

## COMFORTER MINISTRY PRAYER GATHERING

*For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*

Matthew 18:20

### **PART 1: Bible Study on Prayer**

#### **Prayer ~**

*Heavenly Father, we come before You, asking for wisdom and discernment as we study Your holy Word. Open our hearts and minds to all that You would desire for us to learn as we study the blessings of prayer. Enable us to hold dearly the precious truth that prayer is Your gift to the body of Christ. Your gift of prayer is intended to be used faithfully and regularly out of a thankful heart for all You have done for us. Bless us with renewed zeal and joy. Help us focus on what Jesus has done for us as our Savior, the access He has won for us so we can come to You in continual prayerfulness. Do not allow us to miss the miracle of Your invitation to pray or the power behind our prayers that is Yours also. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*

#### **PRAYER IS OUR AUDIENCE WITH GOD, THE FATHER/KING**

Recognizing God as the sole Ruler of the universe (1 Timothy 6:15-16) is imperative if we are to understand our status before Him as King (Ephesians 2:3) and the proper words by which we are to address and speak with Him (Psalm 66:16-20). Since we cannot reconcile ourselves to the King, He must reconcile us to Himself. He accomplished this reconciliation through His Son, Jesus, the only one who is heard by the King because Jesus' status is holy and pure like His Father, the King (John 11:41-42 and Matthew 3:17). Only through Jesus do we have access to God, the Father/King. Apart from Jesus we have no right to stand before the King and speak. Without the forgiveness won for us through Jesus' saving work we would be denied access to the Father. Jesus gives us God's relationship with us; the relationship we could never have on our own because of God's holiness (2 Timothy 1:9-10) and His demand that we be holy if we are to be in God's family (1 Peter 1:16). By faith in Jesus we can now stand before the King and have our prayers heard as one who has been invited to have an *audience* with the King. Our *audience* with the King is the same as our coming to Him in *prayer*.

#### **Where do we find the King's invitation to approach Him?**

##### ❖ God speaks to us in His Word

In the past, God spoke to His people through the prophets whom He had sent to speak His words. We find these words in the Old Testament books of the Bible. Later, when Jesus came to earth He spoke directly to people (Hebrews 1:1-3). Jesus is the Word of God (John 1:1, 14). In order to listen to the King, we need to listen to Jesus, His Son (John 14:24). Where can we hear Jesus? Through Jesus' apostles who wrote what the Holy Spirit told them to write as they were reminded of what Jesus had said to them and as the Holy Spirit taught them (John 14:25-26), we *hear* the apostles in God's Word. True prayer must flow from the words of Christ as found in God's Word. The Word and Sacraments are the Means

of Grace. This is how God works in us and speaks to us. Prayer is not a means of grace but our half of the conversation/ dialogue with God. A quote by Andrew Murray in his book *With Christ in the School of Prayer* shares this insight – *It is this connection between His word and our prayer that Jesus points to when He says, “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” (John 15:7) The deep importance of this truth becomes clear if we notice the other expression of which this one has taken the place. More than once Jesus had said, “Abide in me and I in you.” (John 15:4) His abiding in us was the complement and the crown of our abiding in Him. But here, instead of “Ye in me and I in you,” He says, “Ye in me and my words in you” His words abiding are the equivalent of Himself abiding.* Can we pray to God, the King, correctly or confidently if we do not know what the King has said to us first? Let’s listen carefully to what the King says to us in His Word and then proceed to His throne with our prayers.

**Where do we speak to our Father/King, have our audience with Him?**

- ❖ We speak to our Father/King in prayer

The King has spoken first and now waits to hear from us. Our response is a direct result of our listening to Him through His Word where we find His invitation to call on Him (Psalm 50:15). There are several ways we respond – praise, thanks, confession of sins, requests, and intercessions, all of which are supported by numerous Biblical examples. Our Father/King even provides an advocate in prayer, the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 6:17-18 and Jude 20). Our prayers before the King can never be what they should be because of our imperfect knowledge of our Father/King and His perfect will. The Holy Spirit, our Comforter/Counselor, takes care of our ramblings, lack of focus, sighs, groans, etc. and delivers them to the King’s throne with clarity and in line with God’s will (Romans 8:26).

<b>Jesus’ Prayer</b>	John 11:41-42
<b>How Should I Pray?</b>	Galatians 4:6-7
<b>Why/When Should I Pray?</b>	Deuteronomy 4:7
<b>Example of Prayer</b>	1 Chronicles 29:10-13; Esther 5:2-3 (A picture of prayer)
<b>What/Who Should I Pray For?</b>	Colossians 4:12
<b>Meditation</b>	<i>Prayer with Christ and Without Him</i> by Martin Luther (printed below)

*If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. John 15:7 KJV*

Life apart from Christ is a wretched business. It means hard work for people and yet nothing accomplished; much praying, seeking, and knocking, yet nothing gained, found, or done, for they are not knocking at the right door. For whatever they do and pray, they do it like any other work, without faith. They have no comfort or confidence, and even no conviction that it is well-pleasing to God or that He will hear them. And that is why they never pray, for, as I have often said, prayer is the work of faith alone, which none but a Christian can do. For Christians do not

pray trusting in themselves, but in the Name of the son of God in which they were baptized, and they know for certain that such prayer is well-pleasing to God, for He has commanded them to pray in the name of Christ and has promised to answer. Other people who begin to pray in their own name, taking a long time to prepare themselves until they are right and worthy, and so gaining merit, do not know this. And if they are asked whether they are sure that they will be heard, they answer: I have prayed, but whether I shall be answered, God alone knows. But what manner of prayer is that when you do not know what you are doing or what God will say to it?

A Christian, however, does not so rise from prayer, but as he begins it in response to God's command and promise he makes it an offering to God in the Name of Christ and knows that what he has asked will not be denied him, and so he finds in his experience that he is helped in every time of need.

## **PRAYER ALLOWS US TO TALK WITH OUR FATHER/KING**

Why do we pray if God knows everything, anyway? Let me try to answer the question with another question – Why are parents excited to see their children open presents from them when the parents already know what the unopened box or bag contains? Isn't it because they love their children so much that they love seeing their children's reaction and response to what they have given them. Squeals of delight or wide-eyed, open-mouthed silence bring parents the pleasure they hoped their gift would bring to their precious loved one. Enjoying and using the gifts parents give their children are the parents' expectation and desire.

As part of God's family we are the daughters (and sons) of our Father/King. He wants whatever is good for us (Matthew 7:9-11). Prayer is His gift to the body of Christ, His children. He wants to give each of His children opportunities to react and respond to Him and His gift(s) (1 Timothy 2:1). He delights to hear His children's squeals of delight and the wide-eyed, open-mouthed silence His gifts produce. It brings Him pleasure to see His children using the gifts He has given (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Using God's gift of prayer is something He expects His children to do, even if He knows what the outcome is before we use it (Genesis 24:45 and Isaiah 65:24).

Our Father wants to hear what concerns us, what joys we have, what our struggles are, what our needs are 1 Peter 3:12 and Psalm 88:1-2). Like a family, a father or mother will ask the son or daughter, "How was your day? What did you do today?" Does the parent really need the information? Not really. He probably knows his son or daughter had school, had a friend over, had a violin lesson, but it shows that the parent cares, it invites the son or daughter to talk with the parent, to share, to spend time with one another (Psalm 38:9). With our Father/King we never need to wonder if He is listening because He promises us through the merit of His Son, Jesus, He hears and answers ALL our prayers (Proverbs 15:8,29).

**Jesus' Prayer**

Luke 11:1-4

**How Should I Pray?**

Philippians 4:6

**Why/When Should I Pray?**

Psalm 86:4-7

**Example of Prayer**

Daniel 6:10-11

**What/Who Should I Pray For?**

Ephesians 6:18-20

**Sing or Pray**

Christian Worship Supplement #733 vs. 2 (printed on next page)

Rejoice in God, the God of grace, And come with thanks before his face For all his tender care; Whose mercy meets us in our need, Whose Word of Life is life indeed, On whom, in Christ, our spirits feed, Who loves to answer prayer. Amen.

## **PRAYER IS A RESULT OF FAITH IN JESUS KINDLED IN OUR HEARTS BY THE HOLY SPIRIT**

(Read James 5:16b) Isn't it truly miraculous that God even takes our problems, feelings, thoughts, and praise as worth listening to. As studied previously, there is nothing within the human heart which should prompt God our Father/King to listen to our puny efforts at getting His attention through prayer. Actually, we are so despicable in the King's eyes that He would rather pour His wrath on us than look upon us (Romans 5:9)...unless we are invited to come before the King clothed in the righteousness of Jesus, His Son (Philippians 3:9) "Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift! " (2 Corinthians 9:15)

Do we always recognize the miracle of prayer? Through the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, prompting repentance and placing genuine faith in our hearts, we can come before our Father/King with our prayers and be assured He hears them. (1 Peter 3:12)

We pray the Holy Spirit will enable us to recognize the miracle of answered prayer. Our Father/King's answer may not always be answered in the way we want our prayers to be answered. Sometimes His answer is a resounding 'yes' and sometimes His answer is an equaling resounding 'no.' Often His answer comes with a time frame that is solely His timing and not necessarily ours (2 Corinthians 12:7-9). Too often we respond with impatience and even disbelief that our Father/King wouldn't agree with what we think the answer and time table should be to our prayers. Dear sisters, the King of the universe is hearing our prayer and are we still trying to tell Him what to do, how to do it, and when to do it? Let's quickly pray, ***Dear Father, send the Holy Spirit to lead us to repentance and help us recognize the miracle! We have an audience with the King, and He is actually listening to us and promises to hear and answer our prayer! Enable us to repent, recognize, and rejoice in the miracle!***

Trusting the King of the universe will hear and answer our prayers according to His will in His sovereign wisdom, power, and love will always be better than trusting in ourselves and how we think our prayers should be answered (Romans 15:30-32). Trusting the Holy Spirit will interpret even our sighs and silence and will graciously bring them to the throne of our Father/King (Romans 8:26) should bring us great comfort and prompt a heart of thanksgiving.

**Jesus' Prayer**

Matthew 26:42

**How Should I Pray?**

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

**Why/When Should I Pray?**

1 Peter 5:7

**Example of Prayer**

2 Corinthians 12:7-9

**Who/What Should I Pray For?**

Psalms 66:16-20

**Sing or Pray**

Christian Worship #181 Verse 4 (printed below)

Prompt us, Lord, to come before him With a child-like heart to pray; Sigh for us, O Holy Spirit, When we know not what to say. Then our prayer is not in vain, And our faith new strength shall gain. Amen.

## PRAYER HAS POWER

Just as we often miss the miracle of prayer we often miss the *power* of prayer. Here we have the Creator of the universe, as well as the King of the universe, say to us, His redeemed children, "Come, to me. Come, sit on My lap. Bury your face in Me. Pour out your heart to Me." Can you imagine? Our all powerful Father/King comes to us and invites us to "come." (Matthew 11:28-29) Humbly and yet empowered, we come in prayer to our Father/King (Psalm 4:1).

We've already studied and discussed how we, dear Christian sisters, have gotten to this point

- ❖ Prayer is our audience with **God the Father/King** which He grants to us by invitation only through the merits of His Son, Jesus. **Jesus** gives us God's relationship with us; the relationship we could never have on our own because of God's holiness and His demand that we be holy if we are to be in the King's family.
- ❖ Prayer allows us to talk, share, and spend time with our Father God, Ruler, and King of the universe. Although God doesn't *need* our prayers, He knows we need to pray to Him, and He delights in hearing and answering our prayers.
- ❖ Prayer is a result of faith in Jesus kindled in our hearts by the **Holy Spirit**, through the gospel. Without the witness of the Holy Spirit in our hearts neither genuine faith nor acceptable prayer is possible. Enabled by the Holy Spirit we repent, recognize, and rejoice in response to this miracle.

By now, it should be quite obvious to us that the power of prayer could certainly not lie within us. We've done nothing up to this point to even remotely help in improving our human condition and unholy status before our heavenly and holy Father/King (Romans 5:6&8). The power of prayer is God, Himself; who He is, what He has done for us, what He continues to do. Through faith in Jesus, given by the Spirit through the gospel, God empowers us *to* pray. (1 Chronicles 5:20) Prayer is a weapon we can powerfully employ because of the power of God behind it. Our Father/King's power has been put into our hands through the promises He has made to us in His Word (1 John 5:14-15). When we pray, believing in such power, we glorify our Father/King (John 14:12-14). Praying is a fruit of faith and brings glory to the Father (John 15:8). Trusting in our own merits or in our own power we could never bring glory to God, but He has provided the way, once again, in which we cannot only experience the power of prayer, but in the process and as the result, bring Him the glory due Him as our Father/King (Jude 24-25).

**Jesus' Prayer**

John 17:1-26

**How Should I Pray?**

Hebrews 4:16

**Why/When Should I Pray?**

James 5:13-16 (16b-Why)

**Example of Prayer**

Acts 12:5-19

**Who/What Should I Pray For?**

Colossians 1:9-14

**Pray**

The Lord's Prayer (printed below)

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

## PART 2: Prayer Time

Having finished our study on prayer and understanding better the blessing and power of prayer, let's unite our hands and hearts as we pray for the Comforter Ministry.

A prayer is provided under each Prayer Time section, if you desire to use them, or you can create your own.

Below is an acronym you can use as you design your prayers. There are many others you could use, as well.

<b>P</b>	Praise and thank God for who He is
<b>R</b>	Remember the blessings God has given; Repent; Rejoice
<b>A</b>	Ask/Petition God for yourself and others
<b>Y</b>	Yield – “Your will be done, Lord.”

Let us pray for the *Comforter Ministry*

Dear Father,

We come before Your throne with praise and thanksgiving for who You are, what You have done, and for all You continue to do in the lives of Your children. Thank You, for the abundant grace You have poured out on the Comforter Ministry. Knowing how the ministry started brings a clearer understanding of its purpose and leads to a better understanding of what the future can hold.

Thank You, Lord, for moving the hearts of so many to come forward and willingly serve the Comforter Ministry in so many ways. Family and friends have been helping from the start, encouraging and supporting the ministry from its inception to the present activities that are underway to the ideas and projects of the future. Thank You, for instilling a genuine desire to comfort others through the loving hands and hearts of CM quilters. Their labors of love have brought comfort and joy to many women with cancer. Those who share in the financial part of CM are truly a blessing, and without their monetary support the ministry would not be able to serve in the ways it is able to. Because of these dear and tenderhearted givers the ministry has been able to encourage, enlighten, and inform hundreds of people touched by the finger of cancer, whether directly or indirectly. Most importantly, we give thanks for all CM prayer warriors. Their faithfulness in praying for this ministry cannot be emphasized enough.

Father, our prayer for the future of the Comforter Ministry includes Your continued grace and blessings remain on it. We pray for wisdom and discernment as a vision for CM continues to evolve and ideas are formulated into plans and projects. Forgive prideful thoughts. Keep the purpose of the Comforter Ministry clear and the motive behind the ministry pure so that many will continue to be “Wrapped in the Love of the Comforter.” As we pray for Your will to be done, hear us in Jesus' name. Amen.

Let us pray for the *Comforter Ministry recipients, their families, friends, and caregivers*

Gracious Father/King

With praise on our lips and thanksgiving in our hearts we come to You, Creator of all and King of the universe. We understand that only through the merits of Your Son, Jesus, are we invited to present our prayer offerings to You. Thank You, Father, for the invitation and for the promise to hear and answer our prayers. Because You alone are worthy of praise we will give that glory to no other. Because You alone are almighty and all-knowing we will look to no other for help in time of need. Because You alone are pure and holy we will humbly acknowledge all that You have done for sinful mankind in order that we can approach You with complete confidence and that our audience with You will not be rejected or incur Your justifiable wrath.

We come, asking for Your grace and mercy on behalf of all Comforter Ministry recipients. Look on them with Your favor. Strengthen them emotionally, physically, and spiritually as they individually make their way along the path before them. Draw them closer to You, Father, through Your Word where they will find rest and true peace, no matter the outcome of their journey. We know true healing is already theirs through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. Help them feel Your presence, Lord, especially during those hard and lonely times. Give them the assurance that You love them, You are with them, and You will never leave or forsake them. Keep them from becoming too self-absorbed. May they fix their eyes on You, Father, for the insight and ability to focus on the prayer needs of others, especially their family, friends, and caregivers, all of which are going through some tremendously difficult times, themselves. Lord of miracles, if it is Your will, please provide complete healing for all who walk the path of cancer.

O, Father, family members and friends of the Comforter Ministry recipients cringe under the news that cancer has entered the lives of their loved one. "Why is this happening?" "What do I say?" "What should I do?" These are the questions that torment those closely tied to a CM recipient. Grant them a quiet heart and an understanding spirit. Provide the love and support necessary for them to walk along side their loved one, in order for their loved one to remain strong and steadfast during the long days, weeks, and months of treatment. Help them to "fix their eyes on Jesus."

Caregivers hold a very special place in our hearts, Father. We pray for an extra measure of patience, strength, and love for these faithful husbands, wives, daughters, sons and all members of each Comforter Ministry recipient's support network who serve with continual and tireless care and attention. You alone, Lord, know the depth of their fatigue and hear the cry of their heart as they face the day to day demands of caring for a loved one with cancer. Enable caregivers to recognize the need to keep themselves physically and spiritually well-nourished and in contact with an outside support system who can assist them in making sure they are regularly spending some short periods of time away from their care-giving duties, as loving as they may be, in order to be refreshed and renewed to better care for their loved one.

We present these requests before Your throne, dear Father/King and ask that You hear and answer our prayers according to Your wisdom and will. We ask Your blessing on each Comforter Ministry recipient, their family, friends, and caregivers that each may be grace-covered in Your warm and loving invitation to *Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.* (Matthew 11:28) In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Let us pray for the *medical community and cancer research groups*

Father in Heaven

As Creator and Ruler over all, we give You the praise, thanksgiving, and glory due You, Heavenly Father. You will not share Your glory with another. All things are under Your feet and subject to You. Honor belongs to You, alone.

Lord, in the past You have allowed for the treatment and cure of many illnesses and diseases to be discovered. For these discoveries we are truly grateful. Our times are in Your hands and through the advancement of medical techniques, diagnostic tests, and preventative means our human life span has been extended. May we look at these times as more time to praise You and serve You and others. May we not be guilty of wasting the precious time You have allowed us, recognizing our *time of grace* is determined by You, according to Your will.

We are extremely thankful for all those who are a part of the medical community which help to make the lives of Comforter Ministry recipients better and more comfortable. We ask that You would bless their efforts to meet the needs of those in their care with kindness and compassion. We especially pray for Christian workers within the medical community. May their words and actions reflect the love of Jesus to everyone around them as they strive to serve those in need of their care and attention. All along the cancer journey there are many persons who play a part in the medical diagnosing, treatment, and hopefully recovery of a CM recipient. Each one of those persons has joys and struggles of their own. We pray, Lord, You would lift their burdens and supply all they need to do their work efficiently and effectively.

Heavenly Father, although much has been learned about cancer and its treatment there still is no known cure. We pray for cancer research groups all over the world who are working tirelessly for a cure for cancer. May their research be done ethically and morally. At the present time, the devastating rampage of cancer marches on, leaving millions in its wake. As Christians we know there will always be sickness and death, as long as we exist on this side of heaven. Still, we confidently come before You with this request, knowing if it is Your will to do so our prayer will be answered affirmatively and many will not have to suffer under the horridness of this disease. As in all matters, dear Father, we leave this too in Your hands and according to Your will, knowing Your mercy is new every morning and that Your boundless mercy will tenderly envelope us in every situation. For Jesus' sake and in His name we pray. Amen.



**Suggestion: At this point, depending on the number of participants, you may want to divide into smaller groups. Each group should choose someone who is willing to write down the requests of their group and offer the prayer on behalf of everyone in her group. Depending on group size 20 minutes should give everyone a chance to share and pray. Each group should choose one name to be shared later with the entire assembly. After reconvening, a prayer will be given including one name from each group.**

To the prayerful women in my life – Keep Praying!  
Live your life in such a way that when your feet hit the floor in the morning, Satan shudders and says . . . “Oh, no! She’s awake!”

Let us pray for the *women in our lives who are currently journeying with cancer*

They are: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Great and Merciful Father in Heaven

You showed the whole world how much You loved them by sending Your Son, Jesus, to be their Savior. Your plan of salvation was one of mercy and grace. We praise You! You continue to show the world Your love in countless ways all because of Your unending mercy and grace. We thank You! Spending eternal life in heaven with You will be Your final act of mercy and grace. We glorify You!

Father of Mercy, we bring forward the names of dear women in our lives that have cancer and are walking a path not of their choosing but nevertheless one given them. We ask that You would cover them with Your loving protection so that the devil is not able to harm them. For our Christian sisters we pray You would keep them warmed and comforted in Your loving forgiveness, knowing whatever the outcome they are Yours for eternity. Keep them rooted in Your Word so they can be faithful witnesses to everyone around them, sharing with others the hope that is within them as children of God, as daughters of the King. For those who have yet to believe in Jesus as their Savior from sin and in the victory over death He has already won for them, we pray that through Your Word and the enabling work of the Holy Spirit they will be brought to genuine repentance and faith, assured of their place in heaven and eternity with You, their heavenly Father. Believing what God has done for them, may these precious souls treasure the incredible truth that true and lasting peace is already theirs through Jesus regardless of the outcome of their journey with cancer. Bring joy to their hearts in the midst of sorrow, provide strength in time of weakness, supply patient endurance during the unbearable, give courage where there is fear, and grant healing for the wounded. May they be reminded of their baptism and real identity as a forgiven child of God. Amen.



## Some Extra Thoughts and Ideas about a Prayer Gathering

Invitation for “Coffee for Two”

***Coming together, just me and you,  
Hands folded, hearts entwined,  
A Prayer Gathering of two.***

Invitation for “three or more”

***Gathered together; three, four, or more.  
A Prayer Gathering with Jesus,  
Our Lord and Savior.***

Invitation for Quilters

***Gathered for Scripture,  
Gathered for Prayer,  
Gathered for Quilting,  
Jesus is there.***

Could use a **Comforter Ministry Poster** along with promoting your Comforter Ministry Prayer Gathering event – Example

**Comforter Ministry Prayer Gathering  
Sunday, April 4, 2010  
5:00 PM Salad Supper  
6:00 PM Prayer Gathering – Bible Study & Prayer Time  
Trinity Fireside Room**

A Comforter Ministry Prayer Gathering could be part of a **Comforter Ministry “Comfort & Joy” Retreat, Quilters’ Retreat, in combination with a Comforter Ministry presentation, etc.**

Comforter Ministry Prayer Gathering  
Bible Study and Prayers  
All Materials Written by Susanne Hanson  
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**NOTES:**