

St John's, Ranmoor

Sanctuary

Refuge | Safety | A Holy Space



‘Pray then in this way’

Matt 6:9a

Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you

Jeremiah 29:12

As a Christian, my understanding is that what I'm doing when I pray is allowing the life of Jesus to come alive in me with the Holy Spirit, which means that from the depth of my being as a believer there rises up a kind of welling up of life and love directed towards that mysterious source of Jesus' being, which we call God the Father.

Rowan Williams

Welcome and introduction

Welcome to Sanctuary

During this time set apart for stillness, there are opportunities in word and music to reflect on our personal spiritual life; the relationship we enter into with Jesus Christ through prayer and how we might most fruitfully pray for others.

May this be for you a time of rest, reflection and intentional abiding in word, prayer and silence.

Some thoughts as we enter into this time together:

Prayer does not change God, but it changes him (sic) who prays.

Soren Kierkegaard

Prayer is the song of the heart. It reaches the ear of God even if it is mingled with the cry and tumult of a thousand men (sic).

Kahlil Gibran

Throughout this short reflective liturgy feel free to say the words out loud or pray them in the silence of your heart. God is listening.

Greeting

From scattered lives we come together now to meet with God.

Let us recognize his presence with us.

Silence is kept

As God's people we have gathered:

Let us worship him together.

Come O Lord and visit us in peace,

that we may rejoice before you with a perfect heart.

Music (during which candles may be lit)

Hear My Prayer, Oh Lord by Henry Purcell performed by Voces 8

The text comes from Psalm 55, the text of which is included below.

¹Give ear to my prayer, O God; and hide not thyself from my supplication.

²Attend unto me, and hear me: I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise;

³Because of the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked: for they cast iniquity upon me, and in wrath they hate me.

⁴My heart is sore pained within me: and the terrors of death are fallen upon me.

⁵Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me.

⁶And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest.

²²Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.

Psalm 55:1-6, 22 (King James Bible)

- 1 Hear my prayer, O God; ♦
hide not yourself from my petition.
 - 2 Give heed to me and answer me; ♦
I am restless in my complaining.
 - 3 I am alarmed at the voice of the enemy ♦
and at the clamour of the wicked;
 - 4 For they would bring down evil upon me ♦
and are set against me in fury.
 - 5 My heart is disquieted within me, ♦
and the terrors of death have fallen upon me.
 - 6 Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me,
♦
and a horrible dread has overwhelmed me.
 - 7 And I said: 'O that I had wings like a dove, ♦
for then would I fly away and be at rest.
- 24 Cast your burden upon the Lord and he will sustain you, ♦
and will not let the righteous fall for ever.

Psalm 55:1-7,24 (Common Worship Psalter
altered versification)

Opening prayers

In the depths of my being
I become quiet and still;
I wait for you, my God,
Source of my salvation
Amen.

You, Lord, are in this place,
Your presence fills it.
Your presence is peace.

You, Lord, are in my heart,
Your presence fills it.
Your presence is peace.

You, Lord, are in my life,
Your presence fills it.
Your presence is peace.
Amen

The Word of God

Matthew 6.1-15

Jesus said to the disciples, 'Beware of practising your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

'So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

'And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

'When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

'Pray then in this way:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come.
Your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And do not bring us to the time of trial,
but rescue us from the evil one.

For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Prayer (I) by George Herbert

Prayer the church's banquet, angel's age,
God's breath in man returning to his birth,
The soul in paraphrase, heart in pilgrimage,
The Christian plummet sounding heav'n and earth
Engine against th' Almighty, sinner's tow'r,
Reversed thunder, Christ-side-piercing spear,
The six-days world transposing in an hour,
A kind of tune, which all things hear and fear;
Softness, and peace, and joy, and love, and bliss,
Exalted manna, gladness of the best,
Heaven in ordinary, man well drest,
The milky way, the bird of Paradise,
Church-bells beyond the stars heard, the soul's blood,
The land of spices; something understood.

Prayer by Carol Ann Duffy

Some days, although we cannot pray, a prayer
utters itself. So, a woman will lift
her head from the sieve of her hands and stare
at the minims sung by a tree, a sudden gift.

Some nights, although we are faithless, the truth
enters our hearts, that small familiar pain;
then a man will stand stock-still, hearing his youth
in the distant Latin chanting of a train.

Pray for us now. Grade 1 piano scales
console the lodger looking out across
a Midlands town. Then dusk, and someone calls
a child's name as though they named their loss.

Darkness outside. Inside, the radio's prayer -
Rockall. Malin. Dogger. Finisterre.

In the time of silence which follows, reflect on your experience of prayer and the potential it offers for relationship with God.

You may feel prompted to focus on a verse or phrase from one of the texts that has particularly resonated with you.

Questions to guide your reflection:

1. *Do you think that words are necessary for prayer, or do they get in the way? (cf Matt 6.7-8)*

2. *'Prayer the church's banquet' (Herbert)*

In what way(s) and from whose perspectives might prayer be an act of Christian hospitality?

3. *What might be standing in our way on the days when 'we cannot pray' (Duffy)?*

A time of silence

Abba, Father,
I am here,
for you,
for myself,
for the world,
for this moment,
I am here...

Angela Ashwin



At the end of the silence:

Prayers

O gracious God,
accept my offering, though it is incomplete.
Accept my time, though it is often broken,
my energy, though it is often frail.
Lead me, guide me, hold me
in your straight and simple way,
and let me shine in the remembrance of your love,
one holy whole,
Knowing peace in the still flame of my soul.
Amen.

Julie M Hulme

Lord Jesus,
take my mind and think through me,
take my hands and bless through me,
take my mouth and speak through me,
above all, Lord Jesus,
take my spirit and pray in me;

so that it is you who move and have your being in me.
Amen

Based on a prayer in a 16th c Book of Hours

A prayer for the end of the day

Light of the world,
Enter into the depths
of our lives.
Come into the dark
and hidden places.
Walk in the storehouse
of our memories.
Hear the hidden secrets
of the past.
Plumb the very depth
of our being.
Be present through
the silent hours,
And bring us safely
to your glorious light.



David Adam

Prayers conclude with The Lord's Prayer

Conclusion

Blessing

We are called and loved by God the Father
and kept safe by Jesus Christ.
May mercy, peace and love be ours in abundance,
from God that Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.

May the light of Christ our Lord shine in all our hearts.
Amen



Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4.6-7