

A Week of Practicing Prayer

This guide is an invitation to explore and experiment with a variety of prayer practices, through a 1-week challenge of daily connecting with God.

1. Choose a good time of day to engage in a deep experience.

Figure out when you're at your best (not your worst!) Commit a specific amount of time each day (be it 5, 10, 20 minutes or more) to spend alone with God.

2. Choose a conducive space.

One where you will feel comfortable, inspired, and have as much privacy as you need.

3. Choose a prayer practice... and go for it!

We offer this booklet as a suggested itinerary for the adventure.

Try some new practices on; see what connects, inspires, challenges, and grows you. Build on the ones that work. Adapt or modify the ones that don't.

Check out our Spiritual Practices page anytime for a full menu of additional exercise options. southridgechurch.ca/spiritualpractices/

May you be blessed, encouraged and transformed as you pursue an ever-expanding relationship with the God who loves you so much.

Monday

- **When** are you setting aside time today?
- **Where** will you spend your time with God?
- **What** spiritual practice will you try today?

Our Suggestion: Posture Prayer: The Sign of The Cross

- **Time Required:** 8-10 minutes

If we're going to love God with all of our mind, heart and strength when we pray, it makes sense that we would also sometimes practice saying with our bodies what we're expressing in our words – so we can learn to pray *with* and *through* our bodies in a way that actually deepens our encounter with God. That is the simple but meaningful concept of 'posture prayer.'

- **Preparation:**

Prepare yourself for prayer by finding a quiet place where you will be uninterrupted and have enough privacy to feel free to express yourself with God.

The resource provided below is an audio one, so you will need a device on which to play it back, and possibly headphones if that will help tune out distractions.

We encourage you to silence all other notifications on whatever device you are listening on, in order to stay focused on the practice at hand.

- **Practice:**

For a downloadable audio guide through this prayer experience, click the link below and choose "The Sign of The Cross" from under the "Posture Prayer" menu.

<https://southridgechurch.ca/spiritualpractices/prayer/>

Tuesday

- **When** are you setting aside time today?
- **Where** will you spend your time with God?
- **What** spiritual practice will you try today?

Our Suggestion: Prayer Walk: Neighbourhood Intercession

- **Time Required:** 15-30 minutes

In John 12, Jesus says “My commandment to you is this: love others as I have loved you. There is no greater way to love than to give your life for your friends. You celebrate our friendship if you obey this command.”

One of the best ways we can both honour and know God, is to love those around us well. One of the best ways to love people, is to see them, care about them, and pray for them. This exercise is a practice in raising our awareness, opening up our hearts, and using our God-given gift and ability to influence their lives for genuine good.

- **Preparation:**

Prepare your heart for prayer by turning your attention toward the perspective of your neighbours.

Think of at least one of your immediate neighbours, someone whose home you see every day. Consider for a moment everything you know about that person, maybe even jot down on a piece of paper everything you can think of. How do you think they might need prayer right now? What might God know about that person’s situation that you can’t see? Take a few moments to be quiet before God, listening for his voice and any prompting the Spirit might give, before you head out to pray.

- **Practice:**

Walk prayerfully through your neighbourhood, intentionally turning your eyes towards your neighbours and your heart towards God, listening for how he might guide you to pray for the people in your community and whatever they might be going through right now. Remember prayer is always a conversation that goes back and forth between speaking and listening. Trust your intuition and respond in prayer, however you feel led.

Wednesday

- **When** are you setting aside time today?
- **Where** will you spend your time with God?
- **What** spiritual practice will you try today?

Our Suggestion: Breath Prayer: Christ Be All Around Me

- **Time Required:** 7-8 minutes

Breath prayer is a powerful and ancient practice. If you've never experienced it before, check out this 1 min video before you start:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lyDVbQc0sWk&list=PLMIOAFUmG-JlnMnN6H_g8nb8jZeopFDPa

- **Preparation:**

Prepare yourself for breath prayer by finding a quiet place where you will be uninterrupted and feel comfortable to enter into unhurried time with God.

You can walk through this experience with a downloadable audio file or via a video facilitation provided on YouTube. Headphones are a great way to help tune out any distractions with either method – but we would encourage you to silence all app notifications on your device so you can stay focused while you're in prayer.

- **Practice:**

For a downloadable audio facilitation, click the link below and choose "Christ Be All Around Me"

<https://southridgechurch.ca/spiritualpractices/prayer/>

For a video version of the same facilitation, click this link

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H52xn1QvRo&list=PLMIOAFUmG-JlnMnN6H_g8nb8jZeopFDPa&index=5&t=18s

Thursday

- **When** are you setting aside time today?
- **Where** will you spend your time with God?
- **What** spiritual practice will you try today?

- **Our Suggestion: Praying Scripture (+ Posture Intro): Palms Palms and Psalms**

- **Time Required:** 10 minutes

The Bible is full of powerful prayer templates. Often we default to reading the text in a learning posture, instead of entering into it with a desire for transformation. Learning to pray – instead of simply read – passages of Scripture can be a rich and meaningful spiritual experience.

- **Preparation:**

Prepare yourself by finding a quiet place where you will be uninterrupted and feel comfortable to enter into focused, unrushed time with God.

You may want to have a Bible nearby – although it's not essential, as a passage will be provided. If you use a Bible app on your phone, we'd just encourage you to silence all other notifications while you're trying to engage in prayer.

- **Practice:**

Click on the link below for a PDF guide through this prayer experience.

southridgechurch.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Palms-Palms-and-Psalms.pdf

- **Bonus Material:**

For more great passages to pray personally, you can also check out this additional link:

southridgechurch.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Praying-Scripture-in-a-Personal-Way.pdf

Friday

- **When** are you setting aside time today?
- **Where** will you spend your time with God?
- **What** spiritual practice will you try today?

- **Our Suggestion: Caim Prayer:** Caim Prayer of Protection

- **Time Required:** 2-3 minutes

Caim (or Circle) Prayer is an ancient Celtic Christian practice intended to evoke the blessing and protection of the Trinity over the circle of one's friends, family and self. ("The Trinity" simply refers to our God who is three persons in One – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; in the prayer called the "Mighty/Sacred Three.")

- **Preparation:**

Find a quiet place where you will be as undistracted as possible. This prayer is fairly short, which makes it easy to return to as often as feels necessary throughout the day. Don't feel you need to rush out of the moment, though, if you do have more time to spend talking with God, spend it!

- **Practice:**

Click on the link below for a PDF guide through this prayer experience.

southridgechurch.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Caim-Prayer-of-Protection.pdf

Saturday

- **When** are you setting aside time today?
- **Where** will you spend your time with God?
- **What** spiritual practice will you try today?

▪ **Our Suggestion: Journaling: Praying On Paper (Or Not...)**

Writing down our thoughts, feelings, confessions and longings can be a valuable self-reflection tool. However, when we combine that practice with an attitude of prayer – not just writing things down, but intentionally pointing our hearts and minds toward God as we do that, as an intentional form of prayer – we have the basis of a deep spiritual practice.

For some, words do not come easy. And while it's important to stretch and challenge ourselves, it's also important to speak to God in our 'natural tongue.' If the idea of writing your prayers out fills you with dread instead of life, consider other ways you can communicate that will push you to grow, but also spark life at the thought.

- **Time Required:** 15-60 minutes

▪ **Preparation:**

Find some space you love to be, where you feel comfortable, relaxed, unrushed and inspired. Bring some paper (any notebook, journal, pad or piece of paper will do) and a pen. Feel free to add coloured pens, pencils, highlighters etc. if you're an artistic type. Having a Bible on hand for this practice often comes in handy too.

▪ **Practice:**

Write out whatever you want to say to God. Share your thoughts, feelings, confessions, and longings. Listen for what he might be saying back, and write that out too.

Or...

Paint a picture, write a song, draw a sketch, make a collage, burn some wood, create a photograph journal of prayer, build a something, go for a run, plant a garden...

Spend an extended amount of time simply "being with" God today, allowing your thoughts, feelings, confessions and longings come to the surface.

Offer them up to him as they do. Listen for his answer of love.

Sunday

- **When** are you setting aside time today?
- **Where** will you spend your time with God?
- **What** spiritual practice will you try today?

- **Our Suggestion: Contemplative Prayer:** Physical Intercessory Prayer of Love

- **Time Required:** 5-15 minutes

“Contemplative prayer is a receptive posture of openness toward God. It is a way of waiting with a heart awake to God’s presence and his Word. This kind of prayer intentionally trusts and rests in the presence of the Holy Spirit deep in our own spirit.”

- Adele Ahlberg Calhoun, Spiritual Disciplines Handbook

- **Preparation:**

Prepare yourself by finding as quiet a place as possible, where you will be uninterrupted, undistracted and feel comfortable to experiment with simply resting in the presence of God.

- **Practice:**

This exercise combines a posture prayer with contemplative practice. Try to enter in as deeply as you can, even if it feels a bit foreign and strange at first. Try not to rush the experience, don’t be afraid to sit in the silence, listening quietly for the whisper of God’s loving Spirit.

Click on the link below for a PDF guide through this prayer experience.

southridgechurch.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Physical-Intercessory-Prayer-of-Love.pdf