

Table Prayers for Lent

The 40 days of Lent are a time of confession, reflection, and prayer that helps Christians prepare for Easter. Below you will find scripture, prayers, and reflective practices to use during your Lenten journey.

We encourage each household to make a Lent Jar. Decorate a jar or cup. Cut out these strips of paper and place them in your Lent Jar. Each day of Lent, pull out a slip of paper and let that guide your table prayer that day. They do not have to be done in any particular order

These can be used individually or with your family. They are ideal to use at the table during a daily meal but can also be used to begin or end the day.

Reflections were prepared by the ministers of First Baptist Church of Asheville.

Unless noted all scripture quotations are taken from the New Revised Standard Version

Read: Slowly read these words from Psalm 46:10a.

Be still and know that I am God.

Be still and know that I am.

Be still and know.

Be still.

Be.

Do: Set a timer and be silent for 2 minutes.

Reflect: What kind of work did or do you have to do today?

Read: "The kind of work we do does not make us holy, but we may make it holy." - Meister Eckhart

Pray: God, help us, whatever we do, to do it with all our heart, as though our labor is for you and no other boss. Colossians 3:23

Read: "May today there be peace within. May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be. May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith. May you use those gifts that you have received, and pass on the love that has been given to you. May you be content knowing you are a child of God. Let this presence settle into your bones, and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise and love. It is there for each and every one of us." - St Teresa of Avila

Reflect: When or where do you find peace?

Read: *Now more than ever the word about Jesus spread abroad; many crowds would gather to hear him and to be cured of their diseases. But he would withdraw to deserted places and pray.* Luke 5:15-16

Reflect: When you feel overwhelmed, where is it that you can go, pray, and be renewed?

Read: "In our wanting, Christ, your plenty. In our groaning, Christ, your song.
In our tiring, Christ, your fervor. In our wand'ring, Christ, your home.
In our ebbing, Christ, your glory. In our warring, Christ, your calm.
In our failing, Christ, your triumph. In our dying, Christ, your light."
- *In Our Wanting, Christ, Your Plenty* (Clark Sorrells, 2020 Lenten Choral Benediction, First Baptist Church of Asheville)

Reflect: Where did you find Christ today?

Read: "I truly want to follow you, but I also want to follow my own desires and lend an ear to the voices that speak about prestige, success, pleasure, power, and influence. Help me to become deaf to these voices and more attentive to your voice, which calls me to choose the narrow road to life." - Henri Nouwen

Reflect: Can you think of a time you have heard God's voice? If so, when, where, and how?

Read: *Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.
Worship the Lord with gladness;
come into his presence with singing.*
Psalm 100:1-2

Reflect: What is a song that helps you praise God?

Read: *Beware of practicing 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.* Matthew 6:1-4

Do: Today, do something kind for another person without telling them about it.

Reflect: Across time and across the world, Christians have passed down many prayers to help remind them of God even in the most ordinary moments of life. What is one of the first prayers you ever learned to pray, whether in church or by someone in your family?

Pray: After sharing, pray this "journey prayer" from the Celtic tradition:
"I on Thy path, O God; Thou, O God, in my steps. God, bless the pathway on which I go.
God, bless the earth that is beneath my sole."

Read: *If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* 1 John 1:9

Pray: God, I confess that...

Read: *Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place? Those who have clean hands and pure hearts, who do not lift up their souls to what is false, and do not swear deceitfully. They will receive blessing from the Lord, and vindication from the God of their salvation. Such is the company of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob.* Psalm 24:3-6

Pray: "Lord Jesus, think on me and cast away my sin. From earthborn passions set me free and make me pure within." - Synesius of Cyrene

Read: "We will walk in the light, the beautiful light. Come where the dewdrops of mercy shine bright. Shine all around us by day and by night. Jesus, the light of the world."
- *Walk in the Light* (hymn text by George Elderkin and performed by Aretha Franklin.)

Pray: God, help us, while we have light, to believe in the light, that we may become children of light (John 12:36).

Read: "Christ has no body now on earth but yours, no hands but yours, no feet but yours. Yours are the eyes through which to look out Christ's compassion to the world; yours are the feet with which he is to go about doing good; yours are the hands with which he is to bless the world now." - St Teresa of Avila

Reflect: Who has been the body of Christ for you?

Read: "The point of life is not to be right, or safe, or famous, comfortable, or rich, or powerful. None of those is a sign of success or God's favor or significance, particularly when our power and wealth and safety require someone else to be poor and weak and scared. The point of life is to be together. To love one another - all the one anothers - and to struggle against everything that leads us away from that love."
- Milton Brasher-Cunningham

Pray: God, I pray for...

Read: *I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope;
my soul waits for the Lord
more than those who watch for the morning, more than those who watch for the morning.*
Psalm 130:5-6

Reflect: For what are you waiting?

Read: *All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people.* Acts 2:44-47a

Do: Make plans to share a meal with someone.

Read: *I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart;
I will tell of all your wonderful deeds.*

Psalm 9:1

Pray: God, I thank you for...

Reflect: When is a time you've wandered from God?

Read: "Oh, to grace how great a debtor daily I'm constrained to be!
Let Thy goodness, like a fetter, bind my wandering heart to Thee.
prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love;
here's my heart, Lord, take and seal it, seal it for Thy courts above."
- *Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing* (hymn text by Robert Robinson)

Read: "Keep a clear eye toward life's end. Do not forget your purpose and destiny as God's creature. What you are in his sight is what you are and nothing more. Remember that when you leave this earth, you can take nothing that you have received...but only what you have given; a full heart enriched by honest service, love, sacrifice, and courage." - St. Francis of Assisi

Do: Have each person in your house choose one item they can give to someone who could use it.

Read: *As a deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and behold the face of God? My tears have been my food day and night, while people say to me continually, "Where is your God?"* Psalm 42:1-3

Reflect: When you are in need, where is a place you can go and meet God?

Read: *The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it;
for he has founded it on the seas, and established it on the rivers.* Psalm 24:1-2

Do: Choose a way you will take care of the earth this week (plant flowers, recycle, bring reusable bags to the grocery store, etc.) Then do it!

Read: *The Lord is your keeper.* Psalm 121:5a

"There is a big difference between having and keeping. For instance, I might have a favorite sweater. It is my possession. However, I keep my puppy dog....Likewise, God does not merely have us. God keeps us. We are God's beloved, and immeasurably dear to God. We are not merely possessions in the eyes of the Lord...[This Psalm] celebrates the fact that God is our keeper." - Robert W. Fisher

Reflect: How has or does God keep you?

Read: *Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.* Philippians 4:4-7

Pray: God, help me to...

Read: "That which is impossible for you is not impossible to me: I will preserve my word in all things and I will make all things well." This is the great deed that our Lord will do . . . Our good Lord answered all my questions and doubts by saying with full energy: "I can make all things well, I know how to make all things well, I desire to make all things well, I will make all things well. And you will see with your own eyes that every kind of thing will be well." - Julian of Norwich

Reflect: When is a time you had to trust God?

Read: *I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.*
Philippians 1:3-6

Do: Reach out to a friend to say why you are thankful for him or her.

Reflect: What is something that has recently been troubling you?

Read: *With my voice I cry to the Lord; with my voice I make supplication to the Lord.
I pour out my complaint before him; I tell my trouble before him.* Psalm 142:1-2

Read: "All Thy works with joy surround Thee, earth and heav'n reflect Thy rays,
stars and angels sing around Thee, center of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain, flowery meadow, flashing sea,
singing bird and flowing fountain call us to rejoice in Thee."
- *Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee* (hymn text by Henry Van Dyke)

Pray: God, I praise you for...

Read: "Silence protects us from our noisy selves and prepares us for the work of God in us. In silence, we come to understand ourselves. In silence, we become able to hear the voice of God calling us beyond ourselves - always to better, always to more." - Joan Chittister

Do: Set a timer and be silent for 2 minutes.

Read: *I will call to mind the deeds of the Lord; I will remember your wonders of old.* Psalm 77:11

Reflect: Is there a story your family likes to tell about being delivered from a time of trouble?

Read: "A contemplative is not one who takes his prayer seriously, but one who takes God seriously, who is famished for truth, who seeks to live in generous simplicity, in the spirit." - Thomas Merton

Pray: God, in this time where we, too, can feel famished for truth, and burdened with busy-ness, help us to live in your way of generous simplicity, upheld by your Spirit and your truth. Amen.

Read: Will you come and follow Me if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know and never be the same?
Will you let My love be shown, will you let My name be known,
will you let My life be grown in you and you in Me?
- *The Summons* (hymn text by John L. Bell)

Reflect: How did you follow God today?

Read: "Lord, help me now to unclutter my life, to organize myself in the direction of simplicity. Lord, teach me to listen to my heart; teach me to welcome change, instead of fearing it. Lord, I give you these stirrings inside me. I give you my discontent. I give you my restlessness. I give you my doubt. I give you my despair. I give you all the longings I hold inside. Help me to listen to these signs of change, of growth; help me to listen seriously and follow where they lead through the breathtaking empty space of an open door." - *Common Prayer: A Liturgy For Ordinary Radicals*

Do: Be present to the world. Spend an hour today away from phones, televisions, and computers.

Read: *Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.* Romans 5:1-5

Reflect: What has given you hope this week?

Reflect: What is something you are worried about today?

Read: "Let nothing disturb you, nothing dismay you. All things are passing, God never changes. Patient endurance attains all things. God alone suffices." - Teresa of Avila

Pray: God, help us cast our anxieties on you, and rest in your care for us.

Read: *The Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart."* 1 Samuel 16:7

Reflect: What do others see when they look at you? What does God see?

Read: "If we are insulted for Christ's sake, let us be elated as though we had been showered with praises."
- John Chrysostom

Pray: God, help us to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us, that we may be your children in heaven.

Read: *And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.* Matthew 6:16-18

Do: Choose to fast from something today or tomorrow (candy, screen time, coffee, etc.).

Read: *Now God has us where he wants us, with all the time in this world and the next to shower grace and kindness upon us in Christ Jesus. Saving is all his idea, and all his work. All we do is trust him enough to let him do it. It's God's gift from start to finish! We don't play the major role. If we did, we'd probably go around bragging that we'd done the whole thing! No, we neither make nor save ourselves. God does both the making and saving. He creates each of us by Christ Jesus to join him in the work he does, the good work he has gotten ready for us to do, work we had better be doing.* Ephesians 2:7-10 (The Message)

Reflect: Empowered by the Holy Spirit, what good work can you do this week?

Read: *Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.* Psalm 51:1-2

Pray: "Lord Jesus, I long to be perfectly whole; I want Thee forever to live in my soul; Break down every idol, cast out every foe—now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."
- *Whiter Than Snow* (hymn text by James Nicholson)

Reflect: How have or will you let God's light shine today?

Pray: God, help us to do all things without murmuring and arguing, so we you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, in which we "shine like stars in the world." Philippians 2:14-15
