

## Lenten Prayer Guide - 2022

### Week 1: The Presence of God

Humans were created by God for God's glory. As created beings, we have a purpose. We were created for God's purpose. Because God has created us for Himself, we have this persistent inner restlessness that cannot be satisfied until we are secure in the presence of our creator. This will never be fully realized until we reach our eternal home and find our eternal rest in Him.

What then shall we do while we live and wait in patient hope for that day? We can be in pursuit of God – seek Him while he may be found (Isaiah 55:6), we can enter His holy rest by trusting Him (Isaiah 30:15) for all our needs and in all our situations and we can practice His presence as we go about our daily lives.

During this week our morning readings will focus on the presence of God.

*“...pray without ceasing...” - 1 Thessalonians 5:17*

This week's breath prayer:

*Lord, I seek you in each moment.*

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#### **Day 1 – God Goes with You**

Sometimes we may think we are all alone in this journey of faith. Certainly, there are seasons where even the most devout believer will feel distant from God – or feel that God is distant from them. We are not alone in this.

We may cry out like David,

*“Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me” (Psalm 51:11).*

Or, we may be like Moses, who, when God was sending him on His mission with the Israelite people, needed assurance of God's presence. The Lord spoke to Moses:

*“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” (Exodus 33:12-15).*

Moses was willing to do what the Lord was commanding him to do. Moses had little self-confidence and wanted to be sure that God was with him not just sending him. God's assurance to Moses was that He would go with him, that His, God's, very presence would be with Moses all the way.

After Moses had died God assured Joshua, Moses' successor as the leader of the Israelite people that He would be with him too.

*“No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you” (Joshua 1:5).*

What comfortable words these are the assurance that God is always with us.

As you go into this day, know that God is with you. Watch and listen throughout this day for your God being present and active throughout the day.

Pray that God will make His presence known to you today.

*Lord, thank you for being with me today. Please help me to feel your presence and be reassured, comforted, and encouraged by it. This is my humble prayer. Amen.*

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#### Day 2 – Rejoice in His Presence

There have been times in the history of the Christian faith when joy and merriment were frowned upon. People have at times taken a far too somber approach to God and the walk of faith. While we need to take God seriously and make our Christian faith the priority in our lives, we need not be somber or solemn about it. We, of all people on earth, should reflect a deep inner joy because we have the living God indwelling us and walking with us. Therefore, let us be joyful people.

In Deuteronomy 14:22-27 God is giving instructions to His people regarding the tithes, God was calling the people to be obedient in their giving, but He was also giving them instructions to be joyful in His presence. His instructions were:

*“Use the silver to buy whatever you like: cattle, sheep, wine or other fermented drink, or anything you wish. Then you and your household shall eat there in the presence of the LORD your God and rejoice”*  
*(Deuteronomy 14:26).*

Towards the end of king David's life, the people were celebrating the anointing of Solomon as the king, scripture tells us the people ...

*“...ate and drank with great joy in the presence of the LORD that day. Then they acknowledged Solomon, son of David, as king a second time, anointing him before the LORD to be ruler and Zadok to be priest.”*  
*(1 Chronicles 29:22)*

We too should live joyful lives in the presence of our God and King.

*“You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.”*  
*(Psalm 16:11)*

Take a pause several times throughout this day to simply rejoice in God's presence.

As you begin this day pray rejoicing that He will be by your side all day.

*Lord, I rejoice that you are with me in every moment. No matter my circumstance, your presence alone gives me reason to be joyful. Forgive me when I am forgetful of this and encourage me with your gentle reminders. Amen.*

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#### Day 3 – Be Humble in His presence

Eighteenth century pastor and theologian Jonathan Edwards wrote what became his most famous work titled, “*Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.*” Edwards was known for preaching stern messages of repentance. While we have mostly lost the “fire and brimstone” style of preaching in recent years, what we must not lose sight of is that God is rightfully angry with unrepentant sinners. God does not play with holiness. Each one of us, while we are “sinners saved by grace” must remember we are living in the very presence of a Holy God. God has made humility one of the conditions for our prayers to be heard...

*“...if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”*

*(2 Chronicles 7:14)*

The prophet Micah also called upon the people of God to live humbly in the presence of God.

*“He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”*

*(Micah 6:8)*

Today as you enter into the day with God, in the presence of God, walk humbly. Be aware of any pride of self or status or achievements. Remember all we have is a gift from God and be humble in His presence.

*“Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being? declares the LORD. This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word.”*

*(Isaiah 66:2)*

*“The arrogant cannot stand in your presence; you hate all who do wrong.”*

*(Psalm 5:5 NIV)*

Enter this day with a humble heart – acknowledge that God is all you need for the day.

Pray that God will bring you to recognise any pridefulness in your heart.

*Sovereign King, I humbly come before you. Please show me the pridefulness that I carry in my heart. Forgive me my arrogance. You alone are Lord and King. Amen.*

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#### Day 4 – There is Glory in His Presence

Perhaps the saddest texts in scripture are those that tell of the Lord's departure from among His people. The prophet Ezekiel writes:

*"Then the glory of the LORD departed from over the threshold of the temple..."*  
*(Ezekiel 10:18)*

In 1 Samuel 4 the Israelite army was defeated by the Philistines and the Ark of the Covenant was taken. Eli's grandson was born at that time and his mother named him Ichabod.

*"She named the boy Ichabod, saying, 'The glory has departed from Israel.'"*  
*(Samuel 4:21)*

To lose the presence of God is to lose the presence of His glory. Paul wrote to the believers at Thessalonica:

*"For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? Indeed, you are our glory and joy."* (1 Thessalonians 2:19-20)

Can we practice the presence of God's glory today? Can we see His glory in all that He has created? The beauty that surrounds us gives us a glimpse of the Glory of God that will be ours in eternity.

*"David praised the LORD in the presence of the whole assembly, saying, "Praise be to you, O LORD, God of our father Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all."*  
*(1Chronicles 29:10-11)*

Glory in the presence of God today – see Him at work in you and around you. Take time to see and acknowledge the presence of God's glory all around you today.

Pray God will open your eyes to His glory today

*Lord, Creator of all things, I pray today that I would see your glory as I move through my day. Please help me to focus on your presence and glory, on all those things that you pronounced "good" rather than on the early things that bombard me and attempt to distract me from your glory. Amen.*

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#### Day 5 – Our Access to God’s Presence is Jesus

In Genesis we are told that God made humans in His image. When Jesus was born God made Himself in human image. He stepped out of the glory of heaven to become a human man living and walking on earth. But being no mere, mortal man He showed us that we had access to the father through Him. It is by faith in Jesus Christ that we have moment by moment access to the throne of heaven.

*“For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence.”*  
*(Hebrews 9:24)*

Jesus has full access to our heavenly Father and invites you into that presence through him; He is there “for you.” Jesus said,

*“...no one comes to the Father except through me...”*  
*(John 14:6)*

As you walk through this new day walk with Jesus as your guide – in full knowledge that we are in the presence of the Son of Heaven. No matter what transpires today you remain in the presence of God – no one can pluck you out of His hand.

*“My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one.”*  
*(John 10:27-30)*

No matter what lies ahead for you today you have access to the very throne of God through Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit within you will guide and direct your path today...follow Jesus, fear nothing, for God is on your side.

Pray this morning to be fully present with the Lord throughout the day.

*Father, I give you this day. Please help me to remain ever focused and ever present, following Jesus, guided by your Holy Spirit, living today in faith not fear. It is through Jesus that we can come to you. Praise be your name. Amen.*

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#### Day 6 – Let His Presence Shine from You

If there is one thing the world needs it is to see the reality of God in our midst. We Christians are that reality. No one else has the privilege of carrying the very Spirit of God inside them, no one!

Those who call themselves Christian are ambassadors from the Kingdom of God sent into this hurting world. We have been called out from this world and its lures, deceptions and attachments and now we have been sent back in to spread the good news of Christ's Kingdom.

We are the carriers of the greatest message the world has ever received, "God loves you!" Surely this message will brighten up anyone's day.

This is why Jesus said,

*"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."*  
*(Matthew 5:14-16)*

Have you hidden your lamp under a bowl? Do the people around you sense the very presence of God in their midst when you are around them. Does your light shine before them?

Make this day a day when you will practice the presence of God in your own heart and let that light of His presence shine out from you. Shine a little of that light into someone's day today.

Pray that your light will shine around everyone you encounter today.

*Lord, as I go through this day, I pray that your light would shine in and through me. I pray that I will be a beacon of your love, peace, grace and hope. Amen.*

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#### Day 7 – What If It Were Today?

Jesus is coming to earth again;  
what if it were today?  
Coming in power and love to reign;  
what if it were today?  
Coming to claim His chosen Bride,  
all the redeemed and purified,  
Over this whole earth scattered wide;  
what if it were today?

Yes, Jesus is coming back. What a great day that will be when we shall know Him face to face. When we shall for evermore be in His very presence; freed from sin; freed from earthly entanglements; never to sin or fall short of His Glory again.

While you wait for that day of Christ's triumphant return in Glory, and it could be today, Jesus is preparing a place for you.

*"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am."*  
(John 14:1-3)

So, while we wait in hope and anticipation for that great day. Let us be prepared and living righteous lives...when He returns let Him find us faithful.

*"Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you--guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us." (2Timothy 1:14)*

Today acknowledge before God all the things you have to be joyful about. Live today joyfully in the presence of God.

Pray that you will remain mindful of the immanent return of Jesus and order your day accordingly.

*Maranatha, Come Lord Jesus. I pray today that my thoughts and deeds would be righteous, and that I would live each moment in the knowledge and anticipation of your return. To you be the glory, now and forever. Amen.*