

 **SIM** 10 Days of Prayer 2022
By Prayer

A GLOBAL CELEBRATION

10 Days of Prayer 2022

Introduction

Throughout the Bible, we see God drawing humanity to Himself in faithful lovingkindness. As God interacts with people, various terms are revealed by God or ascribed to God. These include names, metaphors, epithets that describe a quality, and titles that describe position and authority. Over the next ten days, we will focus on some of these terms from the Old Testament so we can discover truths about God's character, purposes, priorities, and capabilities. A deep and intimate relationship with someone cannot be possible without self-disclosure and sharing. So, we thank God for revealing Himself so that we may draw closer to Him.

Please take the time to pause from your routines and give yourselves wholeheartedly to pray with the global family of SIM. While we can pray on our own, we have this unique privilege to express our oneness and celebrate our unity in the body of Christ. What a joy it will be for God to see us together, seeking His face and encouraging one another through prayer.

Just like the early believers in Jerusalem gathered to pray and wait for the promised gift of the Holy Spirit, may we also gather to pray with great expectation and be empowered afresh to make Christ known in communities where He is least known.

Cover artwork kindly provided by **Pete McCarthy** (*Shine 2020, 100cmx180cm, Acrylic, ink and paper on canvas*). Devotional written by husband-and-wife team, **Peter Chu** and **Hyon Kim**.



The LORD, Yahweh

Before the prayer meeting: Read Exodus 3

Gather for prayer and quiet your heart:

LORD, help us to be still and know that you are God. We know you are present and attentive to us. Help us to be present and attentive to you. *(Pause and prepare your hearts to worship the Lord.)*

Read and reflect on God's Word together: *(Let's not rush. Read slowly.)*

When the Lord saw that he (Moses) had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!" And Moses said, "Here I am." "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God (Ex. 3:4-6).

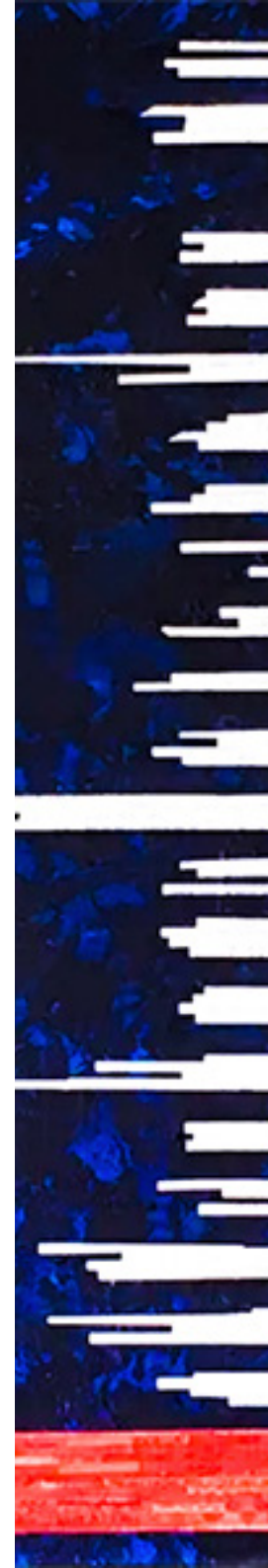
But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" And God said, "I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain." Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?" God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'" God also said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'The LORD (Yahweh), the God of your fathers - the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob - has sent me to you.' "This is my name forever, the name you shall call me from generation to generation" (Ex. 3:11-15).

Rejoice and praise God together:

Heavenly Father, this is an amazing story! Thank you that you are the God who remembers and fulfils your covenant promises. We stand in awe of how you appeared to Moses and invited him to join you in the work of delivering your people from their cruel oppressors. We are humbled as we remember that Moses' call was not based on his identity or ability, but on you and your promise to be with him. Your presence was all Moses needed - it is all anyone ever needs. We marvel at your patience, for when the promise of your presence didn't seem enough for Moses, you revealed your personal and special name, to assure him of your commitment to him, and those you would deliver.

Thank you for sharing your proper and personal name with us. Your name, the LORD (Yahweh)¹, is as weighty as a rain cloud with meaning. Our finite minds struggle to comprehend its depth. Thank you that through your countless and incredible acts of loving-kindness, we learn that your

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Day 1

name conveys that you are the God who wants us to know that “all that I am today to you, I will continue to be to you”.² We rejoice that every time we call on your name, the LORD, we are reminded of your unchanging, committed faithfulness to us.

LORD, our LORD, we praise your wonderful name. Thank you that your presence, the totality of who you are, will always be available to us for all times, in all places and through all circumstances. *(Pause to rejoice and praise God.)*

Pray and ask with great expectation:

LORD, forgive us when we take your presence for granted and live as if your presence is not enough. Father, help us to live with confident awareness that your presence is always with us.

Forgive us when we doubt your faithful, steadfast love for us. Jesus, thank you that you demonstrated in the profoundest way your faithful lovingkindness through your life, death, and resurrection. We wait in great anticipation for your return.

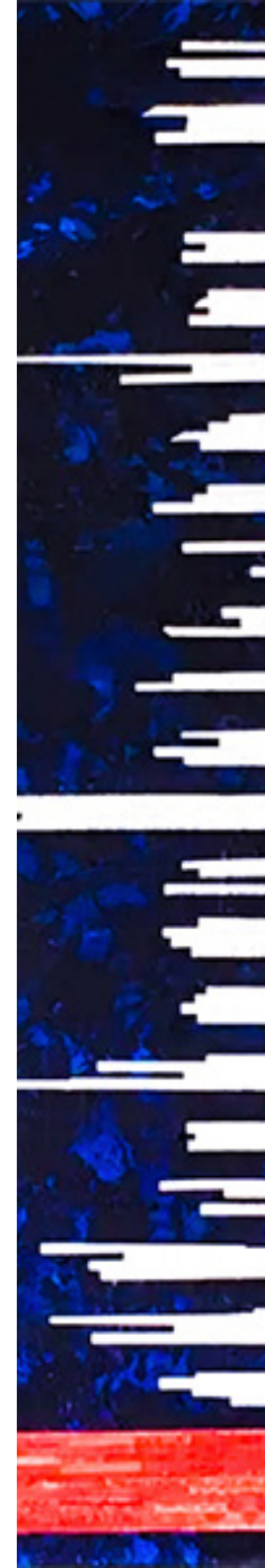
LORD, every time we speak or hear your name, help us to remember how you desire to make yourself known to the people of this world. Holy Spirit, help us to courageously cross barriers to express your love and compassion among those who are living and dying without you. Use us to make your great name known among the nations.

Thank you that you know our names. LORD, remember the names of our family, friends, and communities who do not yet know you. Please reveal your great name to them. *(Pause to pray for these people and communities.)*

LORD, it is 10 days before Pentecost. Like the believers who gathered to pray in Jerusalem to await the gift of your Holy Spirit, we gather to pray with great anticipation of what you will accomplish. Holy Spirit, revive us again and propel us out of this prayer meeting with renewed hope as we make you known in communities where you are least known. In Jesus' name, amen.

¹For the rest of the devotionals, LORD will indicate God's proper and personal name (Yahweh) as revealed in Exodus 3:15.

²In giving Moses His proper, personal name, God uses the very common verb “to be”, but now assigns special meaning to it. This meaning is understood more from the context of Exodus 3 and less from grammar, philology, or semantics. Yahweh is commonly translated “I am who/that I am”. The context suggests that through His personal name God is telling us that “all that I am today to you, I will continue to be to you”. Every time we call out God's name, Yahweh, we are reminded of His unchanging, committed faithfulness.



God Most High

Before the prayer meeting: Read Genesis 14, Psalm 46, 91

Gather for prayer and quiet your heart:

LORD, help us to be still and know that you are God. This noisy and frenetic world wants to pull us away from you. Help us to focus and hear from you in this time of prayer. *(Pause and prepare your hearts to worship the LORD.)*

Read and reflect on God's Word together: *(Let's not rush. Read slowly.)*

When Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he called out the 318 trained men born in his household and went in pursuit as far as Dan. During the night Abram divided his men to attack them and he routed them, pursuing them as far as Hobah, north of Damascus. He recovered all the goods and brought back his relative Lot and his possessions, together with the women and the other people. After Abram returned from defeating Kedorlaomer and the kings allied with him ... Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, and he blessed Abram, saying, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. And praise be to God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand" (Gen. 14:14-20).

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day. Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts (Ps. 46:1-6).

Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God in whom I trust" (Ps. 91:1-2).

Rejoice and praise God together:

Father, the story of Abram defeating Kedorlaomer, the king of Elam, and the three kings allied with him is remarkable. What hope did Abram and his 318 men have against an army of professionally trained warriors who had fought countless battles and tasted many victories? And while Abram engaged in battle on the ground, we know the fight was not simply one of flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realm. The darkness was overwhelming and so much was at stake! And yet, God, you are the King of kings and delivered Abram's enemies into his hands. You

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are God Most High, the creator of heaven and earth! You, the one true God, stand alone above all other gods.

LORD, as we look around us, a growing darkness seems to surround us. The news from around the world is shocking, grieving, appalling. There are endless cycles of nations rising up against nations, ethnic groups oppressing other ethnic groups, and leaders hungry for power who reject justice and act with impunity. Greed and selfishness of every kind at every level degrades our societies, families, institutions, and environment, leading to pain and destruction in our world.

And yet, we remember that you are God Most High. We praise you, for you are the all-powerful, supreme, creator of heaven and earth. Are you not our refuge and strength in times of trouble? Surely when we dwell in your shelter, you will be with us, and we will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. (Pause to rejoice and praise God for who He is.)

Pray and ask with great expectation:

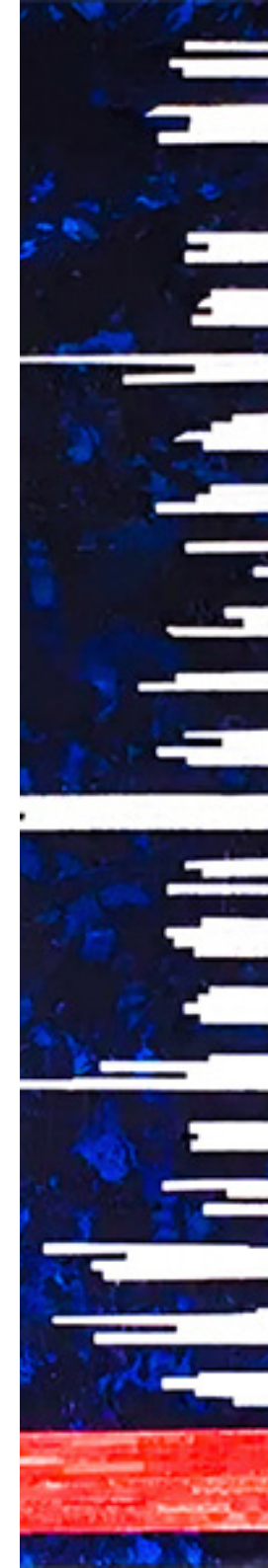
God Most High, thank you for the precious promise, "You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world." Father, these words are true, but we don't always live as if it were so. Please forgive us when we become distracted and fearful of the lesser gods of this world.

Jesus, we know that you reign supreme and will destroy all dominions, authorities, and powers. We rejoice in this truth and give you thanks that we come under your great protection and find our strength and courage in you.

LORD, with all the problems in the world, we confess that at times we don't know what to do. Help us to keep our eyes on you. Holy Spirit, help us to stand firm in faith and to not be afraid or discouraged as we cross barriers to share the good news of your love with this world.

LORD, many people and communities are clinging to worthless idols and turning away from your love. God Most High, remove the barriers that keep these people from surrendering their idols to receive your love. (Pause to pray for these people and communities.)

LORD, it is 9 days before Pentecost. Like the believers who gathered to pray in Jerusalem to await the gift of your Holy Spirit, we gather to pray with great anticipation of what you will accomplish. Holy Spirit, revive us again and propel us out of this prayer meeting with greater courage as we make you known in communities where you are least known. In Jesus' name, amen.



The God Who Sees

Before the prayer meeting: Read Genesis 16 and 21:1-21

Gather for prayer and quiet your heart:

LORD, help us to be still and know that you are God. LORD, we know you see and are attentive to us. LORD, help us to see and be attentive to you. (Pause and prepare your hearts for prayer.)

Read and reflect on God's Word together: *(Let's not rush. Read slowly.)*

The angel of the LORD found Hagar near a spring in the desert; it was the spring that is beside the road to Shur. And he said, "Hagar, slave of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?" "I'm running away from my mistress Sarai," she answered. Then the angel of the LORD told her, "Go back to your mistress and submit to her." The angel added, "I will increase your descendants so much that they will be too numerous to count." (Gen. 16:7-9).

She [Hagar] gave this name to the LORD who spoke to her: "You are the God who sees me," for she said, "I have now seen the One who sees me" (Gen. 16:13).

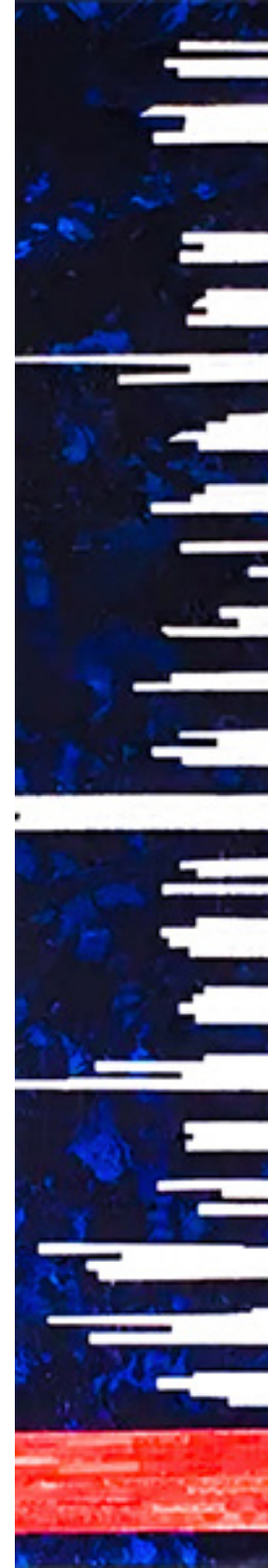
When the water in the skin was gone, she put the boy under one of the bushes. Then she went off and sat down about a bowshot away, for she thought, "I cannot watch the boy die." And as she sat there, she began to sob. God heard the boy crying, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, "What is the matter, Hagar? Do not be afraid; God has heard the boy crying as he lies there. Lift the boy up and take him by the hand, for I will make him into a great nation." Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. So she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink. God was with the boy as he grew up (Gen. 21:15-20a).

Rejoice and praise God together:

Father, what a beautiful story! Thank you that you are the living God who sees, hears and cares so deeply for us. You are the One who actively seeks, finds, and delivers us in our greatest need. You are the God who is ever present and provides what is needed. Thank you that you are a loving and compassionate God who sees and rescues the neglected, devalued, and oppressed in our world. You are the defender of the poor and powerless. You rescued Hagar, a young woman, a foreigner, a slave, an exile, and a single mother. In the eyes of the world, she was a destitute nobody. To you, she was somebody - created in your image and dearly loved.

We wonder how Abram responded when Hagar returned from running away. What did he think when Hagar shared how the same God who had spoken to him, had also spoken to her; how

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the same God who made promises to him, also made promises to her? We praise you, LORD, for your presence and provision which are not based on our merit or standing, but on your amazing grace. We can only respond to your lavish love with the same faith of Abram as he believed Hagar's story and named his son Ishmael.

LORD, we are so grateful that you allow us to come to you as we are. Despite our cultural blind spots and ignorance, you see deep into our hearts. How audacious of Hagar to give you an epithet (nickname), "You are the God who sees me" and "I have now seen the One who sees me." Perhaps she was accustomed to naming gods from her days in Egypt. Even so, you received and endorsed it so we, generations after Hagar, would be blessed by it. (Pause to rejoice and praise God for who He is.)

Pray and ask with great expectation:

Father, forgive us when we take your care and compassion for granted. Forgive us when our hearts grow calloused towards others. Please search our hearts and teach us to extend your concern for others, especially the poor and powerless.

LORD, forgive us when we judge and value people according to their status. Jesus, we remember that in you, we are all children of God through faith. For in you there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for we are all one in Christ Jesus.

LORD, thank you that we are strengthened through our diversity. We are intentionally interdenominational, international, and multiethnic because we believe this expresses the unity of the body of Christ in the world. Diversity is not always easy. We are prone to make mistakes and hurt each other. Holy Spirit, teach us to extend your patient and loving grace to one another.

Thank you that you are the God who sees us. Help us to see people and communities as you do. Enable us to have tender eyes to see the poor and powerless, especially the orphan, the widow and foreigner among us. (Pray for these people and communities.)

LORD, it is 8 days before Pentecost. Like the believers who gathered to pray in Jerusalem to await the gift of your Holy Spirit, we gather to pray with great anticipation of what you will accomplish. Holy Spirit, revive us again and propel us out of this prayer meeting with a deeper love for people as we make you known in communities where you are least known. In Jesus' name, amen.



God Almighty

Before the prayer meeting: Read Genesis 12:1-3, 15:1-6, 17:1-8, 21:1-6, 22:1-19

Gather for prayer and quiet your heart:

LORD, help us to be still and know that you are God. We are so easily distracted. Help us to prepare our hearts to meet you in this time of prayer. (Pause and prepare you heart to worship the LORD.)

Read and reflect on God's Word together: *(Let's not rush. Read slowly.)*

When Abram was 99 years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty; walk before me faithfully and be blameless. Then I will make my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers." Abram fell facedown, and God said to him, "As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. The whole land of Canaan, where you now reside as a foreigner, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God" (Gen. 17:1-8).

Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, whom you love Isaac and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you (Gen. 22:2).

Rejoice and praise God together:

Father, thank you that you draw us closer to yourself as you reveal who you are. We are challenged by the story of Abraham. He grew in faith as he wrestled to understand the true meaning of your title - God Almighty. For 25 years, Abraham analysed his circumstances, did the calculations, saw the obstacles, and weighed the constraints. He couldn't see how you could fulfil your promise of land, nation, and blessings without a son. Abraham struggled with how and when you would fulfil your promise. Humanly speaking, we can understand why he thought the promise would be fulfilled through his nephew Lot, or his servant Eliezer, and finally his surrogate son, Ishmael.

We praise you that you showed yourself to be God Almighty to Abraham and his household. You did this when, in their old age, you gave Abraham and Sarah a son, Isaac. By your provision, we are reminded that your ability to fulfil a promise does not depend on human will or ability, but on your faithfulness and power. Then you did the unimaginable: you asked Abraham to sacrifice

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Day 4

his son, Isaac. By doing so, you emphatically reminded Abraham at the end of his life, that your promise did not depend on any person, not even Isaac, but on your faithfulness. Your ability to fulfil your promise always has and always will depend on who you are.

We are in awe, for you fulfil all that you promise. You are truly God Almighty - the God who will take care of everything! We can trust you to take care of us anytime and anywhere. We can trust you to take care of everything, everywhere for all times. (Pause to rejoice and praise God for who He is.)

Pray and ask with great expectation:

God Almighty, forgive us when we don't wait for you to do things in your way and in your time. Forgive us when we try to outthink you, by pushing and manipulating circumstances to expedite a desired outcome. Father, help us to remember that you bless us abundantly, so that in all things, at all times, having all that we need, we will abound in every good work.

LORD, the work of making you known in communities where you are least known can be daunting. We look at all the obstacles and constraints and wonder how and when? Jesus, you told us, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." Please ignite a renewed passion for your good news in our lives and a sense of urgency for global missions within our partnering churches.

LORD, it can feel safer to lift up little prayers that depend on our strength and ability to fulfil. Help us to remember that you are God Almighty. Holy Spirit, teach us to have faith to pray big prayers in greater dependence on you.

God Almighty, draw to yourself our family, friends, and communities who do not know you. (Pause to pray for these people and communities.)

LORD, it is 7 days before Pentecost. Like the believers who gathered to pray in Jerusalem to await the gift of your Holy Spirit, we gather to pray with great anticipation of what you will accomplish. Holy Spirit, revive us again and propel us out of this prayer meeting with greater joy as we make you known in communities where you are least known. In Jesus' name, amen.



The Eternal God

Before the prayer meeting: Read Genesis 21, Psalm 90

Gather for prayer and quiet your heart:

LORD, help us to be still and know that you are God. Our minds and hearts can be scattered in so many directions. Help us to focus and meet you in this time of prayer. *(Pause and prepare your hearts to worship the LORD.)*

Read and reflect on God's Word together: *(Let's not rush. Read slowly.)*

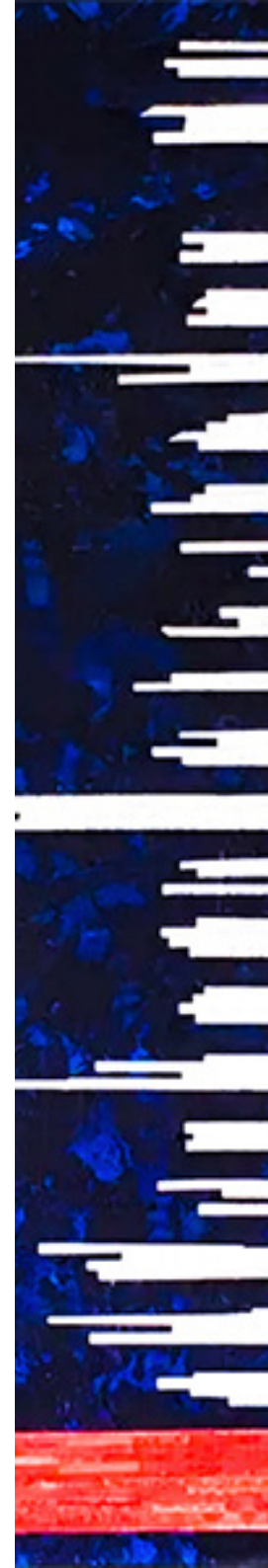
But Sarah saw that the son whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham was mocking, and she said to Abraham, "Get rid of that slave woman and her son... The matter distressed Abraham greatly...But God said to him, "do not be so distressed about the boy and your slave woman. Listen to whatever Sarah tells you, because it through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned. I will make the son of the slave into a nation also, because he is your offspring. Early the next morning Abraham took some food and a skin of water and gave them to Hagar. He set them on her shoulders and then sent her off with the boy. She went on her way and wandered in the Desert of Beersheba (Gen. 21:9-14).

Then Abraham complained to Abimelek about a well of water that Abimelek's servants had seized. But Abimelek said, "I don't know who has done this. You did not tell me, and I heard about it only today." So Abraham brought sheep and cattle and gave them to Abimelek, and the two men made a treaty (Gen. 21:25-27).

After the treaty had been made at Beersheba, Abimelek and Phicol the commander of his forces returned to the land of the Philistines. Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there he called on the name of the LORD, the Eternal God. And Abraham stayed in the land of the Philistines for a long time (Gen. 21:32 -34).

LORD, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the whole world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God. You turn people back to dust, saying, "Return to dust, you mortals. A thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night (Ps. 90:1-4).

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Rejoice and praise God together:

Thank you for your word today. LORD, after an intense season of life and ministry it's good to reflect. We imagine Abraham did the same as he planted the tamarisk tree and gazed out at the expanse of the desert. After 25 years, Isaac, the long-awaited son of promise, had arrived. What a joyful but exhausting time those early years must have been, especially as he and Sarah were so old. Then came the distressing decision to send Hagar and his son, Ishmael, away. How long did Abraham stand by watching those two slowly wander into the Desert of Beersheba? The anguish of that scene must have stayed with him for a long time. After this came a dispute over a well and the delicate political matter of a treaty with Abimelech, the king of Gerar, and his army commander, Phicol. What an intense encounter! Even when conflicts end well, they can be utterly draining.

Life and ministry are often like this. The celebration of births and marriages can quickly turn to mourning over illness and death. The joys of ministry, when plans come together and people are blessed, can easily turn to despair when our efforts are misunderstood or worse, lead to conflict. LORD, in the ebb and flow of life we can easily lose our bearings. Fix our eyes on you as our dwelling place - our true reference point. Everlasting God, you alone comprehend our small moments within the full scope of time and history. Teach us to number our days. Then we will see clearly and gain a heart of wisdom. You are forever installed as the true king over the universe. You reign supreme for all times and in all places, forever. Our finite minds struggle to understand the weight of your glory, which is all encompassing and boundless. We praise you that you are the everlasting God. *(Pause to rejoice and praise God for who He is.)*



Day 5

Pray and ask with great expectation:

Father thank you that you care for us so tenderly in all our ups and downs. As we contemplate how you reign over all time, and every space, help us to see your glory and majesty.

LORD, forgive us when we focus too much on the problems in global mission, and forget how much greater you are in comparison to these. Jesus, you told us, to “go and make disciples of all nations” and that you would be with us “always, to the very end of the age.” Help us to joyfully trust and obey you. May every aspect of our lives be a delightful act of worship to you.

LORD have mercy on us when we lose sight of you. Small things can loom so large in our minds, and we easily give in to anxiety and despair. Holy Spirit, continually guide us back to our true dwelling place in you.

LORD, there are many people and communities who do not know and have not heard that you are the everlasting God. As you have made yourself known to us, would you please make yourself known to them? (Pause to pray for these people and communities)

LORD, it is 6 days before Pentecost. Like the believers who gathered to pray in Jerusalem to await the gift of your Holy Spirit, we gather to pray with great anticipation of what you will accomplish. Holy Spirit, revive us again and propel us out of this prayer meeting with bolder faith as we make you known in communities where you are least known. In Jesus name, amen.



The LORD Provides

Before the prayer meeting: Read Genesis 22

Gather for prayer and quiet your heart:

LORD, help us to be still and know that you are God. LORD, we know you are present with us. Help us to be fully present with you and yield ourselves to your will. *(Pause and prepare your hearts to worship the LORD.)*

Read and reflect on God's Word together: *(Let's not rush. Read slowly.)*

On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. He said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you." Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together, Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, "Father?" "Yes, my son?" Abraham replied. "The fire and wood are here," Isaac said, "but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." And the two of them went on together.

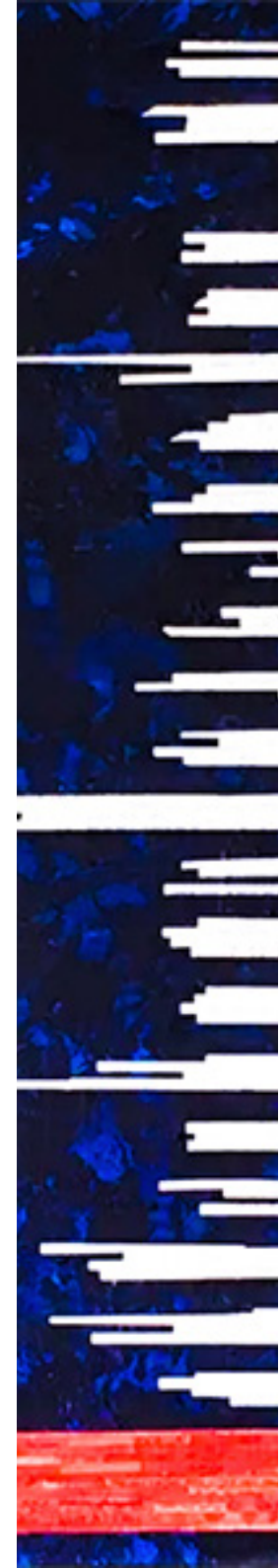
When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son." Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided" (Gen. 22:4-14).

Rejoice and praise God together:

Father, in the life of faith, we know we will face times of testing. You may allow us to be tested to produce or prove a desired quality in us that will help us grow in faith and godliness. Tests are never easy, but we want to yield ourselves to your will. Thank you that you will equip us to meet whatever tests we may face.

Abraham responded to you in trust and obedience. We learn from how you called out, "Abraham!" and the way he responded, "Here I am." Surely you knew where Abraham was. You know where

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Day 6

anyone is at any time. The real question is whether we know where we are and whether we are attentive and available to you. When you call us, help us to yield to your will in trust and obedience.

We marvel at how Abraham responded to Isaac's question about the lamb. By faith, Abraham was certain of what he hoped for and had assurance of what he did not yet see. Over the years, Abraham learned to trust you to fulfil a promise that he would not live to see, because he learned that you are the LORD who provides.

LORD, you knew what you were asking of Abraham. You knew that Isaac was Abraham's dearly loved son. You recognised how heart-wrenching this test would be. Yet, you did not ask of Abraham what you would not do yourself. For Abraham this was a test, climbing up a mountain with a son and descending back down with a son. But for you, it was no test. Many years later, you climbed a mountain and provided your one and only beloved Son as the perfect lamb to redeem the whole world. That takes our breath away! Surely the God who provided for our greatest need, a Saviour, will provide for all our other needs. We fall before you in awe and gratitude, for you are our LORD who provides. (Pause to rejoice and praise God for who He is.)

Pray and ask with great expectation:

LORD, you have called us to make Christ known in communities where He is least known. As we carry out our ministries, we sometimes see fruit, and other times fruit is only seen after we have finished our work. Even so, Father help us to diligently press on in trust and obedience.

LORD, help us to examine our hearts. As we consider all the good gifts you give us, have we misplaced our trust and hope upon these things instead of you? Jesus, grant us the grace to reorient ourselves to the supremacy of your Lordship.

LORD, in your Word we read, "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything." Holy Spirit, teach our hearts the true meaning of this kind of joy when we are being tested.

Thank you that you are the LORD who provides. As we think of people dear to us, would you please show yourself to them as the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. (Pray for these people and communities.)

LORD, it is 5 days before Pentecost. Like the believers who gathered to pray in Jerusalem to await the gift of your Holy Spirit, we gather to pray with great anticipation of what you will accomplish. Holy Spirit, revive us again and propel us out of this prayer meeting with a greater trust and obedience as we make you known in communities where you are least known. In Jesus' name, amen.

Bible verses: Heb. 11:1, Jas. 1:2-4, John 1:29



The LORD is Peace

Before the prayer meeting: Read Judges 6 and 7

Gather for prayer and quiet your heart:

LORD, help us to be still and know that you are God. Help us to be attentive to your presence and receive your peace. *(Pause and prepare your hearts to worship the LORD.)*

Read and reflect on God's Word together: *(Let's not rush. Read slowly.)*

The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, and for seven years he gave them into the hands of the Midianites. Because the power of Midian was so oppressive, the Israelites prepared shelters for themselves in mountain clefts, caves and strongholds. Whenever the Israelites planted their crops, the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples invaded the country. They camped on the land and ruined the crops all the way to Gaza and did not spare a living thing for Israel, neither sheep nor cattle nor donkeys (Judg. 6:1-4).

The angel of the LORD came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites. When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, "The LORD is with you, mighty warrior." "Pardon me, my lord," Gideon replied, "but if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our ancestors told us about when they said, 'Did not the LORD bring us up out of Egypt?' But now the LORD has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian." The LORD turned to him and said, "Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you?" "Pardon me, my LORD," Gideon replied, "but how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family." The LORD answered, "I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites, leaving none alive" (Judg. 6:11-16).

When Gideon realised that it was the angel of the LORD, he exclaimed, "Alas, Sovereign LORD! I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face!" But the LORD said to him, "Peace! Do not be afraid. You are not going to die." So Gideon built an altar to the LORD there and called it The LORD Is Peace. To this day it stands in Ophrah of the Abiezrites (Judg. 6:22-24).

Rejoice and praise God together:

Father, thank you that you receive us just as we are with all our pride and weaknesses. After seven years of Midian terrorising Israel, Gideon lived in a state of constant fear and anxiety. We are not surprised that he asked for multiple assurances from you. Gideon doubted your presence and was certain that you had abandoned him and his people. Yet despite Gideon's frazzled and

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fragile state of mind, you dealt with his objections and doubts with patience and compassion.

LORD, when Gideon finally realised who you were and acknowledged that you are the God of peace, nothing had changed about his external circumstances. The Midianites were still causing massive destruction and oppressing the Israelite people. Gideon was still a member of the weakest clan and the least in his family. And finally, Gideon was still no closer to being a “mighty warrior” than when he had climbed out of the winepress. LORD, we know that you can change our external circumstances but more importantly, change our internal disposition so that we will experience you as our LORD of peace.

LORD, thank you that the assurance of your presence makes all the difference in our perception of peace. So often our sense of peace is tied to our shifting external circumstances. Looking for peace in what we’ve accomplished or what people think of us is futile and exhausting. Your presence drives away our fears and anxieties so we can experience true peace. Thank you that you alone can meet our deepest needs. (Pause to rejoice and praise God for who He is.)

Pray and ask with great expectation:

LORD, you said that in this world we would experience trouble. We expect this from the world, but sometimes we are flabbergasted when our greatest grief and stress come from each other. Forgive us when we are the source of frustration and pain for others. Teach us to clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Teach us to love and forgive one another. May your peace rule in our hearts.

Thank you for your promise, “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand.” Jesus, you’ve done it! The work of making true peace a reality has been completed. We praise you that we can now rest in that peace with God.

LORD, we have team members who are not experiencing your peace. They feel inadequate and insecure just like Gideon. Show us ways to affirm your calling in their lives and encourage them to find their strength in you. Holy Spirit, help us to be instruments of your peace.

LORD, we pray for communities and nations in turmoil. Terror, wars, and environmental disasters are destroying lives and displacing millions of people. We pray for your merciful intervention. May people know that you are the true Prince of Peace. (Pause to pray for these communities and nations.)

LORD, it is 4 days before Pentecost. Like the believers who gathered to pray in Jerusalem to await the gift of your Holy Spirit, we gather to pray with great anticipation of what you will accomplish. Holy Spirit, revive us again and propel us out of this prayer meeting with a greater awareness of your peace as we make you known in communities where you are least known. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Bible verses: Is. 9:6, John 16:33, Rom. 5:1-2, Col. 3:15-17, Ps. 34:14



The LORD of Hosts

Before the prayer meeting: Read 1 Samuel 1 and 17, Psalm 84

Gather for prayer and quiet your heart:

LORD, help us to be still and know that you are God. Help us to quiet our noisy minds and hearts as we approach your throne of grace. *(Pause and prepare your hearts to worship the LORD.)*

Read and reflect on God's Word together: *(Let's not rush. Read slowly.)*

She [Hannah] was deeply distressed and prayed to the LORD and wept bitterly. And she vowed a vow and said, "O LORD of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a male child, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall come upon his head" (1 Sam. 1:10-11).*

He [Goliath] said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. The Philistine said to David, "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and to the beasts of the field." Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied (1 Sam. 17:43-45).*

LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer; give ear, O God of Jacob! Behold our shield, O God; look on the face of your anointed! For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness. For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honour. No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly. O LORD of hosts, blessed is the one who trusts in you! (Ps. 84:8-12).*

Rejoice and praise God together:

Father, we praise you for your eternal word and how it speaks to us today. We love these amazing stories about Hannah and David. Despite the shame of barrenness and the unrelenting irritations of a rival wife, Hannah appealed to you as LORD of hosts. Through her years of struggling, Hannah learned that she was powerless to change her circumstances. She called out to you as the only one who possessed the absolute power to move creation to accomplish your purpose and will. Upon this hope Hannah poured out her heart to you when she prayed for a son.

*Special note - In 1 Samuel 1:3,11 we are introduced to a new term for God, Yahweh Tsevaoth. This term is rendered "LORD of hosts" by translations such as the ESV, NASB, and (N)KJV. However, some translations render Yahweh Tsevaoth as LORD Almighty even though tsevaoth is distinct in meaning from Shaddai (El Shaddai). For clarity, the verses for today's devotional are from the ESV.

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David was the overlooked and youngest son of Jesse. After tedious years tending sheep, David learned how you, his God, are the LORD of hosts. David came to understand that you are the all-powerful, sovereign ruler over creation. He knew that you alone could move and summon Israel, the nations, and the hosts of heaven to serve you. You were the source for David's courage! This was how he could deal with the harsh words of his brother, push through the fear hanging over the Israelite army, forgo Saul's armour, and face the defiant giant, Goliath.

We praise you, LORD of hosts. We call out to you in prayer because we find our true hope and confidence in you. In life and ministry, we are often confronted by people and circumstances that threaten to overwhelm us. At times we can feel powerless, but may we always remember that you alone are able to compel creation to accomplish your good and perfect will. LORD of hosts, thank you that we are blessed when we choose to trust in you! (Pause to rejoice and praise God who He is.)

Pray and ask with great expectation:

LORD, have mercy on us when we focus on the giants in our lives and give way to fear. Knowing that you are sovereign and powerful is not something we learn in an instant; rather, we learn this as we walk in faith and experience you in our lives. Father, as we serve you, give us teachable hearts to know you as our LORD of hosts.

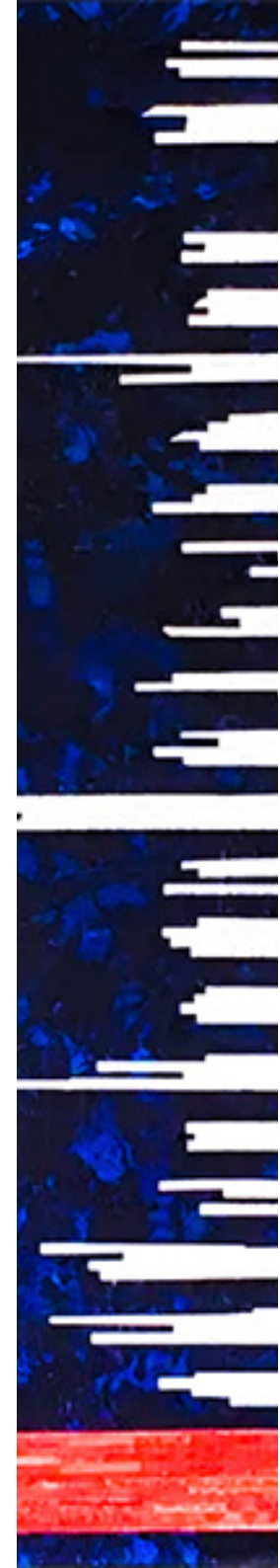
LORD, sometimes we are unable to move forward in ministry because we are each other's giants. We don't always get along with one another. We can irritate, provoke and frustrate one another. Please forgive us. Jesus, you said, "A new commandment I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you also must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." Please help us to love one another.

LORD, thank you that you are the LORD of hosts. Holy Spirit, grant us the courage to cross barriers to proclaim the crucified and risen Christ, expressing His love and compassion among those who live and die without Him.

LORD, we want to work with local and global churches to make you known in communities where you are least known. Please help us to know how to love and nurture healthier partnerships with the churches you have called us to work with. (Pause to pray for the churches that you and your teams partner with.)

LORD, it is 3 days before Pentecost. Like the believers who gathered to pray in Jerusalem to await the gift of your Holy Spirit, we gather to pray with great anticipation of what you will accomplish. Holy Spirit, revive us again and propel us out of this prayer meeting with renewed confidence to make you known in communities where you are least known. In Jesus' name, amen.

Bible verses: John 13:34-35



The LORD is my Shepherd and Host

Before the prayer meeting: Read Psalm 23

Gather for prayer and quiet your heart:

LORD, help us to be still and know that you are God. Grant us the ability to lay down our busy thoughts and anxious hearts. We welcome you into this time of prayer as our most honored guest. *(Pause and prepare your hearts to worship the LORD.)*

Read and reflect on God's Word together: *(Let's not rush. Read slowly.)*

The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely your goodness and love will chase after³ me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever (Ps. 23).

Rejoice and praise God together:

Father, we thank you for the relationships described in this psalm. In our troubled world we can easily become overwhelmed and grow weary. Draw us to your quiet waters and green pastures. Like sheep, help us to depend on you for our provision, protection, and guidance. Thank you that you alone meet our greatest needs and deepest longings. As our shepherd, we praise you for your complete and constant devotion to our care and well-being. Truly, we are the unmerited recipients of your unfailing and steadfast love. We feel safe and secure knowing that you put us on the right path, and that you are always with us even when that right path leads through the darkest valleys.

We praise you that you are our gracious host. In your generosity we have been invited to your lavish banquet. You bring us before your table as your honored guests. We rejoice that we have come under your protection and provision. We celebrate with you and give thanks for your grace.

We are blessed to be recipients of your goodness. Your every intention and desire for us is for our good. We are doubly blessed to also be recipients of your steadfast love. We marvel that you extend such loyal and faithful kindness to us. And, as if that were not enough, we are awestruck that your goodness and steadfast love will not just passively follow us but will actively pursue us all the days of our lives. What a true comfort that is! With all our hearts, we thank you. *(Pause to rejoice and praise God for who He is.)*

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Pray and ask with great expectation:

LORD, we love to think of you as our devoted shepherd and generous host, but sometimes we don't remember or want to think of ourselves as your dependent sheep or grateful guest. Forgive us, Father, when we want our relationship with you to flow in only one direction. Forgive us for our stubborn pride and careless ingratitude.

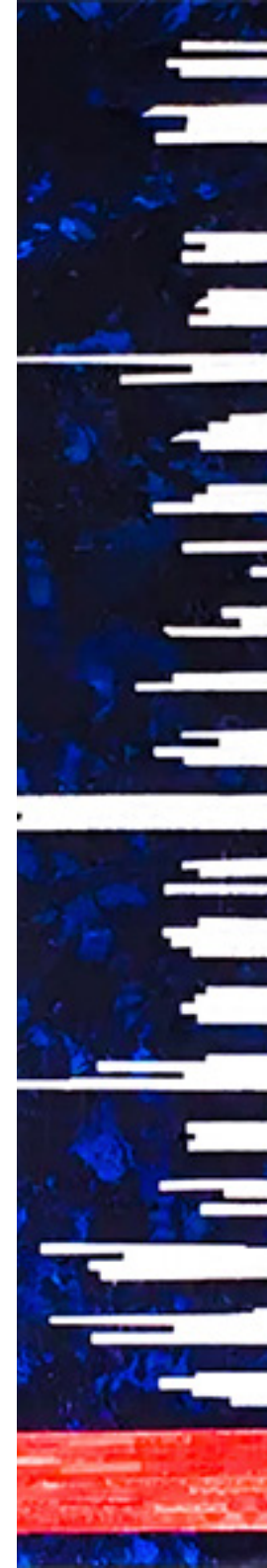
LORD, as disciples called to make disciples, help us to invest in people as a loving shepherd and gracious host. Jesus, guide us to patiently walk alongside people in their journey of faith and to love each other deeply so that people will know that we are your disciples.

Dear God, you are our loving shepherd and gracious host. How can we be like you in our care, hospitality, and generosity towards others? Holy Spirit, guide us to someone who is in the darkest valley and help us to be your presence of comfort and encouragement to them.

Jesus, thank you that you are the good shepherd who laid down his life for the sheep. Many people and communities still live without any knowledge or hope of your goodness and steadfast love. We long for them to follow you as their great shepherd. (Pray for these people and communities.)

LORD, it is 2 days before Pentecost. Like the believers who gathered to pray in Jerusalem to await the gift of your Holy Spirit, we gather to pray with great anticipation of what you will accomplish. Holy Spirit, revive us again and propel us out of this prayer meeting with greater love and generosity as we make you known in communities where you are least known. In Jesus' name, amen.

⁵ In the Hebrew text, the word 'follow' (radaph) is more appropriately translated "to pursue or chase".
Bible verses: John 13:35, John 10:11



The LORD and all His Goodness

Before the prayer meeting: Read Exodus 32, 33 and 34

Gather for prayer and quiet your heart:

LORD, help us to be still and know that you are God. Help us to enter your presence with gratitude and reverence. *(Pause and prepare your hearts to worship the LORD.)*

Read and reflect on God's Word together: *(Let's not rush. Read slowly.)*

When Moses approached the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, his anger burned and he threw the tablets out of his hands, breaking them to pieces at the foot of the mountain (Ex. 32:19).

Moses said to the LORD, "You have been telling me, 'Lead these people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You have said, 'I know you by name and you have found favor with me.' If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people." The LORD replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." Then Moses said to him, "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth? And the LORD said to Moses, "I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name." Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory." And the LORD said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live" (Ex. 33:12-20).

So Moses chiseled out two stone tablets like the first ones and went up Mount Sinai early in the morning, as the LORD had commanded him; and he carried the two stone tablets in his hands. Then the LORD came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the LORD. And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation." Moses bowed to the ground at once and worshiped (Ex. 34:4-8).

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Rejoice and praise God together:

Father, Moses had a tough ministry assignment! Confronting Pharaoh, engaging in an epic spiritual battle, overthrowing the fierce Egyptian army, and leading thousands of people out of slavery were incredibly challenging. And yet, that was the easy part. The harder part was dealing with his own people – their distrust, antagonism, ingratitude, impatience, jealousy, rebellion, disputes, and never-ending complaints. In many ways, Moses' response of anger and throwing down the stone tablets at the sight of his people dancing before a golden calf was a very restrained reaction. What restrained him?

Thank you that in difficult ministry moments, we can learn from Moses and how he sought your presence. In his frustration and discouragement, Moses asked you for greater reassurance of who you are and, more specifically, who you are for him and your people. Moses didn't fully understand what he was asking for when he requested to see your glory, but in your loving-kindness, you showed him just what he needed and just what he could handle.

Thank you for reminding us that you are "The LORD (Yahweh), the LORD (Yahweh)". This was the name you revealed to Moses from the burning bush when you told him, "All that you are, you will forever be, to him and his people." In the trials of ministry, with its ups and many downs, Moses needed you more than ever. We rejoice that you are the God who is compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion, and sin. Yet you are righteous and just and will not leave the guilty unpunished. LORD, we praise you that are "lopsided"⁴ in all your interactions with us. In your self-description, the list is unashamedly biased towards mercy and grace, and judgment is your reluctant and restrained act. You are "lopsided", but in our favour and for our benefit. We are so amazed! We praise you that you are the LORD who is and always will be merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. (Pause to rejoice and praise God for who He is.)

Pray and ask with great expectation:

Father, we are so thankful for who you are and how you have revealed your heart to us. Help us to be your true disciples who display compassion, grace, patience, love, and faithfulness towards other people.

Jesus, we know that in you we see all the fullness of the Deity in bodily form. We have seen your "lopsided" love displayed upon the cross, and we are astonished. Help us to worship you with all our hearts, souls, minds, and strength, for you, our LORD, are worthy.

LORD, we remember the leaders in our organisation and partner churches. Holy Spirit, we ask that



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you remind them to seek your presence. They cannot lead your people if they do not abide and walk in step with the Spirit. *(Pause to pray for these leaders.)*

LORD, it is 1 day before Pentecost. Like the believers who gathered to pray in Jerusalem to await the gift of your Holy Spirit, we gather to pray with great anticipation of what you will accomplish. Holy Spirit, revive us again and propel us out of this prayer meeting with more of your anointing and empowerment as we make you known in communities where you are least known. In Jesus' name, amen.

⁴Lopsided - phrase coined by Dr. Bill Webb
Bible verses: Mark 12:30, Col. 2:9

