

# A YEAR OF PRAYER



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## Preface

Friends naturally want to talk to one another. We like to hear one another's voices and are interested in what our friends have to say, even as they are interested in what we have to say. But it goes beyond that. With trusted friends we make not only small talk about trivial matters; with trusted friends we dare to reveal our personal thoughts and confide our inner feelings. Mutually engaging in conversation, sharing our thoughts and feelings with trusted friends enriches our lives.

What is true between human friends is just as true and much more so between Christians and God. God in his amazing love has made us his friends through Christ. Jesus said to his disciples, "I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you" (John 15:15). A key aspect of God's friendship with us in Christ is that he has talked to us—in human language that we can understand and not just about trivial things. God has shared the most sacred thoughts of his heart with us—his plan of salvation for sinners. "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). That and much more God has shared with us in his written Word—the Bible.

In the Bible, God invites us as his friends, through faith in Christ, to engage in conversation with him, to come and talk to him in prayer, to share with him our deepest thoughts, our feelings, desires, needs, requests, and longings. And God's invitation comes with his promise: He promises that he is always there to listen and to respond as only God always can and does, always for our eternal good.

Many Christians find that as much as they value prayer and want to talk to God regularly, sometimes the thoughts and words do not always come easily. For that reason, many find value in prayer aids to help them with their words, to remind

them of blessings for which to thank God, to pray for the needs of others, and to pray for some of their own needs that they might otherwise overlook.

That is the purpose of this book. *A Year of Prayer* contains a brief prayer for every morning and evening for every day of the year. The prayers have been gathered from several volumes of the devotional periodical called *Meditations Daily Devotional*. These prayers offer a fine way to help you begin and close each day with private prayer conversations with God, your heavenly Friend.

## WEEK 1—SUNDAY

### **Morning Prayer**

Lord God, heavenly Father, because of your tender mercy, I am privileged to open my eyes once again. Lord Jesus Christ, because of your amazing grace, I am privileged to enter your courts this day and give you thanks and praise. Lord God, Holy Spirit, because of your quiet work in me, I count it my privilege to hear and believe your Word. O Holy Trinity, bless my worship this day. Amen.

### **Evening Prayer**

Lord God, my eyes have seen your salvation once again. Your Son was crucified and raised again for me! Bury that truth deep in my heart this night. Let your gospel grow in me and produce fruits that are pleasing to you. Grant rest to my body tonight, just as you gave rest to my soul this morning. Amen.

## WEEK 1—MONDAY

### **Morning Prayer**

Heavenly Father, I wake this morning to a new week of possibilities. There are so many ways to serve you, so many potential paths to take, so many people to meet! I seek your blessings upon my words and ways this day. Let my hands be dedicated to your service, my mouth to your message, and my heart to your glory. I enter this week as your child. Father, guide me! Amen.

### **Evening Prayer**

Lord, the day is drawing to a close. But before I close my eyes tonight, I must open my heart for your examination. My hands were not always helping hands. My mouth was not always a messenger of peace. My heart was often divided—for you, yet at times against you. Forgive me. Renew me for your service. And grant me a good night's rest in the peace of your forgiveness. Amen.

## WEEK 1—TUESDAY

### **Morning Prayer**

Heavenly Father, you set the lonely persons in families. I praise you this day for the gift of my family and the role you have given me in it. Equip me for the challenges of family life. Give me eyes to see the blessings I have in my family. I entrust my family and all I love into your strong hands this day. In Jesus' name. Amen.

### **Evening Prayer**

Lord Jesus, when you hung upon the cross, you received the full wrath of your Father for me and my sins. I haven't always been the family member you have called me to be. But I know that because of your grace, I am now viewed by your Father as a perfect child. Grant that your forgiveness will settle upon my loved ones and give peace to our hearts as we journey toward our home in heaven. Amen.

## WEEK 1—WEDNESDAY

### **Morning Prayer**

Lord, your Word tells me that you appoint the exact times and places that we are to live in this world. You have placed so many people into my life. I could not begin to count them even if I tried: family and friends, neighbors and strangers, fellow workers and acquaintances. Today help me view each and every face I meet as an opportunity to serve you. Amen.

### **Evening Prayer**

Every face I meet is an opportunity to serve you. Forgive me for often turning my face away. Every person I speak to is in need of the message of your grace. Forgive my silence. Each man, woman, and child is a person for whom you died. Forgive me for being dead to their needs. In the power of your forgiveness, help me love my neighbor as myself. Amen.

## WEEK 1—THURSDAY

### **Morning Prayer**

Lord Jesus, you are the Lord of the church. I can, therefore, confidently approach your throne this morning on behalf of my church. Allow my congregation, its members, and its staff to take a firm stand upon your Word and sacraments. Guide its every effort to reach people with your precious gospel. Bless us all with a zeal to work for you while it is still day! Amen.

### **Evening Prayer**

Lord Jesus, as I look at my congregation and at my heart, I have divided feelings. Instead of a rock-solid reliance upon your Word, we have often made friends with worldly ways and means. Instead of a burning zeal to share you, we have often barely whimpered your truth—fearful of what others might think. Renew me. Forgive me. Help me share the joy I find in you with many others at my church. Amen.

## WEEK 1—FRIDAY

### **Morning Prayer**

O Holy Spirit, through your precious Word and sacrament, you have made my heart your home. How wonderful it is that you have placed me into the fellowship of thousands of like-minded brothers and sisters. Hinder every one of Satan's efforts to destroy this blessed fellowship. Keep our focus upon your message and your mission. Bless all the work we carry out together in your precious name. Amen.

### **Evening Prayer**

Lord Jesus, send your holy angels to watch over our missionaries who serve for us in foreign lands. Send the Spirit of wisdom upon our professors who are busy training a new generation of gospel messengers. Guide and direct our

leadership so that they may use our resources to the greatest possible advantage. And grant us all a Spirit-given zeal for your work. Amen.

## WEEK 1—SATURDAY

### **Morning Prayer**

Heavenly Father, I come before you at the end of another week. May the passing of this week remind me of how quickly earthly life flies by. Forgive me for every wasted moment and every lost opportunity to serve you. By the power of your forgiveness, keep me focused on my future reward in Christ Jesus—a crown of life that will never pass away. Amen.

### **Evening Prayer**

Lord Jesus, as I prepare to praise your name tomorrow morning, I am saddened by the knowledge that many of my brothers and sisters are making excuses to stay away from worship. Use me to reach them. Stir up the hearts of our members to reach out to those who are wandering and wavering in the faith. In the peace of your forgiveness, grant me a good night's rest and awaken me for another Sunday celebration of your resurrection. Amen.

— MY THOUGHTS FOR PRAYERS —