

2021 Prayer Week Guide for Homegroups – especially for zoom groups

(R. Toye)

Instructions to Homegroup Leaders:

Before you meet by zoom, ask everyone to gather the following supplies:

- Candle
- Bible (if using a different version of Psalm 96 than what is printed)
- Paper and pen
- Some drawing or art materials - optional

When you meet, welcome everyone to this time of prayer together.

Likely people will have differing thoughts and feelings about this time as prayer on zoom can feel daunting and hard to engage. So, it's ok to name that. Also, some people may prefer to turn their video off while the prayers are being read aloud.

This is the overall framework for the time together:

1. Read Psalm 96 – Write or draw your thanks and praise after Scripture. Share one or two of these with the group (10 minutes total time)
2. Prayer by Walter Brueggemann – and then praying for the world – name the concerns you carry. Looking out the door or window. (15-20 minutes total time)
3. End using the Joyce Rupp prayer (5 minutes)
4. Bless each other and name the prayers you carry forward (5-7 minutes).

Beginning

Invite everyone to light their candles then say:

“Jesus said, I’m the light for the whole world. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness cannot overcome it”. Brief moment of silence.

Praise and Thanksgiving

Invite the person who will read Psalm 96 to read this now.

After listening to the Psalm, allow for about 5 minutes for people to write down their praise and thanksgiving to God. Then they will place these before the candle.

You can use this version from *Psalms for Praying* or another one:

*O sing to the Cosmos a new song;
sing to the Beloved, all the earth!
Sing to the Creator, and bless the Name
above all names;
sing praises to the Glorious One
from day to day.
Declare the splendor of the Radiant One
to all the nations,
the marvelous works of Love
to all peoples!*

*For great is the Beloved, and greatly
to be praised;
reverence Love above all else.
For where your thoughts are,
reveals that which you treasure;
seek only the true Treasure.
Truth and integrity live with Love;
strength and beauty dwell
with the Beloved.*

*Yield to Love, O families of the earth,
yield to Love's glory and strength!
Yield to Love and learn of justice;
make of yourselves an offering
and be guided by Love!
Bow down in adoration and holiness;
for worthy is the Beloved to be
praised in all the earth!*

*The Creator of the Cosmos reigns!
Yes, the world has been created,
gift to all generations;
let truth and justice give birth
to peace and harmony!
Let the heavens be glad, and let
the earth rejoice;
let the seas laugh, and all
that fills them;
let the fields exult, and
everything in them!
Then shall the trees of the forest
sing for joy
before the becoming of the Beloved,
who reigns in glory!
For through Love will come truth
and justice,
offering all the people gifts
of new Life.*

Take 5 minutes to write or draw your praise and thanks. After everyone has written or drawn something, invite each person to share one of these with the group – go around in a circle with one person starting and that person chooses the next person to speak.

After you are all done say together:

***Bow down in adoration and holiness;
for worthy is the Beloved to be
praised in all the earth!***

Praying for the World

Ask the person who is reading the Breuggemann prayer to now read it.

We are not self-starters

(Walter Brueggemann)

*Speaking, acting, life-giving God
the one with the only verbs that can heal and rescue,
We come petitioning one more time,
Seeking your majestic address to us,
asking your powerful action among us,
waiting for your new life toward us.
Your creation teems with bondaged folk
who have not enough for life,
not enough bread, not enough clothes,
not enough houses, not enough freedom,
not enough dignity, not enough hope.
Your creation teems with bondaged creatures,
great valleys become dumps,
great oceans become dumped pollution,
fish wrapped in dumped oil,
fields at a loss for dumped chemicals,
So we pray for creation, that has become a dump,
and for all your people
who have been dumped,
and dumped upon.
Renew your passion for life,
Work your wonders for newness,
Speak your word and let us begin again.
In your powerful presence, we resolve to do our proper work,
But, we are not self-starters.
We wait on you to act, in order that we may act.
Show yourself in ways that give us courage and energy and freedom,
that we may care for our neighbours,
love your creation,
praise your name.
We pray in the savaged power of Jesus,
who cared and loved and praised.
Amen.*

After listening to this prayer, everyone is going to go to an outside door or window to open it and look out. (Allow about 5-7 minutes for this). What do you see, hear, perceive? How can you pray for your neighbourhood and the world – names of neighbours, the city, the world beyond our scope? Do you see lights on in the houses or apartments around you? What of creation – what is still or moving in the night? What is in hibernation or beginning new growth? Hold these people, these places, creation in prayer.

Return and invite each person to name their prayers. After each person speaks, say together: **Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

Praying for ourselves

Use this prayer from Joyce Rupp.

As you pray this prayer together, you can be thinking of the collective “us” as Grandview church and you can also be thinking of yourself, personally.

The leader can assign one person to be the reader or everyone take a turn, or two readers alternating. After each phrase, pause briefly before going on to the next one.

When responding together with the bold, everyone can speak aloud but the audio should be muted except for the person who reads each phrase.

Restoring Awareness

Respond to each of the following intercessions with:

Restore our awareness of your light-filled presence.

Come, show us how you are dwelling in those places of our lives where we have forgotten to welcome you...

Come, take us to the place where you are moving us toward change and deeper relationship with you...

Come, help us believe in the possibility of resurrecting what has hidden itself from our path of growth...

Come, shake free whatever keeps us from accepting your invitation to be transformed...

Come, strengthen our faith, cultivate our hope, and widen our love...

Come, draw us into the stillness essential for an alive and open awareness of your presence...

Come, keep us mindful of the larger world, one in urgent need of our compassion and dedicated care...

Come, be a healing presence for those who suffer, and for those for whom we have promised to pray...

Come, our minds and hearts are alert, ready to welcome you home.

Together but muted except for one reader:

Holy One, awaken our hearts. Quiet our minds. Draw back the veil of our illusions to perceive your presence. Settle what stirs endlessly within us. Hush the voice of haste and hurry. Awaken our inner senses to recognize your love hiding beneath the frenzy. Enfold us in your attentiveness. Wrap a mantle of mindfulness around every part of our days. We want to welcome you with joy and focus on your dwelling place. Amen.

Close

As you close and bless each other into the night, consider what you will continue to carry in your prayers from this evening. If time permits, briefly share that so you can be praying for one another through the week too.

Blessing

(One person to read it with hand out towards the screen while others hold their hands up to receive this blessing).

We trust God to have heard our prayers this night, so we close with this blessing:

*The peace of God
be over you to shelter you,
be under you to uphold you,
be about you to protect you,
be behind you to direct you,
ever with you to save you.
The peace of all peace
be yours this night.
Amen.*