

National Day of Prayer Preparation

May 2

With Becky Schmidt

Introduction:

We all have hard times. These last couple years have highlighted a new kind of communal pain and struggle we will be working through for years to come. In the midst of these communal challenges, we have and are still all living out our individual griefs and challenges. We need time and space to lay before our loving and attentive God the places where we are exhausted, broken, making bad choices and dealing with consequences, or even making the best choices available to us and still struggling. Confession and lament wrapped up with thanksgiving is a pattern all throughout the Bible for a way of letting God meet us right where we are as individuals and as a community.

Confession:

Where we have made individual mistakes and deal with unhealthy and unhelpful habits may we seek the forgiveness God longs to offer. Where we have hurt ourselves and those close to us, may we repent before God, turning away from those harmful things, and seek restitution, when at all possible, with those whom we have hurt. Let us confess the times in which we, as parts of the Body of Christ, have fallen so short. Bring before God the earnest desire we, as a collective, must show the world what Jesus looks like in our current place in time and space. Let us confess where we have been blind to the harm, we have caused those within our circle of influence. Let us humbly seek God to correct our crooked ways and thinking and empower us to live in true love for God and love for our neighbor.

For deeper study:

- Ps 38:18
- Ps 51:1
- 1 John 1:9
- James 1:19-27
- James 5:16

Lament:

Invite God into whatever feels broken in your life. Cry out to God about the things you want to be different about yourself, your circumstances, your world. Bring before God those places and those things in your life that are covered with grief, anger, pain, and sorrow. Let us all sit with God in that pain that comes from being in a world where things are painful and hard. Let us bring before God our lament for the broken hearts, broken bodies, broken minds, broken relationships, broken institutions, and broken systems that are in this broken world. Let us acknowledge the grief we feel every time we experience changes. Let us direct that grief to the One who knows every circumstance in our lives that causes us to grieve. In our lament may we also know the hope that comes from knowing God's mercies are new every morning, and God's faithfulness is great even in our deepest moments of lament. May we not hurry through our griefs, but trust that God is always close to us in our brokenness and sorrow. May we look to God's word and find strength, comfort, and even joy!

For deeper study:

- Lamentations 3:17-25, 40
- Ps 34:18
- Ps 5:1-3
- Ps 30:5
- Ps 31:9
- Ps 119:28
- Matt 5: 3-5

Thanksgiving:

Bring before God whatever comes up to you as you reflect on the things you are specifically grateful for today. It does our minds, bodies, and souls immeasurable good to reflect in gratitude, and the Bible is full of exhortations to pray with thanksgiving. Where has God provided for you? Where has God protected you? Where has God healed you? Where has God empowered you to do something you did not think you could do? Where has God brought in the right people to your life at the right time? Let our strength be renewed as we dwell on God's goodness! May our minds be restored as we meditate on God's kindness and mercy. May our hearts rejoice as we ponder God's unfailing, enduring love and endless compassion.

For deeper study:

- Ex 34:4-6
- Ps 100:4
- Ps 103
- Ps 106:1
- Phil 4:4-9