

COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS

Prayer Guide

When we pray, we are intentionally in the presence of God. E. Stanley Jones wrote, "Prayer is not an occasional exercise to which you turn now and then; it is a life attitude." (16) The following prayer guide focuses on prayers regarding unity, humility, release, and surrender. While well meaning, we can be unaware of our pride and self-confidence. Jesus reminds us, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." (Matthew 11:29) More than just another activity to add on to a busy life, the hope is that this prayer guide will assist us as individuals and as local congregations in deepening our habits for prayer which will result in changed attitudes.

In God's presence sometimes we speak and sometimes we are silent. Sometimes we come boldly and at other times in great humility and repentance. In God's presence we are reminded we do not have all knowledge. It is in prayer before the Triune God that we encounter our truest selves before the starkest reality - God is God and we are not. Here we are fallible, convicted, encouraged, and transformed by God's presence who empowers us by grace. In prayer we are surrounded by the great cloud of witnesses and reminded of the diversity of saints who have gone before us and are alive now in the body of Christ.

Prayer, more than any other means, will be the instrument of *encouragement* to engage and stay engaged in Courageous Conversations. May this prayer guide help guide you (and your church) into the transforming grace of God.

How to Use this Prayer Guide

This prayer guide is intended for both individuals and groups. Some prayers use the singular voice ("I" or "me") while others use the plural ("us" "we") voice. When used collectively feel free to change the plural to the singular and vice versa. This prayer guide has a loose format and is designed to be flexible. Feel free to adapt it to your purposes. Copy and paste as needed.

Some prayers you may deem useful for corporate worship. If used as part of a series of Courageous Conversations in a local church, the church body could use certain prayers before and following church dialogues. Being committed to pray together and for each other can be a powerful force for individual and communal transformation.

With some prayers you might discern the need to pray repeatedly. One practice could be to copy and paste the prayers into your electronic calendar. That way at specific times of the day you could be reminded to stop and pray.

Another way you could approach the following prayer is by choosing one per day of the week. Perhaps praying it morning, afternoon, and before bedtime.

Invitation

Perhaps you have encounter specific prayers that have been particularly meaningful for you regarding humility and surrender. Feel free to [submit those prayers in the comments](#) so that others might benefit as well.

“Let me not, when this morning prayer is said, think my worship ended and spend the day in forgetfulness of Thee. Rather from these moments of quietness let light go forth, and joy, and power, that will remain with me through all the hours of the day;
Keeping me chaste in thought:
Keeping me temperate and truthful in speech:
Keeping me humble in my estimation of myself:
Keeping me honorable and generous in my dealings with others:
Keeping me mindful of my eternal destiny as a child of Thine:
Be my Guide through all that is dark and doubtful...Gladden my heart with Thy peace; through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.”

John Ballie *A Diary of Private Prayer* p. 9

“Father in heaven, we thank You again and again for giving us Your Son, for sending Him into the world, to show us how much You love us. We sometimes forget to be grateful; we sometimes seem to love ourselves more than we love You.
Forgive us our weaknesses, heal our sinfulness, give us an awareness of the presence of Jesus in the world and in our lives. Let us understand and teach others how holy the world is for having had Jesus live here. Let us reverence all things, since all things were created through Your Word. Let us treat one another as holy, since You treasure everyone as Your own. Help us to live as Jesus lived. Amen”

The Prayers of Father Killian (January 3rd)

Gracious God, we declare with our best intentions to know and do your will. During our fleeting moments of reflection, we find that we have done only our will. In this place and at this time, we recommit to patiently listening for your still small voice though the noise of our busy lives. Holy Spirit, give us the wisdom to discern your voice of grace and truth. Give us the characteristics and disposition to embody the Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) in all our words and actions. Amen.

Jesus, you have called to love all people as you modeled for us (Matthew 5:43-44, John 3:16). Even though we don't like to admit it, we have enemies or at least those we have made enemies through grudges or in our self-pride. Lord, reveal to us those for whom we still harbor

anger, jealousy, or contempt. Help us be mindful when words and phrases that cause us pain are uttered, that we might search within for your guidance instead of resorting to fear, silence, or fighting. Today, guide me to cling tightly to your Spirit, that empowered by your grace, I would display radical grace and hospitality. Amen.

Too often O Lord, people have not encountered the church as a place of reconciliation, forgiveness, humility and love. My prayer today is that where I need to be corrected, rebuked, or chastised help me to hear from you and so transformed by your grace that others would experience the beauty of your church through me.

Father, strengthen my commitment to hear, not just the words that others speak to me today, but to hear how you are at work in their lives. Guide me to hear your truths and where your Spirit is leading me and others. By your grace, empower me to take a posture of listening, care, and compassion, may I hear what You are trying to teach me. Amen.

Jesus, you prayed that your followers would be one (John 17:11). More than just unity of beliefs, this is to be unity of mission with You at our center, at our base, at our forefront, meeting us as we love and serve one another. Today the church exists as a fractured body broken into thousands of denominations. Reform us, revive us, renew us, and teach us again how to follow your example of loving with a servant's heart. Help us to forgive as you have forgiven us. Help us to let go of our grudges, to forgive our enemies, and to treat others as we would want to be treated (Matthew 7:12) - even those who would betray us, much as you did with Judas and Peter. Amen.

With the rich ruler (Luke 18:18), you Jesus did not back down. You had the courage to name the barrier that kept him from a fulfilling relationship with you. Lord, speak to my heart today, that I would hear what barriers exists between us - my pride, self-assurance, fear of embarrassment, fear of being "found-out." Give me confidence that comes from being a child of God and give me the courage to let go of whatever obstacles I carry, that in the letting go I would be freed with arms and hands to receive you and be transformed by your life giving love. Amen.

Lord you call us to have the mind of Christ (Philippians 2:5). We confess that our minds are often distracted and focused on selfish pursuits. Forgive us, O Lord. May your Holy Spirit wash us and renew us - all of us - from our most base appetites to our fleeting thoughts. May the power of your grace cause us to be made closer into your image that our thoughts, behaviors, and words would so closely mimic Jesus others would be caught off guard by such manifestations of Your Love. Amen.

Lord we have heard it stated, "growing up is hard to do." It is never truer than when we seek to grow in grace and godliness. We admit, that too often we become slaves to our habits, passions, and emotions. We see it in others and are still surprised after all these years to see our own immaturity and childishness. Forgive us of our pride and self-confidence. May our words be life giving instead of life draining, encouraging instead of demeaning, hope-filled instead of cynical, joyful instead of sarcastic. Help someone else experience your grace and mercy through my presence, actions, and words this day. Amen.

Father, I confess that I have not always showed compassion to others as You have called me to do. Jesus, I confess that I have not given compassion to myself as I should. I replay my missteps when you would rather me focus on your grace, mercy, and forgiveness. Envelope my need to be "right" with your arms of compassion that would remind me being a child of God does not assure complete knowledge or to be without fault. Holy Spirit, renew and remake me according to your image that I would display the Fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, generosity, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). Amen.

Holy Trinity, may I see your beauty like never before. Your beauty that outshines the loveliest vistas, Your beauty that should redefine how we think of beauty - a beauty displayed in the cruciform shape of self-giving love. May we behold the beauty of who you are and who you are creating us to be. Lord, too often we feel dirty, guilty, afraid, and full of shame. In our fear, help us to see the beauty of everlasting life. In our guilt, help us to see the beauty of your forgiveness. In our shame, help us to see the beauty of your mercy. Help us to look beyond our gaze that we might catch a glimpse of the beautiful life, the beautiful community you model for us in the love of the Father in sending the Son, the Son giving His life willingly back to the Father, empowered by the Holy Spirit who glorifies the Father and the Son. Help us to live into a vision shaped by the beauty of your grace this day. Amen.