

**What to Pray For**

**Monday, 8/17/09 – Read Romans 8:26-27**

My Observations \_\_\_\_\_  
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A Question to Answer: This week MyFaithJournal returns to the theme of prayer. Prayer is our essential lifeline to God. It is prayer that keeps us in touch with God. Prayer, though, can become habitual and routine. So, this week we'll focus on some of the Bible's suggestions of what to pray for -- especially some of the more difficult suggestions which are so easy for us to neglect. ... We begin today with one of the great promises: the Spirit of God is praying in us and for us. The Spirit of God is taking our sometimes weak prayers and translating them. ... Think about that for a moment. How does that feel to you -- that the Holy Spirit is every day praying for you and through you?

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**Tuesday, 8/18/09 – Read Ephesians 3:16-19**

My Observations: \_\_\_\_\_  
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A Question to Answer: The Spirit helps us in our weakness (as we say yesterday) -- so that we can become spiritually strong. In today's reading, the prayer is for inner strengthening. If you were stronger spiritually, what would be different? Write down your answer. Be realistic and specific. ... We pray today for inner strength -- so that we'll be strong enough to include in our prayer the Bible's harder challenges.

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**Wednesday, 8/19/09 – Read Psalm 51:1-3, 10-12**

My Observations: \_\_\_\_\_  
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A Question to Answer: Prayer works best when we are "real" with God -- when we tell it like it is, when we tell God the truth about our lives -- as we understand it. It means telling God about our failures, about those times when we have hurt another -- or hurt ourselves. So much of life is about pretending and putting on the good front for others. Prayer is one place where we can be fully honest, knowing that we'll be loved and accepted. ... Today, what do you need to express to God *in all honesty*?

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**Thursday, 8/20/09 – Read Matthew 26:36-41**

My Observations: \_\_\_\_\_  
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A Question to Answer: Today's reading comes from Jesus' last night with his disciples -- his prayer in the garden of Gethsemane. Look at verse 41. Jesus instructs the disciples to pray that they not "come into the time of trial" -- or, that they not be "put to hard testing." ... Because we don't experience being actively persecuted, we probably don't think much about "hard testing." But we do live in an increasingly secular society in which faith is often considered naive or backward... What meaning would Jesus' instruction have for you? What would "hard testing" be for you -- in the world that you live in?

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**Friday, 8/21/09 – Read Matthew 5:44-47**

My Observations: \_\_\_\_\_  
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A Question to Answer: It may be Jesus' most counter-intuitive instruction: love your enemies and pray for them. ... Who are your enemies? Name them specifically. (Maybe you cannot identify anyone as an actual *enemy*. If that's true, just think of someone you have some conflict or tension with.) ... Our natural, very human inclination, of course, is to oppose the

enemy -- and at least to wish them ill. But Jesus asks us to see them through God's eyes, and he mentions an example of God's gracious generosity. ... In your prayer today, bring your enemy to God and ask God to help you see them as God sees them.

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**Saturday, 8/22/09 – Read **John 17:20-23****

My Observations: \_\_\_\_\_

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A Question to Answer: When Jesus prayed for his followers (including us) he prayed for our **unity** -- “that they may all be one.” Just as Jesus instructed us to pray for our enemies, he prays that our normal and inevitable tensions with each other won't divide us into warring factions. Jesus prays that we move toward unity so that we don't become enemies in the first place. ... Think of some person or group with whom you need a deeper unity. Today, pray that God will bring that unity.

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**Sunday, 8/23/09 – Read **Psalm 122:6-9****

My Observations: \_\_\_\_\_

A Question to Answer: In all the world there is perhaps no more conflicted spot of ground than the “holy city” of Jerusalem. Three great religions share a common devotion to Jerusalem, and yet this shared devotion is so often a source of conflict and disunity. “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.” And pray that all of us, Christians and Jews and Muslims, who share this devotion, will allow our God to bring us into God's own shalom. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

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*My Faith Journal*, August 16, 2009

Believing in God #4

***Being Who You Are***

**What do I hear God saying to me today?**

**What action do I intend to take this week?**

*Each day this week, take a few minutes. Begin with PRAYER. Then READ through the Bible passage indicated on the inside of this guide. WRITE down your own thoughts, reactions, observations. ANSWER THE QUESTION to begin connecting the Bible with your life. Use additional paper or your own notebook if you need more space to write.*