

An Order for Morning Prayer

Call to Prayer: (Psalm 96: 2 – 4)

L: Sing to the Lord and bless his Name,

P: proclaim the good news of his salvation from day to day.

L: Declare his glory among the nations

P: and his wonders among all peoples.

L: For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised;

P: he is more to be feared than all gods.

The request for Presence (Psalm 90:14)

L: Satisfy us by your loving-kindness in the morning,

P: So shall we rejoice and be glad all the days of our life.

Blessing One: Creation. A Thanksgiving for Creation

(A prayer or scripture reading)

Blessing Two: Revelation (A Scripture Reading)

The Shema

All: Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is One.

(Silent reflection)

All: Praised be God's glorious sovereignty throughout all time.

The Morning Psalm

(Suggested Psalms: 145; 150; 18; 91; 81; 93; 100; 94; 95)

Response (Silent reflection, meditation, witness, song, or prayer)

Blessing Three: God alone is Eternal Redeemer

Who is like You, Lord, among all that is worshiped? Who is like You, majestic in holiness, awesome in splendor, working wonders?

(Exodus 15:11)

The redeemed sang a new song for You. They sang in chorus at the shore of the sea, acclaiming Your sovereignty: "The Lord shall reign throughout all time." (Exodus 15:18)

Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

Prayer for the Day

All: Lord God, almighty and everlasting God, you have brought us in safety to this new day: Preserve us with your almighty power, that we may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all we do direct us to the fulfilling of your purpose; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Day Four

✠✠ Itinerary: Caesarea, Mt. Carmel, Megiddo, overnight in Tiberias

We begin this day with the prayer that Jesus himself would have said:

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is One. Praised be God's glorious sovereignty throughout all time. Amen

Caesarea – Acts 10:24-48 (First Gentile convert)

Reflection: Acts 10: 34 (NRSV) – *“I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.”*

Conversation around acceptability is as plentiful in our day as it was in Jesus' day and in the days of the first century Christian Church. Peter understands that he has been prepared by Jesus and called to go to “the other side”—called out of his comfort zone—to proclaim the good news to everyone and most especially to people who are not like him, who have not grown up with the scriptures, who do not yet know the ways of God. In this one verse Peter is sharing the Good News with all those who are not Jewish...to people who had not grown up in or been born into the faith or knew anything about the scriptures or Jesus or faith.

Peter's statement is an amazing one. Ponder this statement. Turn it over in your mind. Wrestle with what it says to you. Extract its truth. “No partiality.” “Every nation.” “Does what is right.” “Is acceptable.” There is wideness to God's mercy, grace, and love.

What do we need to learn from this statement? What call do you hear to examine and maybe even change your attitude toward others as you walk with Jesus? What good news do you hear for yourself in this statement? This passage of scripture sounds remarkably like another: *“There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”* Galatians 3:28 (NIV)

Oh Lord, what is it that we need to learn and change in our lives and attitudes as we walk more closely with you and one another and as we seek to “cross over to the other side” as Peter did to share the Good News with those who are not like us?

Caesarea Philippi – Matthew 16:13-20 (Peter’s confession of Christ)

Reflection: Is there something we can learn from Jesus’ “first team?” Well, let’s look honestly at the Disciples, the team hand-picked by Jesus. His team included at least one who was second career. It included siblings—and you know what can happen between siblings—the good and the not so good.

There were persons who knew more about water, sun, moon, stars, and tides than they knew about people. There were bean counters and dreamers. There were disciples who doubted, betrayed, misunderstood, and made mistakes. There were some who wanted to be—and thought they should be—the greatest. There were know-it-alls, there were some who smelled like fish, there were some who knew and were concerned about the rules (and some who were not), and none who were the first to take up the towel and basin to wash others’ feet.

I don’t know about you, but it sounds to me like Jesus’ hand-picked team is just like yours and mine: a motley crew, a crew that still needs to learn and to grow—emotionally, spiritually, administratively, and theologically. It’s a crew that needs to be reminded of their baptism (God’s claim and affirmation of their lives). It’s a crew that makes mistakes, needs forgiveness, needs redemption, needs reconciliation, and needs salvation.

It’s a crew that needs to gather around the table to remember and to be filled anew with God’s Spirit. It’s a crew that hesitates and needs to be coached into washing feet. Yes, we have been given a team, a crew that needs all this, but most importantly we have been gifted with a crew who needs leaders. Clergy and laity through whom Christ shines. Leaders who can clearly and consistently answer Jesus’ question, “But who do you say that I am?”

Who do you say that I am? - Jesus seeks to know. What does your life say about Jesus? What does your mission strategy (or lack of one) say about Jesus? What does how you handle congregational issues and disagreements with members of your congregation or even your pastor, lay leader, or DS say about Jesus? What do your words—all your words with all people—say about Jesus? Remember, Jesus said that it is what comes out of person that can make them unclean. What do your actions both seen and those taken when you think no one is looking say about Jesus?

Leaders, seeking to walk with Jesus, called for this time and place: Who do you really say – with all of your life – who do you say that Jesus is?

Mount Carmel – I Kings 18:6-40 (Elijah and the prophets of Baal)

Reflection: In I Kings 18:20-22, we find a pretty discouraged Elijah:

“I, even I only, am left a prophet of the Lord.” Ahab and Jezebel chase Elijah. Elijah calls the people of Israel to worship and there is no response. Have you ever felt discouraged or alone in your walk with Jesus, unable to feel his presence, unable to see God acting? What spiritual habits do you need to put in place? What spiritual resources, what regular use of the means of Grace can save you from spiritual depletion?

Megiddo – II Kings 23:29-30 (Death of King Josiah)

Megiddo is a raised fortification that protects and overlooks the Jezreel Valley. It dominates the route between Egypt and Syria, and because of its position, many battles were fought in this area. In fact, there may have been more battles fought there than in any other place in Israel. It has become one of the largest archeological excavations in Israel. In the future, the armies of the world will assemble there at Armageddon (Mount Megiddo) (Revelation 19:14-16) for the great battle. Megiddo appears in 12 Bible verses.

Tiberias

Tiberias is a city in the time of Christ, on the Sea of Galilee, first mentioned in the New Testament (John 6:1 John 6:23; 21:1) and then by Josephus, who states that it was built by Herod Antipas, and named in honor of the emperor Tiberius.

Tiberias was the capital of Galilee from the time of its origin until the reign of Herod Agrippa II. Many of the inhabitants were Greeks and Romans, and foreign customs prevailed there: to such an extent as to give offence to the stricter Jews. The Gospels give us no information that the Savior who spent so much of his public life in Galilee, ever visited Tiberias.



Call to Prayer:

L: God is a faithful King.

P: Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is One.

All: Praised be God's glorious sovereignty throughout all time.

A Reading: Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your might. And these words which I command you this day you shall take to heart. You shall diligently teach them to your children. You shall recite them at home and away, morning and night. You shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, they shall be a symbol above your eyes, and you shall inscribe them upon the doorposts of your homes and upon your gates. (*Deuteronomy 6:4-9*)

Prayer: Help us, our dear Lord, as we come to the end of this day, to lie down in peace; and awaken us to life again. Spread over us Your shelter of peace, guide us with Your good counsel. Save us because of Your mercy. Shield us from enemies and pestilence, from starvation, sword and sorrow. Remove the evil forces that surround us, shelter us in the shadow of Your wings. You, O God, guard us and deliver us. You are a gracious and merciful King. Guard our coming and our going, grant us life and peace, now and always. Praised is the Lord by day and praised by night, praised when we lie down and praised when we rise up. In Your hand are the souls of the living and the dead, the life of every creature, the breath of all flesh. Into Your hand I entrust my spirit: You will redeem me, Lord God of truth. Our God in Heaven, assert the unity of Your rule; affirm Your sovereignty, and reign over us forever. Amen

Biblical Verses (These biblical verses recall God's blessings and protection in ancient times:)

Then Jacob said: "May the angel who has redeemed me from all harm bless the lads. May they carry on my name and the name of my fathers, Abraham and Isaac. May they become teeming multitudes upon the earth." And God said: "If you will listen diligently to the voice of the Lord your God, doing what is right in His sight, heeding His mitzvot and keeping all His laws, then I will not inflict upon you any of the diseases that I brought upon the Egyptians, for I the Lord am your healer."

The angel of the Lord said to Satan: "The Lord rebuke you, Satan. May the Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you. Is not this man a brand snatched from the fire?" Behold Solomon carried in his litter — sixty of Israel's heroes are its escort. All of them are skilled swordsmen, all trained at war, each with his sword at the ready to ward off any danger of the night. May the Lord bless you and guard you. May the Lord show you favor and be gracious to you. May the Lord show you kindness and grant you peace.

The Guardian of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps.

Blessing and Thanksgiving

This is the day that the Lord has made! Thank you for your blessings throughout this day. Thank you for walking with us, Jesus, as we seek to walk more closely with you. Bless us now as we rest and fill us with your spirit this evening in ways that renew our mind, body, soul, and spirit so that we may awaken to your fullness of life ready to learn, and grow as disciples who multiply your transforming love and grace!

*** Adapted from various resources*