

## **Biblical & Studied Prayer**

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### **Call to Worship/Prayer of Praise**

One or more of the following texts may be used as calls to worship or as building blocks out of which a prayer of praise may be constructed. This reading and/or prayer sets the tone for the occasion, marking a serious transition from other activities to worship.

The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth (Ps 145:18).

For thus says the high and exalted One Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, "I dwell on a high and holy place, and also with the contrite and lowly of spirit . . ." (Is 57:15a).

But the Lord is in His holy temple. Let all the earth be silent before Him (Hab 2:20).

For from the rising of the sun even to its setting, My name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense is going to be offered in My name, and a grain offering that is pure; for My name will be great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts (Mal 1:11).

God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth (jn 4:24).

I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship (Rom 12:1).

And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him (Heb 11:6).

### ***The Creator***

O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Thy name in all the earth, who hast displayed Thy splendor above the heavens! (Ps 8:1)

The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands (Ps 19:1).

The earth is the Lord's and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it. For He has founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the rivers (Ps 24:1, 2).

Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were born, or Thou didst give birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God (Ps 90:1).

Come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand (Ps 95:6, 7a).

Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth (Ps 124:8).

Worthy are Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed, and were created (Rev 4:11).

### *His Attributes*

The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations (Ex 34:6b, 7).

Thine, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth; Thine is the dominion, O Lord, and Thou dost exalt Thyself as head over all. Both riches and honor come from Thee, and Thou dost rule over all, and in Thy hand is power and might; and it lies in Thy hand to make great, and to strengthen everyone. Now therefore, our God, we thank Thee, and praise Thy glorious name (1 Chr 29:11-13).

Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are regarded as a speck of dust on the scales; all the nations are as nothing before Him, they are regarded by Him as less than nothing and meaningless (Is 40:15a, 17).

Ah, Lord God! Behold, Thou hast made the heavens and the earth by Thy great power and by Thine outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for Thee, who showest lovingkindness to thousands, but repayest the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them, O great and mighty God. The Lord of hosts is His name; great in counsel and mighty in deed, whose eyes are open to all the ways of the sons of men, giving to everyone according to his ways and according to the fruit of his deeds (Jer 32:17-19).

The Lord's loving kindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassion never fail. They are new every morning; great is Thy faithfulness (Lam 3:22,23).

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to Him again? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen (Rom 11:33-36).

Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen (1 Tim 1:17).

He is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords; who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light; whom no man has seen or can see. To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen (1 Tim 6:15, 16).

Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow (Jas 1:17).

And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do (Heb 4:13).

Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come (Rev 4:8b).

"God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth." (Shorter Catechism Q #4)

### ***The Redeemer***

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved (Eph 1:3-6).

For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities all things have been created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything. For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fulness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven (Col 1:13-20).

Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. And Thou hast made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth ... Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing ... To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever (Rev 5:9, 10, 12, 13b).

He is the Prince of Peace (Is 9:6), the Prince of Life, the Holy and Righteous One (Acts 3:15,16), the Word of God, who was in the beginning with God, who was God, through whom all things came into being and apart from whom nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men; and who became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, glory as the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth (Jn 1:1-4, 14); the Son of God (Rom 1:4), our Lord and God (Jn 20:28), who is over all, God blessed forever (Rom 9:5). In Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form (Col

2:3,9). He is heir of all things, the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature. He upholds all things by the word of His power (Heb 1:2,3). He is the Bread of Life (Jn 6:35), the Light of the world (Jn 8:12), the Resurrection and the Life (jn 11:25), the Good Shepherd (Jn 10:11), the Vine (Jn 15:1,5), the Way, the Truth and the Life (jn 14:6), the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end (Rev 21:6). He is the Savior of the World (1 Jn 4:14); the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (Jn 1:28); Immanuel, God with us, who saves His people from their sins (Mt 1:21-23); He gave His life a ransom for many (Mk 10:45); He bore our sins in His body on the cross (1 Pet 2:24); though He knew no sin He became sin that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor 5:21); He is the only mediator between God and man (1 Tim 2:5); our Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous (1 jn 2:1); who always lives to make intercession for us (Heb 7:25); the same yesterday and today, yes and forever (Heb 13:8).

### ***The Holy Spirit***

He is the Eternal Spirit, the Breath of the Almighty (Heb 9:14; Job 32:8). He is the Holy Spirit of promise, by whom we are sealed in Christ and who is given as a pledge of our inheritance (Eph 1:13,14). He is the Spirit of understanding, of counsel and strength (Is 11:2), of wisdom and of revelation (Eph 1:17), the Helper, the Spirit of Truth who abides with us and is in us, who teaches us all things, and leads us into all truth (Jn 14:16, 17, 25; 16:13); who searches all things, and convicts the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment; who glorifies Christ and discloses the things of Christ (1 Cor 2:10; Jn 16:8, 14). By Him we are born again (Jn 3:1), are enabled to say Jesus is Lord (1 Cor 12:3), are baptized, are gifted for the common good (1 Cor 12:7, 13), whose fruit is godliness (Gal 5:22, 23), and by whom we walk, are led, and in whom we live, and who intercedes for us (Gal 5:16, 18, 25; Rom 8:26, 27).

### ***Our Need of and Longing for God***

I love Thee, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies (Ps 18:1-3).

One thing I have asked from the Lord, that I shall seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to meditate in His temple ... When Thou didst say, "Seek My face," my heart said to Thee, "Thy face, O Lord, I shall seek" (Ps 27:4, 8).

As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for Thee, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God (Ps 42:1-2a).

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble (Ps 46:1). O God, Thou are my God; I shall seek Thee earnestly; my soul thirsts for Thee, my flesh yearns for Thee, in a dry and weary land where there is no water. Thus I have beheld Thee in the sanctuary, to see Thy power and Thy glory. Because Thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise Thee. So I will bless Thee as long as I live; I will lift up my hands in Thy name (Ps 63:1-4).

Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And besides Thee, I desire nothing on earth. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever ... But as for me, the nearness of God is my good; I have made the Lord God my refuge, that I may tell of all Thy works (Ps 73:25-26, 28).

How lovely are Thy dwelling places, O Lord of hosts! My soul longed and even yearned for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God ... How blessed are those who dwell in Thy house! ... For a day in Thy courts is better than a thousand outside. I would rather stand at the threshold of the house of my God, than dwell in the tents of wickedness. For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord gives grace and glory; no good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, how blessed is the man who trusts in Thee! (Ps 84: 1 2, 4, 10-12)

Oh, that Thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down. Bow Thy heavens, O Lord, and come down (Is 64:1a; Ps 144:5a).

### **Prayers of Confession, Intercession, and Thanksgiving**

This is a comprehensive prayer that begins with the confession of sin, then gives thanks for the assurance of pardon, and concludes with petitions and thanksgivings. Relate your petitions to the concerns of the family. Let your congregation hear you pleading with God for their souls; for their sanctification and growth; for their healing when afflicted; for the church and their part in its ministry; and for the nation.

### ***Scriptural Encouragements to Prayer***

Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened (Mt 7:7,8).

If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him? (Lk 11:13).

And whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it (Jn 14:13,14).

And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him (1 Jn 5:14,15).

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Phil 4:6,7)

You do not have because you do not ask (Jas 4:2b).

Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins

of the people. For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted (Heb 2:17,18).

For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need (Heb 4:15, 16).

Since therefore, brethren, we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water (Heb 10:19-22).

### ***Scriptural Expressions of Confession and Pleas for Forgiveness***

Do Thou pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us as Thine own possession (Ex 34:9).

Pardon, I pray, the iniquities of this people, according to the greatness of Thy lovingkindness (Num 14:19).

. . . Be sure your sin will find you out (Num 32:23)

Acquit me of hidden faults. Also keep back Thy servant from presumptuous sins; let them not rule over me; then I shall be blameless, and I shall be acquitted of great transgressions. (Psalm 19:12,13)

There is no health in my bones because of my sin. For my iniquities are gone over my head; as a heavy burden they weigh too much for me. (Psalm 38:3b,4)

Be gracious to me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness; according to the greatness of Thy compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against Thee, Thee only, I have sinned, and done what is evil in Thy sight. (Psalm 51:1-4a)

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me. ...Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow...Hide Thy face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities...Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, Thou God of my salvation. (Psalm 51:5,7,9,14a)

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Thy presence, and do not take Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Thy salvation, and sustain me with a willing spirit...O Lord, open my lips, that my mouth may declare Thy praise. For Thou dost not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; Thou art not pleased with burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise. (Psalm 51:10-12, 15-17)

O God, it is Thou who dost know my folly, and my wrongs are not hidden from Thee.  
(Psalm 69:5)

Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Thy name; and deliver us, and forgive our sins, for Thy name's sake. (Psalm 79:9)

If Thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with Thee. (Psalm 130:3-4a)

Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way. (Psalm 139:23,24)

We have sinned, committed iniquity, acted wickedly, and rebelled, even turning aside from Thy commandments and ordinances...Open shame belongs to us, O Lord...because we have sinned against Thee. To the Lord our God belong compassion and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against Him; nor have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in His teachings which He set before us through His servants the prophets. Indeed all Israel has transgressed the Law and turned aside, not obeying Thy voice. ...So now, our God, listen to the prayer of Thy servant and to his supplications, and for Thy sake, O Lord, let Thy face shine on Thy desolate sanctuary. O my God, incline Thine ear and hear! Open Thine eyes and see our desolations and the city which is called by Thy name; for we are not presenting our supplications before Thee on account of any merits of our own, but on account of Thy great compassion. O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action! For Thine own sake, O my God, do not delay, because Thy city and Thy people are called by Thy name. (Daniel 9:5,8-11a,17-19)

O my God, I am ashamed and embarrassed to lift up my face to Thee, my God, for our iniquities have risen above our heads, and our guilt has grown even to the heavens. (Ezra 9:6)

Thou art just in all that has come upon us; for Thou hast dealt faithfully, but we have acted wickedly. For our kings, our leaders, our priests, and our fathers have not kept Thy law or paid attention to Thy commandments and Thine admonitions with which Thou has admonished them. (Nehemiah 9:33,34)

And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' (Luke 15:21)

But the tax-gatherer, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God be merciful to me, the sinner!' (Luke 18:13)

### ***Scriptural Promises of Pardon***

How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered! How blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit! (Ps 32:1,2),

I acknowledged my sin to Thee, and my iniquity I did not hide; I said, 'I will confess my transgression to the Lord'; And Thou didst forgive the guilt of my sin' (Ps 32:5).

The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us (Ps 103:8, 10-12).

For Thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back (Is 38:17b).

I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins (Is 43:25).

But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our wellbeing fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him (Is 53:5, 6).

'But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days', declares the Lord, 'I will put My law within them, and on their heart, I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall not each again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,' declares the Lord, 'for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more' (Jer 31:33-34).

He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities underfoot. Yes, Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea (Micah 7:19).

Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom 5:1).

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom 6:23).

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Rom 8:1).

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast (Eph 2:8,9).

It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all (1 Tim 1:15).

For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the



basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit (Tit 3:5-7).

And He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live in righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed (1 Pet 2:24).

If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 Jn 1:8,9)

My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world (1 Jn 2:1, 2).

### ***Scriptural Petitions***<sup>1</sup>

#### i. Civil authorities:

First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity (1 Tim 2:1, 2).

#### ii. Christian ministry and mission:

And seeing the multitudes, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest" (Mt 9:36-38).

#### iii. Salvation of all men:

First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men.... This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim 2:1, 34).

#### iv. Sanctification of the Saints:

With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints (Eph 6:18).

And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God (Phil 1:9-11).

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<sup>1</sup>Scripture encourages petitions according to these five categories. The early church made use of them. The Reformers in the 16th century revived their use for public worship (see *Leading in Worship*, p. 10, n. 15). They provide a useful guide for the family's intercessions.

For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience (Col 1:9-11; cf., Eph 1:15-23).

v. Comfort and healing of the afflicted:

Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone among you cheerful? Let him sing praises. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him. Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the sky poured rain, and the earth produced its fruit (Jas 5:13-18; cf 2 Cor 1:3-11).

### ***Prayer of Illumination***

Blessed Lord, who caused all Holy Scripture to be written for our learning; grant that we may in such a way hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience, and comfort of Your holy word, we may embrace, and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which You have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Let the words of our mouths and the meditation of our hearts be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer (Ps 19:14).

O send out Thy light and Thy truth, let them lead me; let them bring me to Thy holy hill, and to Thy dwelling places (Ps 43:3).

Teach me Thy way, O Lord; I will walk in Thy truth; unite my heart to fear Thy name. I will give thanks to Thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart, and will glorify Thy name forever (Ps 86:11,12).

As we now give attention to Your word, open our eyes, that we might behold wonderful things from Your law through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen (Ps 119:18).

Teach me, O Lord, the way of Thy statutes, and I shall observe it to the end. Give me understanding, that I may observe Thy law, and keep it with all my heart (Ps 119:33,34; cf. Pss 119:73, 124-25, 144, 169, 143:10,11a).

Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path (Ps 119:105).

My word which goes forth from My mouth . . . shall not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it (Is 55:11).

“Is not My word like fire?” declares the Lord, “and like a hammer which shatters a rock?” (Jer 23:29).

“Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God” (Mt 4:4).

And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures . . . Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures (Lk 24:27,45).

O Lord, as we open now Your word, we pray that the eyes of our heart may be enlightened, so that we may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that we may be filled up to all the fullness of God. Amen (Eph 3:18,19).

We . . . pray . . . that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience (Col 1:9-11).

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work (2 Tim 3:16,17).

For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart (Heb 4:12).

**Benediction**

The service may close with one of the following benedictory prayers, pronouncing the Lord's blessing upon the family:

***Aaronic***

"The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace" (Numbers 6:24-26).

***Apostolic***

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all (2 Corinthians 13:14).