

ORDINARY TIME

A PRAYER GUIDE FROM ASCENSION CHURCH OF PHOENIX



SOWER AT SUNSET - VAN GOGH 1888



How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives. What we do with this hour, and that one, is what we are doing. A schedule defends from chaos and whim. It is a net for catching days. It is a scaffolding on which a worker can stand and labor with both hands at sections of time. A schedule is a mock-up of reason and order—willed, faked, and so brought into being; it is a peace and a haven set into the wreck of time; it is a lifeboat on which you find yourself, decades later, still living. Each day is the same, so you remember the series afterward as a blurred and powerful pattern.

—ANNIE DILLARD, *THE WRITING LIFE*

Dear Friends,

I love reading writers who write about writing. And Annie Dillard is an especial favorite. In *The Writing Life*, she reminds writers that “how we spend our days, is of course, how we spend our lives.” In other words, writers must be conscientious about the rhythms of their lives in order for them to be able to consistently provide creative output. As someone who writes a 5 page paper every week (a sermon!), I have also found it necessary to have a scaffolding for the day and the week. Exceptions and interruptions are common, of course, but the backbone is strong enough that, as Annie Dillard says, it appears “afterward as a blurred and powerful pattern.”

It’s not just writers, though. All of us have to confront the reality that the pattern of our lives, in a meaningful way, IS our life. And for Christians, we must realize that we cannot have a faithful life without having a great number of faithful days. And you can’t have faithful days accidentally. It is a useful exercise to think through the components of each day and ask, “How could this portion be more faithful?”

That is exactly the question that has driven this project. What if we thought Christianly about waking, labor, leisure, relationships, provision and sleeping? Are those somewhat arbitrary delineations for every day? Of course. But all six of them contain the stuff of life, and all of them are also addressed many times throughout the Scriptures. We decided to concentrate on one area at a time, so there are five days for waking, five for labor, and so on.

It is our sincere hope that you will be helped by reading these daily devotions for the next 30 days. Let’s commit to building some scaffolding, some rhythms, and practices for our days so that our lives become a blur of faithfulness.

Peace of Christ,
Pastor Gray (For the Writing Team)

PS. Thank Megan Bergstrom next time you see her. Not only did she design this devotional, the whole idea for the project was hers.

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W a k i n g

LAMENTATIONS 3:21-24

But this I call to mind,
and therefore I have hope:
The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases;
his mercies never come to an end;
they are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.
“The Lord is my portion,” says my soul,
“therefore I will hope in him.”

Seasons of hardship can diminish our desire to get out of bed in the morning. Whether our heartache is the result of grief, the affliction of chronic illness, or the consequences of our own failures, we all go through times in which sin’s destruction is more apparent. Lamenting the ways sin has affected us is biblical and we can trust that the Lord hears our cries. But what antidote can be found for the temptation to despair during such times?

In Lamentations we see that the remedy is found in bringing to mind the character of

God (v.21). His steadfast love is the foundation for all our hope and His inexhaustible mercy is our daily provision for endurance. Whatever our burdens, or however often we may fail, we can be sure that new mercies are given every dawning day. His abundant love and mercies are lavished upon us just as surely as the sun shines. So as we see the morning’s light we can say, “The Lord is my portion... therefore I will hope in Him” (v.24). We can rise to meet the day with hearts firmly settled in His unwavering love for us.

Lord,

You are ever merciful and gracious.

You abound in steadfast love and faithfulness.

How quickly our hearts forget this truth,

And as a result, we grow faint.

By Your inexhaustible mercy,

Renew our strength to face today’s challenges.

When our thoughts wander toward despair,

Redirect our minds to Your goodness.

Keep our hearts anchored in Your love.

Amen

FOR REFLECTION: Is there a particular burden in your life that makes it harder for you to face the day? How might calling to mind the truth of God’s character and His abundant mercies help you endure?

PSALM 90:14-17

Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love,
 that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.
 Make us glad for as many days as you have
 afflicted us,
 and for as many years as we have seen evil.
 Let your work be shown to your servants,
 and your glorious power to their children.
 Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us,
 and establish the work of our hands upon us;
 yes, establish the work of our hands!

The assumption of the psalmist here is ‘if you satisfy us in the morning, O God, we will be made to rejoice and be glad’. Specifically, the psalmist notes such satisfaction comes via God’s steadfast love—his covenantal, consistent, personal, and unconditional love. It is this love that he bestows freely on us—knowing our frail creaturely nature—that makes us satisfied and glad.

The psalmist makes clear that satisfaction comes through God’s revelation of himself (v 16). When we see him truly, we see ourselves

and are prepared for the daily trials of life. This truth compels the psalmist to cry out that God show favor upon his people for, if he does not, his people are not secure and at peace, and all their work is powerless (Ps 104:29-30). Yet God, in his faithfulness, will daily saturate us with his love. This morning, let us steep in and meditate on the faithful love of God that is in no way dependent on our state or the things we do, but on his own character.

*Father, Satisfy us early in the morning
 with your steadfast love all of our days,
 That we may rejoice and be glad all our days.
 Early in the morning, beloved Savior,
 Show us yourself—beautiful, exalted, and glorious!
 Lord, you alone establish our hearts and the work of our hands.
 Help us to accept and embrace our creatureliness—
 Coming to you for satisfaction and rest.
 Thank you for your generous gift of Yourself.
 Satisfy us, oh Lord, with your steadfast love.
 Amen.*

FOR REFLECTION: What might it look like to have your first thought in the morning be the faithfulness and commitment of God to you? How would this change the trajectory of your day?

EPHESIANS 5:8-14

For at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and true) and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness but instead expose them. But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, *“Awake O Sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you”*

There is almost no greater transformation than when bright light floods into complete blackness. That very thing has been given to us. Our identities underwent the greatest transformation that we were darkness, but now we are light. As children of light, the darkness no longer has power over us. We live out our new identity by practicing the beauty of God’s light in goodness, righteousness, and truth.

It is easy to forget we are light. We slip into the belief that the darkness is stronger. We may turn to darkness to hide our sins, holding

back some parts of our hearts and actions so that we don’t feel obligated to confess or to change. Sometimes darkness is apathy or a refusal to acknowledge the brilliant light of God’s mercy and His presence in our lives.

So in the power of the Spirit, we fight to stay awake to the good that God is doing in us, to continue to fight the darkness that wants us to believe its lies, and to bring the thoughts and deeds of darkness to light through confession and repentance.

Father of Light,

Thank you for bringing us out of darkness.

We’re grateful for our new identity of light in You.

Forgive us for the ways we do not live as children of light,

For the sins we cherish in darkness and try to hide from You,

And for our failure to lovingly shine a light for others.

Wake us Father to all that you have done for us.

Wake us Spirit to the sins we hide in darkness.

Shine on us Christ so that we live as children of light.

Amen

FOR REFLECTION: Consider for a moment where you have “fallen asleep” spiritually. In the quiet of this morning, what spiritual desire could God be awakening in you?

PSALM 139:17-18

How precious to me are your thoughts, O God!

How vast is the sum of them!

If I would count them, they are more than
the sand.

I awake, and I am still with you.

As dawn breaks, are we immediately in awe of the greatness of God? David appears to have that exact experience in mind when he penned Psalm 139:18, "I awake, and I am still with you." How does David possess such intimacy with the Lord? The preceding verse tells us, "How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!" David is so beautifully consumed with God's thoughts it controls his first response of the day. David's intimacy with the Lord, like ours, is wrought

from the Spirit of Christ, who aides us in deep contemplation of God's truth in Scripture.

Can it get any better? Yes. More precious and compelling are God's ceaseless thoughts of us! God is always present; He never leaves us nor forsakes us. God's hand is never removed from each of us because He inexorably loves us. God loves us because He loves His Son. There is great comfort and encouragement knowing, regardless of our contemplations of God, He is perpetually loving and caring for us.

*Lord of Life,
Author and perfecter of our faith,
You mercifully love the unlovable,
Saving the sinner from his sins.
At the cross, your justice and mercy prevail.
You keep your promises, calling us by name.
You give us eternal life.
We are always in your keeping!
You are the Good Shepherd
Who never leaves us or forsakes us.
Hallelujah!
Amen.*

FOR REFLECTION: What are you consumed with when you first wake? Is it schedules, concerns, work, or family? How does this psalm give you hope and focus for the day?

PSALM 143:7-8

Answer me quickly, O Lord!

My spirit fails!

Hide not your face from me,

lest I be like those who go down to the pit.

Let me hear in the morning of your steadfast love,

for in you I trust.

Make me know the way I should go,

for to you I lift up my soul.

When we awake, what gets our attention first? We could, of course, look to the news to shock us awake. When we do this, we often never escape the cycle, hungering for information that never seems to make us wise. We can also look first to social media to entertain and entrance us awake. We become complacent watching others as, often undetected, we grow dissatisfied with our own lives. Or perhaps we jump into the day with productivity, tackling our lists, checking our email and solving other people's problems. How often, though, we burn out mid-day, suddenly

aware that the to-do list will never end. Turning to anything other than a word from God is a short-cut to "the pit" where God's face feels hidden and our spirit fails.

But a word from God as the first experience of the morning gives confidence and direction for our whole day. It gives confidence because we are truthfully proclaiming: "in you I trust," and it gives direction as we ask God to "make [us] know the way." The day is different if we begin by acknowledging the God who made it.

Oh God let us hear from you this morning.

Answer us quickly and keep us from the pit.

Remind our hearts that we are yours.

Fill us with a sense of your precious security,

And help us to know the extent of your love.

As we go through this day, give us Your direction.

Show us what faithfulness means in everything we carry.

And bring us back to bed tonight, good-tired and eager

To rest in your gentle arms again.

Amen.

FOR REFLECTION: How could you change your morning routine in order to hear from God first?

L a b o r

GENESIS 1:26-28

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

There's a temptation to view all work as a necessary evil or as some sort of curse. Whether it's mundane, quotidian chores or a once-in-a-lifetime undertaking, it's often hard not to feel like our never-ending to-do lists are anything other than punishment. But work is normal. It is part of God's original design and existed prior to the fall. In the very beginning, God gave us dominion over the earth and directed us to fill it and subdue it. That was His first order.

God created us for both relationship and

impact. Moreover, it is these traits that reflect the image of the triune God, who lives in eternal relationship and began scripture with a creative work—one that he calls "very good." (Gen. 1:31). When we labor with our community, we experience life as God intended. Work is good.

Triune God,

We confess that we often see our work as joyless.

Instead of understanding our gift, we grumble.

Thank you for blessing our work anyway.

Help us to see work as an opportunity to serve you and each other.

Help us to be good stewards.

Thank you for designing us for community and purpose.

Amen

FOR REFLECTION: What is one way you can find joy in the work God ordained for you today?

1 THESSALONIANS 4:11-12

and to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you, so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one.

We live in a culture that endeavors to receive the greatest amount of recognition for the least amount of effort given. As a result our world is full of conflict and disorder. Paul urges God's people toward a different way of life by exhorting us to work quietly and diligently in our own matters. This manner in which we labor not only enables us to provide but also enhances our witness to those outside the church (v.12).

The Christian is called to work with humble earnestness at whatever the Lord has

given as a task. Even the most repetitive chores or mundane duties are not done in vain. But when rendered unto the Lord, they are means by which He builds up a life of peace and order. What respite might we provide a frazzled soul when they walk into a well-ordered home? What skeptic might take notice and give us occasion to share about the hope within us? Our unseen labor yields a flourishing in our lives that the world cannot ignore.

*God of Peace,
We thank You for the gift of Your Spirit
That enables us to work for Your glory
Instead of our own.
Please take our imperfect efforts,
And bring forth order in our lives and homes.
Transform the work of our hands
Into a freedom that enables us
To better serve those whom You place in our path.
Amen*

FOR REFLECTION: Is there an area in your life where you are more prone to seek outside recognition for your labor? What would it look like if you approached this task with quiet diligence?

LUKE 3:10-14

And the crowds asked him [John], "What then shall we do?" And he answered them, "Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise." Tax collectors also came to be baptized and said to him, "Teacher, what shall we do?" And he said to them, "Collect no more than you are authorized to do." Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what shall we do?" And he said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, and be content with your wages."

John the Baptist was a great prophet. Crowds gathered, hoping for a Messiah. But what a message! John called them poisonous snakes, warning them that God's judgment was near, and insisting that they repent (Luke 3:7-9).

Remarkably, they took his exhortations to heart. John challenged them to share their extra clothing or food with those who had none. When hated tax collectors and soldiers asked about their specific situations, John did not say "quit your jobs". Rather, he instructed them not to abuse their power for personal gain. Later in

Luke's gospel we see surprising examples of each: Zacchaeus the chief tax collector who abruptly gave half his possessions to the poor (Luke 19), and a Centurion renowned for his generosity in building the local synagogue (Luke 7). Jesus publicly celebrated each one's faith.

In our labor there are many alluring pitfalls, often connected to money or power. John shows us that God's people are called to meet these challenges with repentance, generosity, and humble contentment, trusting God in whatever he has called us to do.

Jesus,

Apart from you we can do nothing.

We are often reluctant to share with our neighbor in need.

Please kindle in us a generous and cheerful spirit.

Help us to love others freely with what you have given us.

Thank you that we may honor you with the labor of our days.

Help us to be content with what you provide.

*Please make us faithful in our devotion to you,
and sincere in our service to others.*

Grow in us the assurance

That it is more blessed to give than to receive.

Amen.

FOR REFLECTION: Zacchaeus and the Centurion each found deep joy in a life of extraordinary generosity. How is God's word encouraging you to give generously in your calling?

2 THESSALONIANS 3:6-9

Now we command you brothers in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition you received from us. For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you. It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate.

Our inboxes are overflowing, our work hours spill into weekends, deadlines loom, dishes pile up, laundry never ends, children constantly need something. No matter our job title, all of us are familiar with work that seems never-ending, and most of us are probably burned out to some degree.

Sighs of “I wish I didn’t have to do this,” or “this is too much” can become the refrain of our lives. We often believe that if something is hard then it is bad. In a culture that sometimes values work only as a means of a “great retirement”,

we also sometimes build our lives on a desire only to get to idleness and rest. But we see here that work in and of itself is a lovely thing, not something to be only endured.

According to custom, Paul as teacher could have relied on others to meet his needs. Instead, he labored day and night. His example reminds us it’s valuable to be productive, to not be a burden, and to be servant-hearted in our work. Rather than counting hours until we can relax, we can learn to see our toil as innately beneficial.

God our Provider,

Every good and perfect gift is from above.

All our needs and desires are met in You.

Thank you for the countless provisions in our lives,

Yet, Lord, we are deeply weary.

We feel our inadequacy. The demands seem too much.

We confess that we neither work well, nor rest well.

Teach us to see our work as good.

Enable us to find joy in our callings.

Protect us from idleness, and give us true rest in You.

Amen

FOR REFLECTION: In what area are you longing for pure relief and relaxation? How might the Holy Spirit be inviting you to transform that area into service of others?

GALATIANS 6:7-9

Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.

How easy it would be to do good if we immediately reaped some benefit: if family members always thanked us for washing the dishes or bosses immediately praised us for volunteering to cover extra shifts. The reality is, we are often looking for a pat on the back to make us feel good about ourselves and eschewing the true blessing God has in store.

Paul here recognizes how hard it is to persist in doing good when we don't immediately see the reward, and he exhorts us not to give up. Though earthly recognition feels good in the moment, our pursuit of it is a form of sowing to the flesh, which this passage tells us will yield corruption. What a better reward we will have if we instead sow quietly to the spirit - eternal life!

So instead of grumbling that our work is not appreciated, perhaps we can mop the house without recognition or hold back that harsh criticism that seems so deserved, remembering that we are the recipients of so much unmerited goodness from our Heavenly Father. And what a reward it will be at the gates of heaven to hear the words: "Well done, my good and faithful servant."

*Father who sees in secret,
Your rewards are far greater than any we could dream up.
Your focus is eternal, while we are so stuck in the here and now.
Lift our eyes to heaven,
So that our hands and feet may praise you on this earth,
With humble acts of service,
Unseen by those around us, but precious in the light of eternity.
Help us to not grow weary of doing good,
Knowing that you never grow weary of doing good for us,
Even when we don't notice.
Amen.*

FOR REFLECTION: In what ways do you "sow to the flesh" in your daily life? What wearies you from continuing to do good and how can you overcome this obstacle?

L e i s u r e

GENESIS 2:1-3

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

God does not need to sleep, and is never weary. So why does the passage say “God rested”? It means that God ceased his creative activity, having finished all his work. He had made the entire heavens and earth, and now (as it were) he steps back to appreciate his creative achievement and celebrate that it is “very good”. He gives the celebration form and structure by making the seventh day - the day of finishing his creative work - blessed and holy— a holy day.

Indeed, a kind of holiday: a day for rest, for celebration, for leisure. Having made us in his image, God tells us about his own rhythm of work and rest intentionally, as a framework for us. That framework protects us from worshiping our work, and also from worshiping pleasure. Rather, as “imitators of God” and “dearly loved children” (Eph. 5:1) we can safely follow God’s rhythm, living in a balance that includes our own creative labors, as well as stepping back from work each Sabbath to celebrate and rest.

*Creator of heaven and earth,
We wonder at the magnificence of your creative work!
The heavens declare your glory, the sky shows your artistry.
The earth is yours, and everything in it.
How amazing, that you made us creatures in your own image.
More amazing still, you made us your children, loved and cherished.
Help us, then, to please you by imitating you:
In our purposeful labor and creativity,
In our purposeful leisure and celebration,
And in a life of sacrificial love, as Christ loved us.
Amen.*

FOR REFLECTION: As someone made in the image of God, how might you “step back” from your work today and simply enjoy some aspect of it?

PHILIPPIANS 4:8-9

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

Truth, honor, justice, purity, loveliness, excellence: we are the gatekeepers of what enters our minds, and these are lofty companions. If Phillipians 4:8 was a litmus test for what we allowed to occupy space in our brains, we would be watching a lot less Netflix and 10 o'clock news and doing a lot less scrolling on social media.

But when we consider that everything good, lovely, and true flows from the Creator of the universe, what boundless freedom and joy exist within these boundaries! We can celebrate

the intricacy of our bodies through athletics, read literature that plumbs the depths of what it means to be human, make music to the glory of God, invest deeply in friendships, and rejoice when lost souls are saved - these examples only scratch the surface.

Even more profoundly, when we train our minds on “the God of peace,” His love, His beauty, and the boundless generosity he has shown us, our joy will transcend even the hardest of circumstances. Like Paul, who wrote these words of encouragement from behind the bars of a Roman jail, we will be able to say confidently in good times and bad: “To live is Christ.”

*Jesus,
Help us daily remember you died so we can live,
Not under a curtain of shame,
Or with a head full of junk,
But with joy,
Forgetting what lies behind,
Straining forward to what lies ahead.
Help us not to waste our days with crass words and mindless distraction,
But instead, center us on the cross,
The source of all that is pure, lovely, excellent, and true.
Amen.*

FOR REFLECTION: What is one thing you can cut out of your life that does not meet the criteria of Phillipians 4:8? What is one thing you can add in that does?

ECCLESIASTES 9:7-9

Go, eat your bread with joy, and drink your wine with a merry heart, for God has already approved what you do. Let your garments be always white. Let not oil be lacking on your head. Enjoy life with the wife whom you love, all the days of your vain life that he has given you under the sun, because that is your portion in life and in your toil at which you toil under the sun.

“God has already approved what you do.” What a jarring statement. Of course, this is not scripture blessing licentiousness. The rest of Ecclesiastes is clear on that point. It is, however, permission – a permission to enjoy the things God has given us. This is one of the themes of Ecclesiastes: God’s desire for us is to enjoy the fruits of our labor with the people that we love. That is His gift to us.

Ecclesiastes is also clear that our ability to enjoy God’s gifts is impossible apart from Him. Without our hope in God, our search for pleasure is “chasing the wind.” But with God, we don’t need to strive for perfection or beat ourselves up over sin. God covers our sins and gives us the freedom to forget those things. He is gentle with us. As a father watching his kids on Christmas morning, God approves of and takes pleasure in our enjoyment of his world.

*Giver of all good things,
Thank you for your continued gifts, both large and small.
Help us to have the wisdom to enjoy our circumstances.
Let us see the ways that your hand provides.
Give us the freedom to eat and drink without regret.
Teach us to accept our portion.
Amen*

FOR REFLECTION: Do you truly believe that God desires you to take joy in the things he has placed before you? What are you dwelling on that prevents you from enjoying God’s gifts?

PSALM 104:24-26

O Lord, how manifold are your works!
 In wisdom have you made them all;
 The earth is full of your creatures.
 Here is the sea great and wide,
 Which teems with creatures innumerable,
 Living things both small and great.
 There go the ships,
 And the Leviathan, which you formed
 to play in it.

This Psalm is all about God's wisdom and purposeful creation. Right in the midst of that, is this surprising verse. In our day to day lives, we may not think much about leviathans, and if we do, we certainly don't think of them as frolicking. Yet, here we learn that God placed huge creatures in the ocean in order to play! This is such a beautiful insight into the heart of God. Our Creator designed the world with order and purpose. Part of that order and purpose is, like the leviathan, to frolic and play!

For many of us as we age we lose the habit of play, and we become unacquainted with laughter and light-heartedness. Some days we may regret its loss, but it seems like it's the inevitable reality of aging. Certainly we rarely think of this as part of God's character or design for our lives. What a gift to be reminded here that God designed us to delight, and placed us in a world of countless opportunities to do so!

*God of all Creation,
 We marvel that You are a God who values play.
 Though we fail to notice the many delights of Your world,
 though we have grown unaccustomed to play,
 though laughter feels unfamiliar in our mouths
 We ask that you restore to us the joy of our salvation,
 that you would help us to be more fully ourselves
 and that we would live in the way you created us to -
 Worshiping you in work, rest and play.
 Amen*

FOR REFLECTION: Remember a time when you were feeling playful. What is a practical way that you could return to God's gift of that enjoyment this week?

PSALM 37:4

Delight yourself in the Lord,
and he will give you the desires of
your heart.

Our downtimes throughout the day provide us the greatest opportunity to marvel at the presence and power of God in our lives. It's in those cherished moments throughout our day where we recognize God's amazing hand at work. Contemplating this mighty God Who has saved us and is sanctifying us leads to delight in Him. The substance and motivation is Christ and His gospel. We delight in the Lord because of who He is, what He has done, and what He is continuing to do for us. When we do this in the Lord, He gives us the desires of our heart

which is to draw nearer to Him.

A genuine delight in the Lord results in our desires being aligned with His desires. In the midst of our day, and especially during moments of downtime, we are provided an incredible opportunity to marvel at our amazing Creator and Savior.

*Our Contentment,
Your hand is at work in our lives.
Your sovereignty is on display for us to see.
Your Word is in our ear, working in our hearts and minds.
How great are your works!
How wonderful is your display!
Help us to constantly see and hear your work and Word,
Help us to delight in You, giver of eternal life.
In Christ, we pray.
Amen.*

FOR REFLECTION: What captivates your delight and desires? Dwell on a recent time that has drawn you nearer to the Lord and delight in it!

Relationships

DEUTERONOMY 6:4-9

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

The Israelites who Moses was speaking to here had just been led by God out of slavery and received the Ten Commandments, witnessing the creator of the universe literally descend in fire and speak to one of his creation. They were awestruck and must have thought their love for God would never fade. But God cautioned that when they arrived at the promised land, it would be easy to forget their Provider (v. 10-12). Like the Israelites, we often forget God’s goodness and our affections grow tepid.

In the Jewish tradition, these verses are read twice daily and posted in a small box on the doorframe of homes. While this may seem legalistic, there is something to be said for daily rituals of remembrance. God commands his people to love Him but thankfully gives us a blueprint for how to do it. We love Him by writing His word on our hearts, talking about it in our homes, and teaching it to our children. We love Him by remembering how He has perfectly kept His promises, and will continue to do so despite our unfaithfulness. And if we engage in these daily acts of remembrance, our affections are sure to follow.

*Creator of the universe,
You chose your people before all time.
You called us your beloved, though we did nothing to earn it.
Through empires and eras, you have preserved your people.
Help us to remember your great works today
So that when we wake in the morning and when we sleep at night,
When we are eating, talking, or laughing,
Our households will be full of love for You.
Amen.*

FOR REFLECTION: What rituals can you build into your daily life that will deepen your love for God and your delight in His law?

PSALM 56:8-13

You have kept count of my tossings;
 put my tears in your bottle.
 Are they not in your book?
 Then my enemies will turn back
 in the day when I call.
 This I know, that God is for me.
 In God, whose word I praise,
 in the Lord, whose word I praise,
 in God I trust; I shall not be afraid.
 What can man do to me?
 I must perform my vows to you, O God;
 I will render thank offerings to you.
 For you have delivered my soul from death,
 yes, my feet from falling,
 that I may walk before God
 in the light of life.

Many times, it feels as if the world has a personal vendetta with us. Repeatedly, the Scriptures inform us that we shouldn't be surprised by fiery darts and the roaring of the enemy; yet often, we are. The fallenness of this world, the depravity of humanity which manifests itself in the acts of other image bearers and in the weakness of our own flesh catches us off guard. Yet, David reminds us that when we are under attack, we should set aside our fear and trust in the Sovereign God who is for us.

David reminds himself of God's nearness; the One who gently observes tears shed. He

remembers how God delivered him before, keeping him steady in his hand. David has been bound to God, as God has bound himself to David. Friends, we do not wander into worldly battle alone. When we cry out, he hears. When we weep, Christ intercedes. When we face daily battles, the Spirit walks with us. Remember, he saved us and will keep us so that we might walk in the light for all eternity.

Living God, Victorious King

We praise you. Your word is true. Your ways are perfect.

Your grace is sufficient and perfected in our weakness.

You are for us!

You enter the muck of this creation, though you are holy.

You bind yourself to creatures who stumble around hurting one another.

How this must grieve you; how much you must abound with love.

Teach us to enter into the victory of the cross.

You have taken hold of us, and so we grope to take hold of you.

Teach us to not fear, to walk in light, to bask in your life!

Amen.

FOR REFLECTION: Where in life do you feel particularly stricken? Where does it feel like others come against you in some way? How has God been "for you" in this circumstance?

ROMANS 12:14-16

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight.

The first eleven chapters of Romans are a beautiful manifesto of the deep truths of the Gospel. But starting in chapter twelve, Paul shifts his attention to how these truths should play out in the lives of God's people. Paul is not merely giving us a list of rules. He is showing us what it means to be a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1).

Our lives are to be a demonstration of Christ's love, poured out for His glory and the good of others (John 13:34). Daily dying to ourselves is an essential practice of a life in God. By

the power of the Spirit we surrender our comfort so that we may respond to an enemy with love. We set aside our own desires to celebrate with others in their joys. We change our plans to come alongside the broken-hearted. Forsaking our pride, we awaken to opportunities to befriend the outcast among us. It is through this posture of a life-laid-down that biblical love is known in our relationships (1 John 3:16).

*God of Perfect Love,
We are often full of selfish ambition,
Making us indifferent to the needs of others.
Forgive us, we pray, and humble us.
Help us lay down our agendas.
Open our eyes to the hurting and the outcast,
Make us vessels of your love and light.
Remind us that in the offering of our whole lives to You
We can truly love
And truly live.
Amen*

FOR REFLECTION: Are there any specific areas where the Lord is calling you to sacrifice for the good of another? Ask Him to help you do this.

PHILIPPIANS 1:27

Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel.

We've all seen clips of the coach summoning up an inspirational message which propels the team to victory—the unity of purpose, the shared striving, the fortitude for victory. There are no designated “half-time” speeches in Scripture, but if there were, Apostle Paul's gospel exhortation in Philippians 1:27 is likely it.

We are exhorted to be worthy of the gospel of Christ because of what Jesus has accomplished for our salvation and sanctification. As we anticipate Christ's return, God has prepared for us gospel fueled works to complete.

Paul's appeal draws our attention to this shared purpose. He wants us “standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel.” Our unity, beginning and end, is Christ. Our ability to stand firm is found in the Spirit of Christ and our unified mind is to reflect Christ, the Head of the Body. The outcome is a cohesive team driven by the gospel, laboring victoriously for Christ and His Body, the Church.

*Our Righteousness,
Your victory won, no sting of death.
Our salvation secure,
Loving You because You first loved us.
Our mouths shout your praise,
You, having prepared the words of our mouth,
Draw us near now and keep us close.
Unify us in You, doing the work of Your will,
Our God and Redeemer.
Amen.*

FOR REFLECTION: How have you been ministered to by members of the body of Christ recently?

JOHN 15:12-15

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one that this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.”

Jesus, speaking to his disciples, calls us his friends. A remarkable statement, to be sure, but it is made even more remarkable by his preceding statement that there is no greater love than someone laying down his life for his friends. This of course was His promise to us, a promise He fulfilled only a few chapters later.

This was also His example and expectation. He says we are to lay down our lives for one another. That is how we love. Mercifully, most of us will not be called on to physically die. But

nevertheless, we are called to die to our own selfish desires every day. This is a difficult task.

The rhythms of ordinary life often dull us to the needs of our family and friends. Jesus’s example, however, tells us to break out of this autopilot. He commands us to love others how He loved us: by treating others as worthy of our sacrifice.

*Faithful Friend,
We marvel at your unselfishness,
And we confess that we have acted selfishly
Both in things we’ve done and things we’ve left undone.
Thank you for your example of sacrifice.
Make us more like you.
Amen*

FOR REFLECTION: In what small way can you lay down your life for your friends today?

P r o v i s i o n

1 CORINTHIANS 3:16-17

Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.

1 CORINTHIANS 6:19-20

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price, so glorify God in your body.

EPHESIANS 2:20b-22

Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God in the Spirit.

The temple of God is where He dwells. When Christ ascends into heaven after the resurrection, he promises the gift of the Holy Spirit. God who gives of himself in the person of Jesus, gives of himself again in the person of the Holy Spirit. No longer does God dwell in a stationary temple or live alongside us as Christ did in human form. Instead, he chooses to dwell within his people who are now individually temples of God, and corporately being built up into a temple of God.

How wonderful and perplexing—a holy God who dwells in a broken people. As Jesus is

in the throne room of the heavenlies, the Holy Spirit lives amongst the people of God—never leaving or forsaking us but instead being intimately bound to us, sanctifying us, and preparing us to see our Redeemer face-to-face. Ultimately, if we belong to Jesus, there is a way we carry the presence of God into each place we enter—being ourselves temples of the living God. What an amazing gift and heavy responsibility.

*Holy God, You are gracious, abounding in steadfast love
In your grace, help us to experience the nearness of your presence.
Make us in awe of the God who condescends to his people,
Holy God making himself lower than the angels in Christ
Bound to stubborn people as the Spirit lives in the Church.
Help us to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit within us
To not grieve Him, but respond to him in willful obedience—
Overwhelmed with gratitude
Made holy through the blood of Christ and presence of the Spirit.
Praise, and glory, and honor to God.
Amen.*

FOR REFLECTION: Meditate on the reality that God has given himself in the Spirit to dwell in you as his temple. How should that shape how you think, act, and feel today?

ISAIAH 40:28-31

Have you not known? Have you not heard?
 The LORD is the everlasting God,
 the creator of the ends of the earth.
 He does not faint or grow weary;
 His understanding is unsearchable.
 He gives power to the faint,
 and to him who has no might he increases strength.
 Even youths shall faint and be weary,
 and young men fall exhausted;
 but they who wait for the LORD shall renew
 their strength;
 They shall mount up with wings like eagles;
 They shall run and not be weary;
 They shall walk and not faint.

Our bodies are daily reminders that we are, in fact, limited. A sore ankle, tired eyes, sickness, and disease all gently, and sometimes not-so-gently, communicate to us that our bodies don't function as well as they could or should. Age, of course, makes these reminders only more pointed and poignant.

God promises us renewed bodies in heaven. Until then, we live in the tension of feeling our bodies wasting away while simultaneously awaiting their renewal. Paul refers to this tension as our bodies "groan[ing], longing to put on our

heavenly dwelling." (2 Cor. 5). This can be a discouraging feeling, and experiencing our frailty makes it hard to trust that God will restore us.

But what is God's instruction to us in our moments of weakness? He does not tell us to work, or strive, or seek, or justify ourselves. He tells us to "wait." He invites us to rest in His strength knowing that ours will fail. The everlasting God assures us that His might will help us overcome our feebleness. Accordingly, in addition to reminding us of our limitations, our failing bodies should remind us that God will sustain and renew us.

*Creator of the ends of the earth,
 We come to you in our moments of increasing frailty.
 Teach us to wait for you and trust in your power to renew our
 strength.
 Help us to accept our limitations;
 While remembering that you have none.
 Too often we rely on our own strength.
 Remind us to wait for you*

FOR REFLECTION: In what ways do you rely on your own strength rather than rely on God's? What keeps you from resting in His strength?

MATTHEW 6:31-34

Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself.

Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

Each day has its share of trouble. Jesus even says as much here. We find plenty to worry about in daily news of global conflicts, economic uncertainties, and unanticipated disasters. We even worry over things we have plenty of: food and clothing. And what about tomorrow? We are anxious about our future.

So when Jesus repeats "Therefore do not be anxious" three times in verses 25-34, it seems out of touch with reality. But by saying "therefore" he is making a rational argument, complete with rhetorical questions: "...which of you by

being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?" (v. 27) Birds don't sow or reap, but God feeds them; lilies don't toil or spin, but God clothes them. "Are you not of more value than they?" (v. 26)

Jesus knows his Father, and so reckons on his certain provision. With God as your heavenly Father, your life is already as secure as it could ever be. He loves you, and knows all your needs. He will provide for you.

Heavenly Father,

Jesus, of course, was right: each day has its own trouble.

We mean to trust you, but we are anxious and perplexed.

We want to place our faith in you, but we worry.

Teach us that we are secure in your love for us.

You are a refuge we could never be for ourselves.

Thank you that not one sparrow is forgotten by you.

Thank you for adopting us into your family.

Thank you for your generous provision of all we need.

Amen.

FOR REFLECTION: What "anxious moments" are in your recent memory? How is Jesus gently showing you that the Father will provide for even these?

HEBREWS 4:15-16

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Perhaps today we are burdened by circumstances nearly too much to bear. Or we may come to this passage giddy from good news with blessings overflowing in abundance. We may come today crying out to our Lord seeking comfort. We may come rejoicing at the goodness of God in Christ Jesus. No matter which “we” is you today, we all are in daily need of the throne of grace. We are all products of grace, purchased by the blood of Christ. Our Savior sits on the throne as King of kings and Lord of lords.

It is undoubtedly a throne, but it is a throne of grace. With lowly reverence and confidence, we should approach this throne—lowly reverence with regard to ourselves and utmost confidence with regard to our perfect high priest, Jesus Christ. No matter our present circumstances, whether we’re facing the fiercest storm or reveling in the brightest day, we all need to desperately draw near to the throne of grace. In doing so, “we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

Merciful King,

Giver of grace and grantor of peace,

Blessed are You above all else.

You look upon the lowly and lift them up.

You hear our cries and You answer them.

You do not turn your head.

We have cause for rejoicing because of your goodness.

Our sins are no longer counted against us.

Celebration and praise is our response.

In grateful humility, we give You thanks.

Hallelujah.

FOR REFLECTION: In what practical ways will coming to Christ’s throne of grace get us through our day?

RUTH 2:8-12

Then Boaz said to Ruth, “Now, listen, my daughter, do not go to glean in another field or leave this one, but keep close to my young women. Let your eyes be on the field that they are reaping, and go after them. Have I not charged the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink what the young men have drawn.” Then she fell on her face, bowing to the ground, and said to him, “Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?” But Boaz answered her, “All that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband has been fully told to me, and how you left your father and mother and your native land and came to a people that you did not know before. The Lord repay you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge!”

In Scripture, God has special concern for the foreigner, the poor, and the widow. Ruth is all these things. Her husband has died, and she has traveled with her mother-in-law to a foreign land. She seeks work to support herself and mother-in-law. Here, Boaz gives us a glimpse of our Redeemer Jesus. Boaz hears of Ruth’s circumstance and character. He protects her from harm, provides her food and allows her to glean from his own abundance.

This is who our God is. He is a God who sees and comes to the needy. God knows

exactly where we are in spirit; God knows exactly what we need. God looks upon the humble and is a refuge to those willing to place themselves under his care. Our God is a God who purposely leaves bits of grain amidst our work to provide glimpses of his great knowledge and love of us. Let us be a people who amidst the circumstances of life, gratefully tend to the work God has given us, looking for the purposely placed bits of grain of our Father so that we might know him as he knows us, love him as he loves us, and praise him—for he is worthy.

Generous Creator,

Who are we that you might be attentive to us?

We are a broken people, beaten down by sin, ever in need.

But you, Beloved Jesus,

Have made us, who were not a people, children of the Living God.

You see our frailty and sin and You beckon us,

‘Come child, under my wings. For I provide life in abundance.’

Teach us to simply and humbly walk in your Presence,

Help us see the intentional reminders you place along our path.

We desire to see you and nestle into the security of your arms.

Amen.

FOR REFLECTION: Look for abundant bits of grain today. Can you identify them? Thank God for them, and be encouraged that He is with you.

S l e e p i n g

PSALM 130:5-6

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,
and in his word I hope;
my soul waits for the Lord
more than watchmen for the morning,
more than watchmen for the morning.

Sometimes the night must be endured. There are some late hours—most of us know well—when our minds double down on doubts, despair, and overwhelm. Whether it is financial, relational, or philosophical, we feel a sense of personal or cosmic doom. Psalm 131 gives us the picture of an eager watchman counting down the hours to see the morning. How many of us know that feeling of watching a clock, hoping that morning will bring some relief?

What would it mean to meet the Lord in the watches of the night, when we are having those gloomy thoughts? The psalmist answers: Waiting and Hoping. Waiting on God to bring relief, and assuring our hearts that he is worthy of our hope. This doesn't always relieve the suffering but it does help us endure it. One of the ways the psalmist does this is through repeating the truth to himself: "I wait..my soul waits...my soul waits." What he is doing is reassuring his own soul that the Lord is worthy of his attention. The Lord does not want us waiting in despair alone. On nights when we find ourselves watching the clock for the morning, may we also find a way to wait, hope and watch for Him.

Oh Lord,

*We wait for you. We wait for you. We wait for you
In the darkness of night and in the darkness of soul.*

We find ourselves dwelling on uncertain plans.

We find ourselves retracing previous conversations.

We find ourselves wondering about unanswered prayers.

Give us instead a song in the night.

Show us enough to remember that you are faithful.

And cause the morning light of your gracious presence

To dawn on our darkened hearts.

Amen

FOR REFLECTION: What is one thing that has kept you up at night recently? Instead of solving it, what do you think it would look like to wait and hope?

PSALM 127:1-2

Unless the Lord builds the house,
 those who build it labor in vain.
 Unless the Lord watches over the city,
 the watchman stays awake in vain.
 It is in vain that you rise up early
 and go late to rest,
 eating the bread of anxious toil;
 for he gives to his beloved sleep.

At the center of this psalm we find a beautiful promise of sleep. A gift! Obediently we lay our heads down for the night and welcome this much needed rest. But soon the back begins to ache, the insomnia creeps in, the restless child is yet again at the bedside. What happened? If sleep is a gift, has the Lord forgotten His beloved?

God's sovereignty is the overarching theme in this passage and it offers us the reassurance that we are not forgotten. In His sovereign hands, sleepless nights are His building blocks to

form in us a greater Christlikeness. By our weary rising to tend to loved ones and in our desperate prayers to the Father, we become small partakers in the sufferings of the One who knew the weariness of constant ministry. Yet He remembers our feeble frame and He knows our every need. Rest may elude us for a time, but exhaustion will not overtake us. We can trust that sleep will come again because it is His good gift to us.

*O God Who does not slumber,
 We confess that in the darkness of night
 Our trust in You can easily falter.
 As You uphold the universe with ease
 We ask You to uphold our tired bodies.
 Knowing that You know our needs
 More fully than we know them.
 We surrender our days and our nights
 Into Your sovereign and loving hands.
 Amen*

FOR REFLECTION: How are the sleepless nights in your life the result of “anxious toil”? How might the truth of God’s sovereignty bring specific comfort to you?

PSALM 77:1-3

I cry aloud to God,
 aloud to God, and he will hear me.
 In the day of my trouble I seek the Lord;
 in the night my hand is stretched out
 without wearying;
 my soul refuses to be comforted.
 When I remember God, I moan;
 when I meditate, my spirit faints.

When our days are troubling, our nights can be restless. In quiet reflection, we may sense our own weakness and distress. The psalmist is seeking God both day and night, crying out to God with his concerns, confident that God will hear. And yet he is not comforted. Even as he remembers God, he moans. As he prays and meditates, he continues to feel the weariness of his own soul. When we seek God and still find no peace, what then?

The psalmist doesn't give up. He continues meditating, searching in his spirit, by asking himself rhetorical questions about God (Psalm 77:7-9). Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has his steadfast love forever ceased? Slowly, these questions lead him to reflect on God's powerful rescue of his people in the Exodus.

We shouldn't give up either! We should meditate also, reflecting on our own questions about God. His Spirit will help us. Thoughtfully reflecting on Jesus' sacrificial death and resurrection, we will find God's deeply committed love, and the powerful rescue we need.

God Most High,

Thank you that you do not give up on us when we are distressed.

Thank you that you do not reject our sincere questions.

Thank you for your compassion when we cry out to you.

When we are so troubled and words fail us,

Help us not to turn away from you.

Rather, help us to sustain our trust in you.

Help us to recall the powerful, loving acts of Jesus.

Help us ponder how nothing can separate us from your love.

Help us to realize how faithful you are,

And to find our rest in you.

Amen.

FOR REFLECTION: Recall a time when your soul refused to be comforted, even when you called on God. How might choosing to reflect on God's love and rescue make a difference when trouble comes again?

PSALM 91:9-11

Because you have made the Lord your
dwelling place
– the Most high who is my refuge –
No evil shall be allowed to befall you,
No plague come near your tent.
For he will command his angels concerning you,
To guard you in all your ways.

God created each day to be plunged into darkness and He hardwired humans to require sleep. In darkness, our concerns and emotions often feel bigger, danger feels more imminent. In sleep, we are at our most vulnerable. Each night we are more powerless and less aware than at any other time in our lives.

The promise of Psalm 91:11 is the antidote to all of that, and this psalm of protection is a great comfort. God does not leave us to our own strength. He commands his angels. The language

here is of marching orders: a host of angels is on-duty for our sakes! Furthermore, this protection is limitless. He keeps us in all our ways- body, soul, and spirit- regardless of circumstances.

When night falls, we are reminded that we cannot control how protected or safe our life is. While at first that feels scary, the beautiful reality is we are much safer in His hands.

Lord of Hosts,

We spend so much of our days trying to control our lives,

We spend so many of our nights fighting our thoughts and fears.

Teach us to entrust our nights and days— all our lives— to You.

We thank You for the gift of your protection and care.

Though You are infinite, You care intimately for us.

Though You set planets in their places, You protect our small lives.

Thank You for commanding your angels concerning us.

May we live in the beautiful security of that promise.

Amen

FOR REFLECTION: Name some of those nagging fears that run through your mind when your head hits the pillow. How would you live and think differently if you remembered that God keeps you in all your ways and protects you with His whole host of angels?

PSALM 121:1-4

I lift up my eyes to the hills.
 From where does my help come?
 My help comes from the Lord,
 who made heaven and earth.
 He will not let your foot be moved;
 he who keeps you will not slumber.
 Behold, he who keeps Israel
 will neither slumber nor sleep.

Perhaps the clearest sign of our creatureliness is our need for sleep. Even Jesus' disciples could not manage to stay awake with Jesus in his darkest hour, while he pleaded with his Father to be spared from his upcoming crucifixion. Though Jesus was about to make the greatest sacrifice of all history for them, the disciples simply could not keep their eyes open. As Jesus told Peter that night, "The Spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

One of the reasons we grow tired is that we were never meant to carry the weight of this world. We are finite. We are weak. What a comfort that we have a God who does not need sleep. Knowing this, we can lay our head on our pillow each night in peace, trusting that while we sleep, God watches over us. Just like Jesus who as a man slept through a fierce storm knowing his Father was in control, we can sleep soundly, knowing our eternal waking Father has the world in his hands, and will not let even our foot be moved without His consent.

Heavenly Father,

Thank you for the gift of sleep.

It reminds us that we are not You, and we never could be.

Tonight, please still our racing minds;

Calm our anxieties and fears.

For while we sleep, you are on watch.

When we grow weary, you are steadfast.

Thank you that we cannot solve the world's problems,

Or even our own.

And let us surrender our cares to you, and sleep soundly tonight.

Amen.

FOR REFLECTION: Have you ever fallen asleep while praying at night? Did you find this experience discouraging? What do your own physical limitations teach you about trusting in God alone?



A S C E N S I O N
C H U R C H O F P H O E N I X