

# Sweet Hour of Prayer

*Couldn't you watch with me even one hour? (Matt. 26:40)*

## 1. Enter and slow down

Find a place in the church or your home without distractions. Turn off your phone. Move away from other people. Imagine yourself entering the throne room of God the king. You are in the presence of the wisdom of the ages, don't speak incessantly as you converse with God.

Begin by enjoying the words of the following prayer. Linger over the phrases of this prayer until they cease being just words and become your desires.

*"Almighty God, my heavenly father, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires are known, and from whom no secrets are hid. Cleanse the thoughts of my heart by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that I may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Christ my Lord. Amen"*

As time allows, reflect on this portion of the written word from the 27<sup>th</sup> Psalm:

*Hear me as I pray, O LORD.*

*Be merciful and answer me!*

*My heart has heard you say, "Come and talk with me."*

*And my heart responds, "LORD, I am coming."*

*Do not turn your back on me.*

*Do not reject your servant in anger.*

*You have always been my helper.*

*Don't leave me now; don't abandon me,*

*O God of my salvation!*

*Even if my father and mother abandon me,*

*the LORD will hold me close.*

## 2. Is anyone thankful?

(You may choose to adopt the orans posture of hands raised in thanksgiving)

*"Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you...."* (1 Thess. 5:18)



-Thank God for who he is. Name specific attributes such as: love as seen in the Father, grace as seen in the Son, comfort as seen in the Spirit, etc.

-Thank God for everything you can think of in the last 24 hours.

-Thank him for specific things he has done in history: your history, your family and friend's histories, and the history of the world.

-When you run out of things to thank him for, be silent before God with a deep sense of gratitude to him. Allow him to bring to your mind other things for which you should give him thanks.

As time allows, reflect on this portion of the written word from the 98<sup>th</sup> Psalm:

*Let the sea and everything in it shout his praise!*

*Let the earth and all living things join in.*

*Let the rivers clap their hands in glee!*

*Let the hills sing out their songs of joy  
before the LORD,*

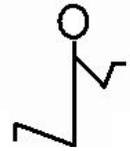
*for he is coming to judge the earth.*

*He will judge the world with justice,  
and the nations with fairness.*

### **3. Are you giving in?**

(You may choose to adopt the submissive posture of kneeling or lying prone)

"...let them (your bodies) be a living and holy sacrifice."(Romans 12:1)



-Review the past 24 hours and confess to God anything in your life that was not in submission to him and ask for forgiveness.

-Pray earnestly for the grace to submit to God for his healing the parts of your past that are preventing you from loving purely in the present.

-Acknowledge and confess any place where you have belittled or thought less of others who are equally made in the image of God because of their race or ethnicity.

-Make yourself a living sacrifice by giving all of yourself to all of God: Slowly and deliberately submit your body, mind, spirit, attitudes, words, thoughts, actions, and feelings to God. Allow the Holy Spirit to heal any broken places in your life that he brings to mind as you offer yourself to him. Allow him to bring order out of your chaos.

-Offer your whole self to God so that you do not have to live as a victim of any person, or any fear, any anger, or any circumstance, but are free to love the way that Jesus loves the Father and loves people.

-Offer yourself to God by affirming to him that this day you will keep your heart free of any ill will toward any person.

-Name your fears and release them to him. Wait quietly before him and allow yourself to be immersed in his perfect love for you. Allow his perfect love for you to free you from your fears.

-Name your angers and let them go; Recall where you might be angry at people, policies, injustices and institutions. Release them to our just God who sees everything.

-Allow yourself to be overtaken by a profound sense of joy as you submit fully to God.

As time allows, reflect on this portion of the written word from the 95<sup>th</sup> Psalm:

*Come, let us worship and bow down.*

*Let us kneel before the LORD our maker,*

*for he is our God.  
We are the people he watches over,  
the flock under his care.*

#### **4. Is there trouble anywhere?**

(You may choose to adopt the supplicant posture of standing, head bowed)

*“When Jesus heard them, he stopped and called, ‘What do you want me to do for you?’” (Matthew 20:32)*



*Pray against the pandemic*

-Pray for comfort for the families of those who have died.

-Pray that the COVID-19 virus may be restrained and a vaccine made available.

*Pray against racial injustice*

-Pray for those who suffer from injustice because of their race or ethnicity.

-Pray that our country may become more just towards persons of color and immigrants.

*Pray for human institutions*

-Pray for President Trump, Governor Whitmer, local officials and government leaders.

-Pray for our neighboring leaders, President López Obrador of Mexico and Prime Minister Trudeau of Canada.

-Pray for the November elections, that values of the Kingdom of God will be honored.

-Pray for Spring Arbor University and other schools as they navigate re-opening.

*Pray for the worldwide church*

-Pray that through the church, *“the earth will be filled with an awareness of the glory of God.”* (Habakkuk 2:14)

-Pray for Christians in other lands who are often in danger of death and imprisonment.

-Pray that the Lord would send out workers into the harvest field so the church will multiply.

-Pray for an obedient church; pray especially that hospitality and encouragement would flow out of it.

*Pray for Spring Arbor Free Methodist Church (SAFMC)*

-Pray for Pastor Kolde and all those who provide leadership at SAFMC.

-Pray that SAFMC may be a place of salvation for lost people you know.

-Pray for “found people” in the body of SAFMC that they may grow daily into the likeness of Christ.

-Pray for a future of SAFMC that includes much fruitfulness.

-Pray against division, idle talk and what John Wesley calls “evil-speaking” in SAFMC

*Pray for specific people*

-Pray for the present and future of individuals about whom you care and for whom you have been called to pray.

-Pray that God's grace will be lavished in their lives and situations; that God will redeem them by giving them:

- grace for repentance,
- grace for healing,
- grace for protection, and
- grace for purity.

-Pray that these people would come to hate their sin; pray that issues that are keeping the will of God from prevailing would be exposed.

-Pray that you will be a source of encouragement in their lives and situations.

*Pray for your family*

-Pray for your descendants, to several generations in the future, including their future spouses.

-Pray that none of your family would be missing in heaven.

*Pray for yourself*

-Discuss with God your need for specific provisions for this day.

-Ask for your “ear” to be attuned to the Holy Spirit’s whispers.

-Ask for the assistance of the Spirit to make righteous decisions.

-Ask for help in resisting temptation. Name your temptations to God.

-Ask for grace for peace, protection, and for purity.

As time allows, reflect on this portion of the written word from the 67<sup>th</sup> Psalm:

*May your ways be known throughout the earth,  
your saving power among people everywhere.*

*May the nations praise you, O God.*

*Yes, may all the nations praise you.*

*Let the whole world sing for joy,*

*because you govern the nations with justice  
and guide the people of the whole world.*

## **5. Now what?**

(You may choose to adopt the sitting posture as you contemplate)

*“If you need wisdom, ask our generous God” (James 1:5)*



-Spend time waiting and listening to God about the next steps in your life:

What is the next step in your relationship with your family?

What is the next step in your spiritual growth?

What is the next step in your efforts to see justice abound?

What is the next step in your ministry?

-Pray for wisdom and for grace to submit to and obey what he has revealed to you in these prayers.

-Pray all of this in the power of the life, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus.

As time allows, reflect on this portion of the written word from the 40<sup>th</sup> Psalm:

*I have told all your people about your justice.*

*I have not been afraid to speak out,*

*as you, O LORD, well know.*

*I have not kept the good news of your justice hidden in my heart;*

*I have talked about your faithfulness and saving power.*

*I have told everyone in the great assembly*

*of your unfailing love and faithfulness.*

Created by David & Yvonne Roller with many thanks to Superintendent David Harvey for his permission to borrow liberally from “How to Pray for One Hour.”

Scripture quotations from the New Living Translation

## **Children's Prayer Guide**

Don't worry about how you pray, just remember that God can hear you and loves to hear your voice. You can also pray by being silent and listening...sometimes you will know that God is talking to you. Other times it's okay to just be quiet and know he's near you.

You will be making eight drawings to help you pray.

### **Thank God**

Draw three pictures of things you're thankful for. As you draw, talk to God about what's in your heart.

### **Be sorry for wrong**

Draw one picture of a person who is sorry for doing wrong. As you draw, tell God about anything you've done wrong and let him forgive you. Don't forget how much he loves you!

### **Pray for things that worry you**

Draw two pictures of things that you're worried about. As you draw, give your worry to God and don't take it back!

### **Ask God**

Draw a picture of what you'd like to look like in one year. As you draw, ask God to help you become a better person.

Draw a picture of any way your church can be different in one year. As you draw, ask God to show you one thing you can do so the church may look like that?

When the time is up you can either keep your pictures or throw them away. Think about keeping the last 2 pictures to help remind you to pray during this next year.