

People at Prayer

My discipleship, especially my prayer life, is encouraged and challenged as I reflect on people who I meet at prayer in the Bible.

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**BIBLE
SOCIETY**
Live light

Scripture taken from *The Holy Bible: NIV*

Day	Readings	Reference	Reflection/Question	Prayer
1	'I am a woman who is deeply troubled. I have not been drinking wine or beer; I was pouring out my soul to the LORD.	1 Samuel 1:15	Hannah's persistence in prayer is striking. Childless, and taunted by her rival, Hannah continues to pray. Even God's silence cannot still her life of prayer. The Bible records Hannah "pouring out her soul to the Lord". Do you desire to pour out your soul to the Lord?	Passionate and compassionate Christ, you poured out your soul in prayer at Gethsemane. Grant me passion, compassion and discipline that I may become more and more a person at prayer, pouring out my soul to you. Amen.
2	And Mary said: 'My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me – holy is his name. His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation.'	Luke 1:46-55	In Mary, we hear a heart nurtured by the Bible: in this case by Hannah's prayer in 1 Samuel 1. Intuitively, at a time of deep emotion, Mary's prayer is shaped by the words of a biblical prayer. Are your prayers nurtured by the words of Scripture?	Nurturing Lord, may my prayer life be steeped in the richness of the prayer life of the people I meet in the Bible. Amen.
3	And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.	Ephesians 3:17-21	Paul's outburst of praise is marvellous and exhilarating! He is in the midst of a long letter, but as he writes on the work of God in Christ he is overcome with emotion and bursts forth in praise. God's grandeur and glory overwhelm him. As you read of the work of Christ in the Bible, ask the Holy Spirit to sensitise your heart and mind to God's marvellous ways, and let forth praise! As you reflect on Christ, for what in particular do you praise God?	Glorious God, you do immeasurably more than we could ever ask or imagine. Help us to grasp how wide and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge, that I and my Christian community may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Amen.

People at Prayer (continued)

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4	<p>After Jesus said this, he looked towards heaven and prayed:</p> <p>‘Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.</p> <p>‘My prayer is not for them (my current disciples) alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you.</p>	John 17:1-3, 20,21	<p>This prayer excites me. What a joy to know that when Jesus was praying with and for his small band of disciples 2000 years ago, he was also praying for me, for us who are living today! We are “those who will believe in me (Jesus) through their (the disciples’) message (about Jesus).” PTL!</p> <p>Are you an answer to Jesus’ prayer? Do you believe in Jesus? - If so, you are an answer to his prayer! If not, will you take time to become an answer to his prayer?</p>	Prayerful Lord Jesus, thank you for praying for me even as you approached the time of dying for me. Such love! Such prayer! Thank you. Amen.
5	<p>‘LORD, the God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and keep his commandments, let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father’s family, have committed against you. We have acted very wickedly towards you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws you gave your servant Moses.’</p>	Nehemiah 1:4-7	<p>Nehemiah’s confession has always challenged me, because he includes himself in confessing the sins of the people. This is not “forgive those sinners, Lord” but rather Nehemiah says, “for we sinners”, which includes himself, the one praying. It shows a lot of humility to see your own sin, as well as the sin of others.</p> <p>When you ask for God’s mercy and forgiveness do you include yourself in those prayers?</p>	Forgiving Lord, through your Spirit humble my spirit that seeing my people’s failures and rebellion, I see our failures and rebellion and confess that ‘we’ have sinned and ‘we’ must amend ‘our’ life. In Jesus Christ, our redeemer’s name. Amen.
6	<p>Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord, ... they cried to the Lord for help.</p>	Judges 4:1-3	<p>Judges records a series of extraordinary events. Again and again, God’s people sin, they cry out to God, and God saves them. You can almost sense God saying, “Get the message Israel, I act through my people, women and men, so get with the program!”</p> <p>Are you alert to God speaking to you and ready to support people who are struggling to obey God’s word?</p>	Dear Lord of History, keep me alert to your voice and obedient to it, unafraid to help others who may be faltering in obedience. Amen.

People at Prayer (continued)

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7	Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died – more than that, who was raised to life – is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.	Romans 8:34	<p>Be amazed! Jesus Christ is at the right hand of God interceding for us! As a young Christian, I recall coming to this realisation that the risen and ascended Lord of All, the Alpha and the Omega, the Almighty, was interceding for me! How humbling is that? Jesus Christ continues to watch over us from his seat at the right hand, the authority side, of God and continues his shepherding of us to ensure that we persevere in our faith. Satan, evil, chaos and the glitter of this world threaten our discipleship but Christ Jesus is interceding for us to stay strong and steadfast. What comfort!</p> <p>Do you believe that Jesus is interceding for your protection and perseverance to your life's end as a disciple of Christ? In what ways does this truth influence your own prayer life?</p>	Christ Jesus, ascended advocate, thank you for your constant commitment to me. Thank you for your watchful eye and passionate shepherd heart that intercedes for my perseverance to fight the good fight, to finish the race and to keep the faith. Amen.
8	Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness.	Acts 4:29	<p>It strikes me that when believers join together in prayer, that is God's dream coming true. The believers' dedication in proclaiming Christ has brought their leaders before the authorities. In prayer, they signal their unwavering dedication to proclaim the goodness and grace of Jesus Christ.</p> <p>Do you pray to speak of Christ with great boldness? Do you make time to pray with your Christian community that you the community may speak the word of God boldly?</p>	Sovereign Lord, through the Holy Spirit enable us, your servants, to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus. In your mercy, use your people's boldness in prayer and proclamation to bring our nation to repentance, faith and obedience to you. Amen.

People at Prayer (continued)

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9	While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' Then he fell on his knees and cried out, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them.' When he had said this, he fell asleep.	Acts 7:59-60	<p>Stephen's prayer of forgiveness strikes me hard. I have witnessed great evil, and to forgive certain perpetrators is an enormous challenge. It is no easy task to truly forgive great evil. Yet Stephen, in the midst of an angry mob who are soon dragging him along the ground and hurling stones at him, is able to summon his faith in Christ. He appeals to Christ not to hold this horrendous sin of stoning against his assailants. Do you recall the last words of the 21 Coptic Christians martyred in Libya by ISIS in 2015? - "Lord, Jesus Christ". Our prayers, especially our last prayers, reveal our heart, our deepest yearnings.</p> <p>Is Jesus Christ your deepest yearning? How can your yearning for Christ and his kingdom be deepened?</p>	Ever Present Lord of life and death, train me through your Spirit to look always to you in the good times, so that when the going gets tough, I will intuitively turn to you, my Lord and Saviour. Strengthen my acknowledgement of you as Judge, my understanding of your coming judgement of evil and my capacity to live with the pain of unjudged evil in this life. Amen.
10	<p>'This, then, is how you should pray:</p> <p>"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."</p>	Matthew 6:9-13	<p>This prayer, often called the Lord's Prayer because the Lord Jesus prayed it, is actually a prayer for his disciples to pray – it's the Disciples' Prayer - this is how we are to pray.</p> <p>Do you pray this prayer? Does it shape your prayers? In what ways?</p>	<p>My Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give me today my daily bread. And forgive me my debts, as I also have forgiven my debtors. And lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from the evil one. Amen</p>

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11	With many other words he [the Apostle Peter] warned them; and he pleaded with them, 'Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.' Those who accepted his message were baptised, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.	Acts 2:40-44	The events on the day of Pentecost are extraordinary: the disciples filled with the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues, Peter preaching Jesus of Nazareth and about three thousand baptised! What an outpouring of God's power for salvation! What joy! And the growing Jesus community is radical in many ways, but don't miss that everyone devoted themselves to prayer. This is the act of the Christian. How do you devote yourself to prayer?	Listening Lord, assist me to gather with Christian brothers and sisters in prayer that I may be strengthened to converse with you, learn to hear your voice as I read your word, the Bible, and respond to you that I may grow to be a person of prayer in a community of prayer. Amen.
12	On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshipper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message.	Acts 16:11-15	"A place of prayer" – how beautiful! A particular place was known as a place of prayer, a sacred place. Lydia had been at prayer, God replied abundantly and Lydia responded strongly. The Holy Spirit is ever at work prompting, leading, and responding to people at prayer. When we gather in prayer, do we expect God to answer?	Intimate Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, you delight in your people at prayer. Strengthen our discipline and faith, that places of prayer would multiply and be honoured as sacred places of meeting with you. Bless us when we meet in prayer. Make us strong to act. Amen.
13	May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.	2 Corinthians 13:14	Grace is a key descriptor of God's action towards us in Christ. Grace is shown pre-eminently to us in the Lord Jesus Christ: in his life, death and resurrection for us. A distinction: Grace is God's unmerited favour towards us whereas mercy is God's overlooking of wrongdoing. Little wonder that people at prayer ask for the blessing of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ upon God's people! Is there a particular group of God's people for whom you can pray this blessing of grace today?	May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with my Christian community today; thinking especially of [insert someone you know here]. Amen.

People at Prayer (continued)

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14	Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.	Revelation 22:20b	<p>This short prayer of John, following as it does the revelation of God's sovereign majesty in history, captures his heart's desire for this revelation to be established as soon as possible – like now! The revelation to John commenced with a vision of the glorified Christ and it continues through the battles for God's rule until the day when there will be a new heaven and a new earth and God himself will dwell among his people, and death, mourning, crying and pain will be no more. John is overwhelmed by the revelation of God's glory and wonder and yearns for God's reign to be established now! Hence John's passionate prayer, "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus".</p> <p>Do you long for Christ's coming? What aspects of Christ's return are most significant for you? How then do you pray?</p>	Almighty Alpha and Omega, the Returning Lord of Heaven and Earth, come we pray in your glory to establish your kingdom in fullness: your rule of mercy, justice and peace that we might worship you in holiness. Amen.