
“The Singing Prayer”

Music is an important part of our spiritual lives. Often it is the music in our lives that connects with our emotions and with our hearts. Music plays an important role in development of our spiritual lives. There are many hymns that can be used as a musical prayer. “Just As I Am,” “Abide with Me,” and the great old favorite “How Great Thou Art” just to name a few. Today we are going to pray together an old hymn written by J. Edward Orr and is based on Psalm 139. In 1936 Orr witnessed a powerful moving the Holy Spirit in New Zealand. Orr was inspired to write the words of this song while standing in a post office. In less than five minutes he wrote the text on the back of an envelope. May it be more than a familiar song to us today. Let’s make it a prayer from our hearts.



Reflection:

Cleanse Me

Search me, O God, And know my heart today;
Try me, O Savior, Know my thoughts, I pray.
See if there be Some wicked way in me;
Cleanse me from every sin And set me free.

I praise Thee, Lord, For cleansing me from sin;
Fulfill Thy Word, And make me pure within.
Fill me with fire Where once I burned with shame;
Grant my desire To magnify Thy Name.

Lord, take my life, And make it wholly Thine;
Fill my poor heart With Thy great love divine.
Take all my will, My passion, self and pride;
I now surrender, Lord In me abide.

O Holy Ghost, Revival comes from Thee;
Send a revival, Start the work in me.
Thy Word declares Thou wilt supply our need;
For blessings now, O Lord, I humbly plead.

Reminder: Our 40 Days does not include Sundays. Let us gather together and worship the Lord in Spirit and in Truth.

See you at church!



FORTY DAYS OF PRAYER DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

IMAGINE

- IMAGINE* what God might do when the Westview Congregation commits to pray every day for 40 days.
- IMAGINE* what might happen as God’s presence rains down upon Westview and our communities.
- IMAGINE* all people becoming interested in regular communion with the Lord and interested in living and sharing the gospel message.
- IMAGINE* seeking the Lord and finding Him near.
- IMAGINE*...revival.



Why Forty?

The number “forty” has been universally recognized as a significant number in the Bible. It appears often in relation to the fulfillment of promises, as well as in periods of testing or judgment. Here are a few examples:

- The rain fell on Noah for 40 days and nights (Genesis 7:4).
- Israel ate Manna for 40 years (Exodus 16:35).
- Twice, Moses was with God for 40 days and nights (Exodus 24:18 & 34:28).
- The spies searched Canaan for 40 days (Numbers 13:35).
- 40 stripes were the maximum whipping penalty (Deut. 25:3).
- Three times in Judges, God allowed the land to rest for 40 years (Judges 3, 5 & 8).
- Saul reigned for 40 years (Acts 13:21).
- David reigned over Israel for 40 years (1 Kings 2:11).
- Solomon also reigned for 40 years (1 Kings 11:42).
- God gave Nineveh 40 days to repent (Jonah 3:4).
- Jesus fasted for 40 days and nights (Matthew 4:2).
- Jesus was tempted for 40 days (Luke 4:2).
- After His resurrection, Jesus remained on the earth for 40 days (Acts 1:3).

This is not an exhaustive list of the number forty. Many times the number forty is in association with testing and trials. It is quite often followed by a time of blessing. Perhaps the most vivid example is found in the story of Noah and the ark. His test came in the form of forty days of rain, followed the blessing of the rainbow and the accompanying promise of God. We read in the Scriptures over and over of the transforming work of God taking place after a period of testing.

We might also think of the “Forty Days of Lent.” The season of Lent is a period of soul-searching and repentance. It begins each year on Ash Wednesday and ends the day before Easter. The forty days does not include Sundays. By observing the forty days of Lent the individual Christian imitates Jesus’ withdrawal into the wilderness for forty days. This practice has been observed by Christians since the fourth century when it was a time of preparation for Christians who were to be baptized.

40
days

Reflection: Today as you pray...pray for the Lord to reveal the dark forces that are at work around you. Use the promises of 1 John 4 and Isaiah 41:10 as the foundation for your prayers against the darkness.

“Seeking Transformation”

The following is an excerpt from a book entitled “Prayer” by Richard Foster.

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To pray is to change. This is a great grace. How good of God to provide a path whereby our lives can be taken over by love and joy and peace and patience and kindness and goodness and faithfulness and gentleness and self-control.

The movement inward comes first because without interior transformation the movement up into God’s glory would overwhelm us and the movement out into ministry would destroy us.

A disciple once came to Abba Joseph, saying, “Father, according as I am able, I keep my little rule, my little fast, and my little prayer. And according as I am able, I strive to cleanse my mind of all evil thoughts and my heart of all evil intents. Now, what more should I do?” Abba Joseph rose up and stretched out his hands to heaven, and his fingers became like ten lamps of fire. He answered, “Why not be totally changed into fire?”

We’ve often heard it said that “prayer changes things.” But what about this idea from Foster that prayer changes us? As we come to the prayer altar of commitment we commit to allowing God to come and change our hearts that we might burn with the Holy fires of the Spirit’s transforming power.

Reflection: Blessed Savior, I pace back and forth at the altar of commitment. I know that without some kind of consistent communion with you I will not know holy obedience. So, as best as I can, I promise to set aside time regularly for prayer, meditation, and spiritual reading. Strengthen me in this covenant. Help me to delight in your presence that I will want to come home to you often. For your namesake I make this covenant.

~Amen



“The Weapon of Prayer”

Ephesians 6:12

“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”



I wonder at times if we truly understand the struggle that we face in this life. Certainly we understand the struggle between flesh and flesh. We can see that struggle, we can touch, and many times break it down and understand it. But what about the spiritual struggle that surrounds us? Are we able to see when the forces of darkness are creating havoc all around us? I am afraid that our culture has put us to sleep...to the point that we often miss this spiritual battle altogether, and therefore fail to recognize when we are being deceived by it. Let me break down the verse for us...

“struggle” (πάλη) literally meaning to “wrestle.” If you’ve ever been to a High School wrestling match, then you get the picture.

“Rulers” (ἀρχή) Paul is referring to spiritual dominions and the angels and demons who are given charge of them.

“Authorities” (ἐξουσία) Those in power who can temporarily oppose the purpose of God.

“Powers of dark forces” (κοσμοκράτωρ) a specific reference to the “lord of this world” the “prince of darkness” the devil and his demons.

Yes we must watch against this spiritual battle which wars around us. Prayer is one of the weapons we must utilize as we head into battle. Too often it’s our last resort. I am praying that as we journey together through 40 Days the weapon of prayer will become our standard, rather than our last resort. God’s Word reminds us that God is greater than the one who would like us to stumble (1 John 4). Let us be reminded of the promise of God from Isaiah.

*“So do not fear, for I am with you;
do not be dismayed, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you and help you;
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”*
~Isaiah 41:10

Forty Days of Prayer at Westview.

Our desire is to see the transforming power of the Holy Spirit at work in the hearts and lives of the people of Westview. We believe that this will only be accomplished as we join together in prayer...calling upon Almighty God to touch His church...and to rain down His presence and power upon each one. Please use this devotional guide during the coming season of 40 Days of Prayer here at Westview. (NOTE-the 40 days does not include Sundays)

40 Days Prayer Vigil-the Westview “40 Days of Prayer” will end with a 40 hour Prayer Vigil. Beginning on Friday, April 15 at 4 PM, and ending on Palm Sunday morning at 8:00 AM we want to have people on site praying this entire time. Start considering how you might be involved in our Prayer Vigil.

“Teach us to pray...”

Luke 11:1



It must be that the disciples recognized something in the connection Jesus had with the Father through prayer. We read many times of Jesus taking time to “get away” from the crowds in order to pray.

Today when we think of “getting away” it is for a holiday, a respite, a time for leisure and the pursuit of fun. Certainly nothing wrong with that!

But what about our prayer life? What about “getting away” to commune with our Heavenly Father? What is our connection like with the One who created us? Andrew Murray said that...

“Prayer is fellowship with the Unseen and Most Holy One.”

The disciples must of thought that no one could pray like Jesus...and so their request... “teach us to pray.”

Over the next forty days may this be our prayer. Lord “teach us to pray.” Also, let’s pray together that as we communicate with the Father and meditate upon His Word, that we would find an ever deepening communion with our Creator and His Son. Today’s prayer will be our “40 Days” prayer that we will pray together many times over the coming weeks. Take a moment to pray this prayer today.

Heavenly Father...this is our prayer.

Because we love God and desire His purposes, We commit to pray and ask the Lord to fill us with the knowledge of His will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding; and to move us beyond complacency and compromise to a deeper communion with Him.

We pray this so that we will live a life worthy of our Lord and may please Him in all we do; bearing fruit in every good work and growing in the knowledge of our God.

Amen

Reflection: What would you like to see God do in your life over the next 40 days? _____

“Teach us to pray...”

Luke 11:1



Anyone can pray. When thinking about this truth, my mind went immediately to the prayer of a child. I love hearing children pray, don't you? Children pray honest, innocent prayers that come straight from the heart. They don't allow their prayers to be burdened by some sort of form that they have memorized, or that has been modeled by others.

Certainly prayer is a simple exercise...it is also the Most important discipline that we can develop. A reminder from a recent sermon...

Prayer:

- Eternal powers are placed at its disposal.
- The blessings of true religion are channeled through it.
- The strength of the Father is found in its practice.
- The power of life for us and for others is found in prayer.
- Promises await their fulfillment.



-The Kingdom awaits its coming.

-God's glory waits for its full revelation.

Let us strive for this prayer life which takes hold of God's strength and achieves so much. Let us strive for a prayer life that will go beyond the simple rote prayers of religious form. Let us strive for a prayer life that will open the gates of Heaven, so that the glory of God might be revealed to us, in us and through us.

Reflection: Take an honest look at your prayer life today. Are you truly seeking to connect with God through prayer? Have you developed some bad prayer habits that need to change? Pray today that God would reveal this to you and help you to change.

“The Prayer of Forgiveness”



Has God ever revealed something to you that you needed to ask forgiveness for? I wonder if now that we've started the process of 40 Days if you've realized your need for a deepening communion with the Lord. I am reminded of our 40 Days Prayer which says "...move us beyond complacency and compromise and into a deeper communion with [the Lord]." Andrew Murray writes that we can be deceived in our prayer life.

“How speedily we are deceived into resting in a form of prayer, while the power is still missing. Our early training, the teaching of the Church,, the influence of habit, the stirring of emotions— how easily these lead to prayer that has no spiritual power and achieves little.”

~Andrew Murray

“With Christ in the School of Prayer.

Yesterday we took an honest look into our prayer life. Perhaps in your moment of reflection today a Prayer of Forgiveness is appropriate. Let us ask the Lord to forgive us for our lack of meaningful, undistracted connection with Him.

Reflection: Pray Psalm 130:1-5 today.