

This is the fourth and final one in our series of mini-meetings.

# Meeting 4: Prayer

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## Opening Prayer:

ONE: Praise the LORD, my soul;

ALL: all my inmost being, praise his holy name.

ONE: Praise the LORD, my soul,

ALL: and remember all that God does for us.

ONE: The Lord forgives all our sins and heals all our diseases.

ALL: The Lord redeems us and crowns you with love and compassion.

ONE: The Lord satisfies our desires for good things and renews us.

ALL: Praise the Lord.

(Adapted from Psalm 103)

**Hymn:** #638 – Take time to be holy

**Scripture:** 1 Thessalonians 5:12–28, Ephesians 6:10–20

## Read Together:

The Women's Missionary Society is a community of Christians whose purpose, in response to the love of God in Jesus Christ, is to encourage one another and all the people of the church to be involved in local and world mission through prayer, study, service, and fellowship.

## Reflection: Prayer

We are a praying church. Our national church produces our Prayer Partnership with daily prayers for our church community in Canada and around the world. As well, our national church website includes prayers for certain days or events that are happening, usually written by the current Moderator of General



Assembly. In addition, many of our churches and WMS groups participate in the Women's Interchurch Council of Canada's World Day of Prayer. I know many of our congregations have a prayer group, and there is a new movement that sees churches committing to 24/7 prayer. I have never been to a WMS meeting where pray has not been a part of the gathering.

The early church was also a church of prayer. In the book of Acts we read that the early church often gathered to pray. Paul told the church in Philippi to pray without ceasing. He gave similar commands to the church in Ephesus, and in the church of the Thessalonians.

Yet, sometimes prayer is hard. Sometimes, I wonder if we believe that prayer is effective. Praying without ceasing seems impossible. Yet, it is a habit worth striving for—a lifelong process. We need to remember that God is always with us and that we need to trust in God for all things.

As we move through our day, a habit of regular prayer is important. Send up short prayers whenever you can. If someone asks for prayer, instead of saying, "I will pray for you later", take a moment to pray for, or even with them, immediately. Perhaps you are on facebook and see a friend's need. Lift a prayer up for them right away and let them know you have prayed for them. Heading into a meeting—pray as you enter the room. Calling a sick friend—pray for them before you pick up the phone. As you pass an accident, pray for those involved and the emergency workers. As you pass a school, pray for the children and staff. Develop a habit of short immediate prayers.

Spending more deliberate time in prayer is also important. Find a time that works for you. Some enjoy their quiet time with God to start their day, while others find



it more meaningful at night. This is a great time to offer thanks, offer your personal concerns, and to pray for God's mission around the world. Prayer and mission are closely linked. Our mission staff are fuelled by the prayers that go out for them. Your prayers for them are known and appreciated—they make a difference.

Your prayers connect you with mission. You may not be able to volunteer at your community food bank, but you can still participate through your prayers. Few of us can travel to Malawi to serve, but we are still involved as we pray for the country of Malawi, and the work that is happening there.

Paul requests prayer for himself as he reaches out to new communities, so always remember your local church in your prayers as well. Pray that your leaders will be fed and inspired. Pray that our congregations will be welcoming communities that will show both boldness and kindness. Pray for one another that we will follow and serve God.

As we look to follow God, we should remember that pray also includes listening. Take time in silence with God and spend time reading the Bible and listening for God's word in them to you.

Like most good things, prayer takes time and discipline. Our good intentions to pray can get sidetracked, but when we truly take the time, amazing things happen. Prayer changes us and this world.

## Discussion:

Prayer is so much a part of the Christian faith, that many Christian leaders have spoken about it. Read the following quotes on prayer.

- To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing. ~ Martin Luther King Jr.
- I pray because I'm helpless. I pray because the need flows out of me all the time, waking and sleeping. It doesn't change God. It changes me." ~ C.S. Lewis
- Prayer does not mean simply to pour out one's heart. It means rather to find the way to God and to speak with him, whether the heart is full or empty. ~ Dietrich Bonhoeffer
- To clasp the hands in prayer is the beginning of an uprising against the disorder of the world. ~ Karl Barth
- Prayer is the gift of the Spirit. Often we wonder how to pray, when to pray, and what to pray. We can become very concerned about methods and techniques of prayer. But finally it is not we who pray but the Spirit who prays in us. ~ Henri Nouwen
- I used to pray that God would feed the hungry, or do this or that, but now I pray that he will guide me to do whatever I'm supposed to do, what I can do. I used to pray for answers, but now I'm praying for strength. I used to believe that prayer changes things, but now I know that prayer changes us and we change things. ~ Mother Teresa

Which one most resonates with you and why?

## Offering:

You are the ultimate giver of all things. May we give generously as you have given generously to us.

"To clasp the hands in prayer is the beginning of an uprising against the disorder of the world." ~ Karl Barth

# When I lift up my voice

## Hymn #102

### Offering Prayer:

Generous God, thank you for our many gifts. Help us to give generously of our finances, our times, and our prayers.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

### Prayer:

Consider setting up some prayer stations for this time (instructions included). Alternatively, pray the following prayer.

Loving God,

You hear us when we pray. Take the clutter from our minds as we focus on you.

We pray for our world.

We pray for those areas of the world where there is war and violence. Bring your peace.

We pray for areas of the world where girls and women are oppressed. For those women who are living in fear, provide your safety. Transform these areas so that all your people can live in freedom.

We pray for areas of this earth that are already experiencing climate change. Be with those who are experiencing more frequent drought or storms. Forgive us for being so carefree with this planet and empower us to make concrete changes.

We pray for our mission staff around the world. Energize them in their work. Protect them. Help them to work in partnership with those around them.

We pray for our congregation. Strengthen our leaders. Help them to know how to reach out to those within our community that are searching or hurting. Empower each one of us to reach out with God's love.

Pray for our national WMS during this time of transition. Pray for a vision for the WMS that will continue to see us be involved in local and world



When I lift up my voice, and I cry for your help, and I pour out my troubles before you: I say, "You are my refuge; I will praise your name; you are good to me, O Lord!"

When you come to my side and you answer my prayers and you set my soul free from its prison; I say, "You are my refuge; I will praise your name; you are good to me, O Lord!"

mission through prayer, study, service and fellowship.

In this time of silence, we pray for the concerns of our hearts:

-silence-

Lord, hear our prayers, Amen.

**Hymn:** #102 – When I lift up my voice

### **Blessings:**

Spend time in prayer, knowing that God listen.

Spend time in silence, knowing the Spirit speaks.

Blessed are those who trust in Him. Amen.



### **Prayer Stations:**

This can be used either to begin your meeting or as your prayer time. Allow members some time to pray using a few of the following prayer stations:

#### **1. Knot Prayer:**

Supplies: Shoe laces

Preparation: Tie 4–5 loose knots in the shoelaces.

Instruction card: Think of things that are bothering you—tying you up in knots. As you offer these in prayer to God, untie the knots in the lace.

#### **2. Pray for the World:**

Supplies: Newspapers

Instruction card: Take a few moments to look at the newspaper and choose 1–2 items of concern to pray for and 1–2 items to give thanksgiving for.

When you have chosen your topics, spend some time in silent prayer for these items.

### 3. **Gratitude**

Supplies: Rocks, sharpie markers, a bowl

Preparation: Place rocks on a table around the bowl.

Instruction card: Think of 1–2 things you are grateful for. Write that item on a rock and place it in the bowl. Give thanks to God for all those things which your group is thankful for.

### 4. **Prayer Requests**

Supplies: Post-it notes and pens

Preparation: Place post-it notes and pens on a small table be a clear wall.

Instruction card: Write out a prayer request and post it on the wall. Take a moment to pray for 1–2 requests that are already on the wall.

### 5. **Breath Prayer**

Instruction card: A breath prayer is an ancient Christian prayer. Choose a phrase for your breath prayer:

- Jesus Lives
- Be Still
- Know God
- Lord, have mercy
- Here I am
- Come, Lord Jesus
- Give me Strength
- Your will, not mine

Slowly breath in and out. As you inhale, focus on the first half of your prayer. As you exhale, focus on the second half of your prayer. Continue for several minutes as you dwell in God's presence.

### 6. **Mission Prayers**

Supplies: Copies of mission staff list and Canadian mission projects

"I pray because I'm helpless. I pray because the need flows out of me all the time, waking and sleeping. It doesn't change God. It changes me."

~ C.S. Lewis

Instruction Card: Choose to pray for 1--2 of our PCC international mission staff and their work. Choose to pray for 1--2 of our PCC Canadian mission projects.

PCC International Mission Staff:

*Malawi: The Rev. Dr. Blair and Vivian Bertrand*

Presbyterians Sharing supports the Rev. Dr. Blair and Ms. Vivian Bertrand as they serve with the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) in the Synod of Blantyre. Blair's assignment focuses on education and youth ministry. He is working with Zomba Theological College, Theological Education by Extension in Malawi (TEEM), and he is affiliated with the Blantyre Synod youth department. Vivian is working with CARD (Church Action in Relief and Development).

*Malawi: The Rev. Joel Sherbino*

Presbyterians Sharing supports the Rev. Joel Sherbino as he serves a two-year appointment as part-time Malawi Liaison with the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) in Blantyre Synod. Joel, minister of Paris Presbyterian Church in Paris, Ontario, has a long history with Blantyre Synod.

*Japan: David McIntosh*

Presbyterians Sharing supports David McIntosh, co-director of the Centre for Minority Issues and Mission (CMIM) in Tokyo, Japan.

*Taiwan: Louise Gamble*

Louise Gamble has been working with our partner church, the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, since 2006 (previously 1965-1973 and 2001-2004). She transcribes and translates reports and correspondence of the Canadian Presbyterian North Formosa (Taiwan) Mission. This includes over 7,000 documents from 1868 to 1923.

*Taiwan: The Rev. Dr. Paul McLean*

The Rev. Dr. Paul McLean has been serving as a Bible Translation Adviser in partnership with the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan and the Bible Society in Taiwan since 2012. Currently, he is helping six indigenous translation teams who are preparing Bibles in the Amis, Bunun, Paiwan, Pinuyumayan, Tayal and Tsou languages. The Ngudradrekai (Drekay) Bible was published in July 2017. During 1983-1995 and 2004-2011, Paul helped translate the Bible into Hakka. It was published in 2012.

*Hungary: Stephanie Chunoo*

Presbyterians Sharing supports Stephanie Chunoo as she serves as a Young Adult Intern with Kalunba Social Services, a refugee ministry of the Reformed



Church of Hungary. Stephanie will be building relationships with the refugee clientele, teaching English and assisting with the English website by providing content to connect international readers.

Pray for our Canadian Ministries:

*Action Réfugiés Montréal, Montreal, QC*

Action Réfugiés Montréal works with refugees who are seeking justice and safety in the greater Montreal region. ARM's knowledgeable and caring staff understands Canada's complex refugee laws and regulations and knows how to best support people going through the refugee process.

*Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre, Montreal, QC*

Montreal's Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre offers empowering, supportive programs and services to the community of Little Burgundy in the south-west part of the city and beyond. The center is a presence in the community, accompanying people through their struggles and successes.

*Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry, Saskatoon, SK*

Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry provides a warm and safe place where people in inner-city Saskatoon can gather for food, friendship and support. SNCM reaches out to the Native population through culturally sensitive worship services, a healing circle, and crisis and spiritual counselling. Staff work to assist those who are in need physically, spiritually and emotionally.

Their main goal is to establish a relationship of trust and care with street people so that they may feel comfortable enough to attend a church service that includes with Native traditions; a place they can call home and a people they can call family.



*Anamiewigummig (Kenora Fellowship Centre), Kenora, ONT*

The Kenora Fellowship Centre provides sanctuary and hospitality for those marginalized and alienated by poverty and addiction. It operates as a drop-in centre and works with legal services, detoxification programs, street patrol and other essential services in the community.

*Winnipeg Inner City Missions, Winnipeg, MB*

Winnipeg Inner City Missions is committed to serving people with a particular focus on those living in downtown Winnipeg. WICM provides a safe, nurturing and peaceful atmosphere where people can begin to achieve their potential.

It is committed to helping people find their way to having adequate food, clothing and a safe place to live. It helps people learn how to be listened to and understood, achieve employment and develop physical, emotional, spiritual and social well-being.

*Cariboo Church: Nazko and Area Dakelh Outreach, Cariboo Region, BC*

The Nazko and Area Dakelh Outreach is part of the mission work of Cariboo Presbyterian Church in the Dakelh First Nation territory, BC. It is an essential ministry in a region struggling with economic downturn and the ongoing crises of addiction, poverty and despair among many First Nations peoples. It is with the amazing love of Jesus that the ministry team reaches out to the rural and remote people of the Cariboo region.

*Hummingbird Ministries, Vancouver, BC*

Hummingbird Ministries is an Aboriginal healing ministry located in the lower mainland of BC. It is committed to walking with Indigenous people in their healing journeys and to promote healing and reconciliation between Indigenous people and the Church.



PRAYER.