

PRAYING

Constant Encourager, teach us to steady those who have lost their balance. May we grow into the still centre of calm for people in turmoil; Teach us to stretch out our arms like branches of an oak tree full of leaf, and give shade to the tired, the lonely and the lost. **Amen**

We meet your Word in prophet and apostle;

(Pause)

Come Holy Spirit: **Thy Kingdom Come.**

We express our thanks that you enrol us in your purposes;

(Pause)

Come Holy Spirit: **Thy Kingdom Come.**

We offer you our strength and energy for the tasks ahead;

(Pause)

Come Holy Spirit: **Thy Kingdom Come.**

We bear before you those swept away by storm and flood;

(Pause)

Come Holy Spirit: **Thy Kingdom Come.**

*We wait upon the work of your Spirit as we say the Lord's Prayer together: **Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread.***

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours

Now and for ever.

Amen.

Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with strong backs.**

Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with kindness.**

Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with words of encouragement.**

Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with yourself.**



DAILY WAITING

Jesus ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father (Acts 1:4).

(This service is for use by individuals or groups and can be adapted to suit your context. Hymns, worship songs and additional prayers may be added as you wish. *Italic text is intended as an instruction, plain text is to be read by a leader, bold text is to be read together.*)

GATHERING

As you begin your time of prayer, take a moment of silence to remember and delight in the promise of the Holy Spirit Jesus gives to all his disciples.

Read the following from John 14 together:

I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you forever - the Spirit of truth... On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.

Make a sign of being present to God and one another – light a candle, open a Bible, share the peace...

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your people

And kindle in us the fire of your love.

Come, Holy Spirit, be with us as we pray

And leave us not as orphans.

Come, Holy Spirit, renew us in body, mind and spirit

And send us out to be your presence in your world.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your people

And kindle in us the fire of your love.

Optional hymn or worship song.

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NINE DAYS OF PRAYER 2021

DAY 6: HELP

LISTENING

A prophecy about the Messiah

¹The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; ² to proclaim the year of the LORD's favour, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; ³ to provide for those who mourn in Zion—give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory. ⁴ They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations. They shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations. (Isaiah 61:1-4, NRSV)

REFLECTING

At heart, this is a list of all the different attitudes and activities we need to develop and grow in order to become helpers to another: to bring good news means we are an encourager; to bind up the broken makes us a carer; to proclaim liberty makes us a 'freedom-fighter'; to release prisoners makes us someone who unlocks another from chains; to comfort the mourners makes us a consoler; to offer a mantle of praise in place of a faint spirit means we build up another's courage. As the prophet says, if we attempt these faithfully, we will be called 'Oaks of Righteousness' and become a planting for the future.

This is the good news, prophesied by Isaiah and taken up by Jesus in Luke's recounting of Jesus' sermon in Nazareth (Luke 4:16-20). What a pity Luke stopped at the end of verse two. Jesus knows this isn't a 'quick fix', but it is God's fixed will for the world that we become builders not destroyers. It may take hard work and sweat, just as a gardener who digs over the soil in spring wields a heavy spade and finds it is back-breaking work. But only by exercising our muscles will our backs become strong enough. And only by small acts of kindness can we launch ourselves into larger ones.

We may never see the oaks of righteousness reach full maturity, or the ruins that have laid devastated for centuries finally repaired. Our task may be a humbler one: 'to be a still, non-anxious presence in the world – equipped for the moment, at the place of maximum helpfulness to others'. (Brother Clark Berge, SSF).

This is a calling we must wait patiently to fulfil, in Jesus' name. So next time we feel moved to help another; next time we are swept up in a neighbour's crisis, a loved one's grief, a stranger's disaster, or a community's deprivation, let us ask ourselves: Am I being calm and collected?

What are the gifts I can employ so that I contribute to the solution, not the problem?

Where would be the place of maximum helpfulness for me to stand in this situation?

PSALM

- 1 God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.
- 2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;
- 3 though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble with its tumult. Selah
- 4 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.
- 5 God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved;
God will help it when the morning dawns.
- 6 The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter;
he utters his voice, the earth melts.
- 7 The LORD of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah
(Psalm 47:1-7, NRSV)

**Glory to the Father and to the Son,
And to the Holy Spirit;
As it was in the beginning, is now
And shall be for ever.
Amen.**