



Abide

Whoever says, "I abide in him,"
ought to walk just as he walked.

1 John 4 : 7-16

Prayers and Scripture
for Lent 2018

Georgetown Baptist Church

Introduction

Lent is a season of preparation. Easter is coming some 40 days from now. The biggest celebration in Christian life, the acknowledgement that, though Jesus died, yet he lives! He conquered sin and death. He made a way for us to be with God. For such a celebration, we want our hearts to be ready.

For many, Lent is a season of self-denial. People often choose something they love or spend time or money on to give up for Lent. Others choose to add something to their routine during Lent—scripture reading or prayer for example.

Whatever you do, whether addition or subtraction, Lent is about making space to be with God, to abide in the presence of God. I hope that these suggested practices, scriptures, and prayers help you to dwell with God and remain close to God's spirit this season.

Ash Wednesday, February 14 - 17

Spiritual Practice: Confession

As we consider the road to the cross and begin this Lenten journey, we remember the reason for the cross—our sin. Confession is an often overlooked portion of prayer. Between the requests and the thanks we offer to God, we may forget the reflecting and repenting actions of Confession. Ash Wednesday calls us to remember our impermanence and our imperfection cast against the backdrop of God’s unending, perfect love. Let us take stock this week and confess our sins to God.

Scripture

Psalm 51:1-4

Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion
blot out my transgressions.
Wash away all my iniquity
and cleanse me from my sin.

For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is always before me.
Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight;
so you are right in your verdict
and justified when you judge.

Prayer

O Merciful God, who answerest the poor,
Answer us,
O Merciful God, who answerest the lowly in spirit,
Answer us,
O Merciful God, who answerest the broken of heart,
Answer us.
O Merciful God,
Answer us.
O Merciful God,
Have compassion.
O Merciful God,
Redeem.
O Merciful God,
Save.
O Merciful God, have pity upon us,
Now,
Speedily,
And at a near time.

February 18 - 24

Spiritual Practice: Silence

So often prayer tends toward talking instead of listening. This week, take time to be silent, to be still, to listen for the voice of God.

Scripture

Psalm 46:10

“Be still, and know that I am God!
I am exalted among the nations,
I am exalted in the earth.”

Prayer

I am serene because I know thou lovest me.
Because thou lovest me, naught can move me from my peace.
Because thou lovest me, I am as one to whom all good has come.

Gaelic Prayer, tr. Alistair MacLean

February 25 - March 3

Spiritual Practice: Writing

Writing can be a helpful and therapeutic spiritual practice. Spend some time writing whatever comes to mind. It doesn't have to be good; don't edit your thoughts. Set a timer for 10-15 minutes, put pen to paper, and just write. Let the flow of thoughts and movement of pen be your honest communication with the Divine.

Scripture

1 John 4:16-19

So we have known and believe the love that God has for us.

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. We love because he first loved us.

Prayer

My spirit has become dry because it forgets to feed on you.

St. John of the Cross

March 4 - 10

Spiritual Practice: Reflection

Where do you dwell? A house, condo, apartment? Upstairs, your own room, a shared space, in the basement? On your own, or with assistance? Take a few moments and reflect on your home as a place of shelter...rest...refuge...fortress.

If you are able, walk outside. Look upon your dwelling. Take a few steps and view it from another angle. Think of the people who live nearby and your hopes for them. Walk a bit further to another side of the building. Visualize the events in your home that draw you closer to God, practices and habits of yesterday and today that could be regular holy habits in the days to come. Move to an area where you can see a door.

When people enter your home, what experience do you desire for them?

If the weather does not permit today, schedule another day for this exercise. If you are physically unable to walk outside due to illness or fatigue, open a window or gaze upon the images in your mind's eye.

Scripture

Psalm 91:1-2

The one who dwells in the shelter of the Most High
will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.

I will say of the Lord, "Yahweh is my refuge and my fortress,
my God, in whom I trust.

Prayer

Wherever I go today, O God, let me go with you.
I desire to dwell in your shelter
To rest in your shadow
To know you as refuge and fortress.
In you I trust, today and always.
Amen.

March 11 - 17

Spiritual Practice: Service

God calls us to bear fruit, to be changed and show evidence of that change in our behavior. So much of that change concerns how we treat others. Scripture calls us to go beyond claims of internal transformation to acts of service. Spend some time this week serving others. Think especially of the small and meaningful services you can perform: the kind words you can write, text, or speak, the chore you can take over, the patience you can show, the hug you can bestow...

Scripture

John 15:4-5

Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.

Prayer

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me, save that thou art,
Thou my best thought, by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

Traditional Irish Prayer

March 18 - 24

Spiritual Practice: Breath Prayers

Breath prayers are short, one sentence or phrase prayers meant to be repeated over and over again as you breathe deeply. Choose a phrase like, "Jesus Christ is Lord," or, "Here am I; send me!" Measure your breath to the repetition of the phrase. Inhale as you internally speak part of the phrase, exhale as you finish the phrase. Continue to breathe and pray your chosen sentence. Let the prayer connect body and soul as you meditate on those holy words.

Scripture

Isaiah 6:8

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I; send me!"

Prayer

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love,
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
Where there is sadness, joy.
O divine Master, Grant that I may not so much seek
To be consoled, as to console,
To be understood, as to understand,
To be loved as to love,
For it is in giving that we receive;
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
It is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

St. Francis of Assisi

Holy Week, March 25 - 31

Spiritual Practice: *Lectio Divina*

Lectio divina means holy reading. It is a way of reading scripture as devotion rather than study. In *lectio divina* one is meant to ruminate on the scriptures, to rest in the words and repetition of phrases. Choose a passage of scripture, perhaps the passage suggested below and its surrounding verses. Find a place where you might, ideally, read aloud. Begin to read, pausing at a word or phrase that stands out. Mumble the word(s) that stand out over and over again. When you feel other thoughts slipping in, go back to the text and continue reading. Throughout your reading, keep this question in mind:

“What does God have to say to me here, in this moment?”

Scripture

Isaiah 53:4-6

Surely he took up our pain
and bore our suffering,
yet we considered him punished by God,
stricken by him, and afflicted.
But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,
and by his wounds we are healed.
We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to our own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

Prayer

“The Cross”

I stand before the cross
and wonder.

To know the cross
Is to know Christ.

I stand before the cross
and fear.

To feel the cross
Is to feel Christ.

I kneel before the cross
and weep.

To gaze at the cross
Is to be a Christian,
And not until then.

I pray before the cross
and rejoice.

God, forgive us.