword puzzle or jigsaw puzzle, play with your pet, play music, play with arts and crafts, play as you cook. Create something.

Saturday, April 24 | Invite someone to worship tomorrow and take them to lunch. Introduce them to others in your Sunday school class or small group. Thank them for allowing you to share this time with them.

Sunday, April 25 | Prayerfully consider your giving patterns. In what ways do you give to the ongoing work of the church? In what ways do you give out of joy? If you do not sense joy in your giving, ask God to show you the resistance and barriers to that joy.

Monday, April 26 | Today write down all the ways in which you are blessed and thank God for these blessings. Your breath, your body, the sunshine or the rain, the breeze on your cheek.

Tuesday, April 27 | Read two to four verses of scripture today and then listen with the ear of your heart. Reread that same text again. What word or phrase strikes you? Reflect on that. What meaning do these words have for you. Read the text again. Listen and hear what God is telling you to say or do this week. Sit with the scripture and come back to it again during the day.

Wednesday, April 28 | Sit in stillness and breathe deeply, in and out. Pay attention to your breath and thank God for your breath. As you breathe in thank God for what is on your heart. As you breathe out ask God for forgiveness for wrongdoing. Accept the forgiveness given to you. Breathe in and out.

Thursday, April 29 | Call someone and ask them how you might pray for them today.

Friday, April 30 | Walk outside, if you can, paying attention to the music of the birds and the colors of nature. If you are unable to walk, sit next to a window and look at each thing within your view thanking God for each thing you see, each person passing by, each holy moment.

Saturday, May 1 | Sing a song from the hymnal or another spiritual song on the radio. Sing a loud so you can hear yourself. Thank God for your voice and the gift of singing. When we sing we are practicing our work in heaven – which is to sing.

Sunday, May 2 | As you receive Holy Communion consider the taste of the wafer and the juice. How do they feel in your mouth? What does it mean to you to receive the body and blood of your Savior in the midst of the community of faith? How does the Supper of the Lord nourish your soul? If you are not in worship today, either in person or online allow your meal to be your Holy Communion with God and consider how Jesus is the host of your table, even in this moment.

Monday, May 3 | At the end of your day consider one thing that happened for which you are most grateful. Consider that one thing for which you are the least grateful. Tie both of these things together in a prayer to offer to God.

Tuesday, May 4 | Go to a grocery store and offer thanks for each item you place in your basket. Purchase beans and rice to give on the second Sunday or other shelf stable foods for Community Assistance Center (CAC) Food Pantry.

Wednesday, May 5 | Take a walk with your camera and look at creation around you. What shimmers before you? Receive the image and reflect upon what you see in the context of color and contrast, light and shadow, reflection and the presence of God. Give thanks for what you see and feel.

Thursday, May 6 | Write a conversation between you and Jesus. What will you say to him? In what ways will he respond? Make it as long or short as it needs to be.

Friday, May 7 | Bless someone today with words of grace, hope, forgiveness and mercy.

Saturday, May 8 | Walk your neighborhood and pray for the people you pass by people in their homes, for the business you see. Ask God to illuminate your spirit with love and compassion for your neighbors. If you are unable to walk and get outside, walk with God in your mind and heart, praying for those who live around you.

Sunday, May 9 | Go to worship in person or online. Sing, greet, be still, listen, respond in gratitude. As you bathe, shower or wash your hands, remember your baptism and be grateful.

Monday, May 10 | Fast from alcohol, carbonated beverages, or sweet drinks. Today, drink only water and give thanks for the gift of pure, clean water readily available to us.

Tuesday, May 11 | Pray for God's creatures in the wild and for our domesticated animals. Take cat or dog food to your animal shelter.

Wednesday, May 12 | Write your own psalm on gratitude, thanksgiving, joy, praise, forgiveness or healing. Pour out your heart to God in 8 to 16 verses.

Thursday, May 13 | Send a special offering to the church in honor of a loved one.

Friday, May 14 | Light a candle in your home and sit quietly listening to God.

Saturday, May 15 | Sit in stillness focusing on relaxing each part of your body, letting go of stress and tension, from the top of your head to the bottom of your feet. Sit for a few moments and give thanks for your body.

Sunday, May 16 | Pray for the well-being and goodness of a person or group of people with which you do not agree. Pray without judgement or opinion – pray with a heart of love.

Monday, May 17 | Move your body today as in prayer. Open your arms wide to embrace God. Lift your arms in praise and thanksgiving. Touch the ground in gratitude for the bounty of the earth. Use your body as a way to pray and allow the movement to be your words.

Tuesday, May 18 | Imagine yourself in the presence of God. Place yourself in a safe and beautiful space with God. What is God saying to you?

Wednesday, May 19 | Bring another person with you in your imagination into the presence of God. Lift that person into the light of God. See that person in a state of wholeness and well-being in God's light. Ask God for this beauty and well-being to be fully realized. Thank God for whatever healing is given.

Thursday, May 20 | Take a piece of paper and some colored pencils or crayons and color a prayer. Do not use words, but only color and shapes. Allow your pencils or crayons to move freely over the paper. Do not judge what you see, just allow what comes to be your prayer. God does not need words to understand your heart.

Friday, May 21 | Visit someone who can no longer get out of the house or who is in the nursing home or hospital. Spend time with them and listen to their stories.

Saturday, May 22 | Walk through Psalm 23 one word at a time. Focus on each word and what that word means to you in your life right now. Write down what you discovered and reflect on what God is revealing to you.

Pentecost Sunday, May 23 | Write down on a piece of paper something that causes fear in your spirit. Offer it to God in prayer. Place it in the sink and run water over it until it melts – thank God for helping you let it go and in its place receive hope.