




We hope that you find this resource helpful.

If you would like to join us for one of our future Listening Mornings,
the dates and sign up are on our website.

www.cachurch.com/listening

 Christian Assembly Women www.cachurch.com/women

A Journey to the Cross and Resurrection

Getting Started

For some this time is a welcomed friend. What a gift to have over 2 hours to just be with and listen to Jesus. For others, this feels a bit intimidating. If it's a welcome friend, dive in! If it feels a bit scary to have this much time, don't panic – you can use these pages to guide your time. Since we are just a few weeks from Easter, we want to focus our mind, heart and prayers upon the cross and resurrection of Christ.

Focusing in Prayer [adapted from *The Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, p. 209]

1. **Settle in to a comfortable position.**
2. **Intentionally place yourself in the presence of God**, in the center of his love. Let these verses point you to Christ and to his cross and resurrection. Note the words that seem to jump from the page to your heart.

Isaiah 53 [a prophecy concerning Christ]

My servant [Jesus] grew up in the Lord's presence like a tender green shoot, like a root in dry ground.

There was nothing beautiful or majestic about his appearance; nothing to attract us to him.

He was despised and rejected — a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief.

We turned our backs on him and looked the other way. He was despised, and we did not care.

Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down.

And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for his own sins!

But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins.

He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed.

All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God's paths to follow our own.

Yet the Lord laid on him the sins of us all.

He was oppressed and treated harshly, yet he never said a word.

He was led like a lamb to the slaughter. And as a sheep is silent before the shearers,

he did not open his mouth.

Unjustly condemned, he was led away. No one cared that he died without descendants, that his life was cut short in midstream. But he was struck down for the rebellion of my people.

He had done no wrong and had never deceived anyone. But he was buried like a criminal;

he was put in a rich man's grave. But it was the Lord's good plan to crush him

and cause him grief. Yet when his life is made an offering for sin,

he will have many descendants.

Romans 5:1-8

*Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us. You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But, God demonstrates his own love for us in this:
While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

1 Corinthians 15:20-22, 51-58

But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. He is the first of a great harvest of all who have died. So you see, just as death came into the world through a man, now the resurrection from the dead has begun through another man. Just as everyone dies because we all belong to Adam, everyone who belongs to Christ will be given new life.

But let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die, but we will all be transformed! It will happen in a moment, in the blink of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we who are living will also be transformed. For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies. Then, when our dying bodies have been transformed into bodies that will never die, this Scripture will be fulfilled:

"Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"

For sin is the sting that results in death, and the law gives sin its power. But thank God!

He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ.

So, my dear brothers and sisters, be strong and immovable. Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless.

1 Peter 2:24-25

He personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right.

By his wounds you are healed.

Once you were like sheep who wandered away.

But now you have turned to your Shepherd, the Guardian of your souls.

3. **Choose a simple word, phrase or verse** from the Scripture that causes you to be in awe of Jesus and his life, death and resurrection. Let this word guard your attention.

4. **Take time to become quiet.** It is not unusual for the first minutes to be filled with many noisy thoughts. Don't worry about them or pay attention to them. Let them go. Gently return your attention to the center of God's presence and love by repeating your word. When your thoughts wander let them drop to the bottom of your mind. Don't go after them. Gently return to the presence of Christ through repeating your word. Let the word draw your attention back to Jesus. *Be* with Jesus. Listen. Be still. When distractions persist let this image help you return to Jesus.

- Imagine that God's river of life runs through you. Deep down, the river is calm and slow. But on the surface there is rushing and debris. Imagine your distracting thoughts are part of the debris floating in the current. Don't try to capture these thoughts; release them and let the river of God's life carry them away. Anytime you are distracted, let the distractions go with the river. Gently return to the presence of Christ with your prayer word.

5. **Rest in the center of God's love.** Trust that the Holy Spirit, who abides in the depths of your spirit, to connect you to God.

6. **Don't hurry your prayer.** Breathe in the presence of Christ. Offer yourself to God for the tasks awaiting you (e.g., "I'm yours," or "Remain with me"). Listen for his whisper.

M. Basil Pennington

In prayer we seek God. We do not seek peace, quiet, tranquility, enlightenment; we do not seek anything for ourselves. We seek to give ourselves . . . to God. He is the all of our prayers.

Acts 17:24-29

[From The Message]

"The God who made the world and everything in it, this Master of sky and land, doesn't live in custom-made shrines or need the human race to run errands for him, as if he couldn't take care of himself. He makes the creatures; the creatures don't make him. Starting from scratch, he made the entire human race and made the earth hospitable, with plenty of time and space for living so we could seek after God, and not just grope around in the dark but actually find him. He doesn't play hide-and-seek with us.

He's not remote; he's near. We live and move in him, can't get away from him!

One of your poets said it well: 'We're the God-created.'

John 11:25-26

Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die. Do you believe this, Martha?"

Record your prayers here.