

## Reclaiming Daily Prayer

As a Part of Faith Formation

*“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good” — 1 Thessalonians 6:16–22 (NRSV)*

Paul Simon penned the lyrics to one of those songs you’re ashamed that you sing when it comes on the radio. “Slow down, you move too fast. You got to make the morning last.” Sing it with me now: “doot-in, doo, doo, feelin’ groovy.” Mr. Simon may not have been thinking of Paul’s charge to the church at Thessalonica to “pray without ceasing” when he wrote those lyrics, but perhaps there is a connection. The furious pace of 21<sup>st</sup> century life can be overwhelming. For many of the church’s most faithful lay leaders, members, youth, and children, “church”— and everything about it— is a flurry of activities. With all that is going on being formed in the faith, “praying without ceasing,” seems a little perplexing. Paul Simon’s charge to “slow down” might seem downright impossible.

In the midst of this chaotic existence, daily prayer may provide the best option to reclaim God in every aspect of our lives and recenter ourselves for faith formation. The *Book of Order’s* Directory for Worship asserts that “in worship the people of God acknowledge God present in the world and in their lives.” The introduction continues, “In worship the faithful offer themselves to God and are equipped for God’s service in the world.” In other words, our faith is formed through the transformational power of our worship. In our worship, we are equipped and renewed for the tasks of our daily life as disciples. If this is true, then engaging in daily prayer is an act of faith formation.

Through the reclamation of daily prayer in our homes, as a part of meetings, small group gatherings, and other appropriate places might provide fresh opportunities to keep God and thanksgiving for God’s many blessings at the forefront of our life together. This may not mean services of corporate prayer daily, but certainly there are opportunities to share Morning Prayer, Midday Prayer, and Evening Prayer with one another or as a part of individual discipleship.

Albert Winn lays out some of the reasons for daily prayer in an article in the Fall 1987 *Reformed Liturgy & Music* journal. Rev. Winn cites the frustrations of “contemporary life” and the reasons why “personal daily prayer seems impossible.” He also asks the question, “How could daily prayer conceivable be arranged?” His conclusion is as pertinent today as it was years ago. He writes, “The hunger for daily prayer, its evident benefits prevent an easy surrender to the frustrations of contemporary life. But the evident frustrations remind us to be modest and realistic in our expectations... Nevertheless, let us pray.”

Those modest and realistic expectations call us to look for opportunities to form our faith through regular prayer in unexpected ways and venues. This may include zoom daily prayer services, pre-recorded videos, private prayer, household services, or adapting daily prayer offerings for groups of the church meeting at various times. See below for a list of resources for use in crafting simple daily prayer services.

## PLACES DAILY PRAYER CAN BE INCORPORATED IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

- Session meetings
- The beginning of Sunday School lessons for any age
- Presbyterian Women Circle Gatherings
- In private homes
- Before staff or committee meetings
- At the beginning of choir rehearsal
- Youth Group
- Mission Trips or Retreats

## RESOURCES FOR DAILY PRAYER

- [\*Glory to God: The Presbyterian Hymnal\*](#) offers outlines and brief orders for morning, midday, and evening prayer that can easily be adapted or used in their entirety for engaging in daily prayer.
- The [\*Book of Common Worship\*](#) (rev. 2018) offers additional resources for daily prayer.
- A number of resources from the [Wild Goose Resource Group](#) and the Iona Community are particularly useful for daily prayer resources.

## A SAMPLE ORDER FOR DAILY PRAYER

### Opening Sentences

*Consider reading a psalm together or a simple call and response (God is good, **all the time...**)*

### Opening Song

*Could be a familiar song to the group gathered or something the community has memorized.*

### Opening Prayer

### Scripture Reading

### Reflection or Conversation

### Intercessory Prayer

*Consider allowing this to be open for individuals to voice their own prayers.*

### Closing Song

### Sending/Passing the Peace

*Much of this content is adapted from a column that originally appeared in the Daily Prayer volume of the Call to Worship: Liturgy, Music, Preaching, and the Arts (Volume 47.3) and is used here with permission.*

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