

My Prayer Journal

Use this weekly prayer to help you begin your time with God each day.

Prayer of Confession:

We confess, O Lord of all who live, that we have come so very short of all that You intend for our lives. Turn our lives, we pray, to the work You have given to us. May we come to know the true joy of bringing hope, joy, and love to the dispossessed of our world. Turn our hearts from self to service and give us strength to work for life and liberty for all of Your children.

My Prayers this Week:

Family Time:

It can be hard for us to focus on those in the community who have different life circumstances than us. We sometimes get so wrapped up in what we are thinking or doing that we forget about those less fortunate than us. However, it is important as a Christian for us to be the Body of Christ and help those around us. As a family take time this week to come up with a plan of how to serve those in your community. Maybe you can serve at a soup kitchen or donate items to a homeless shelter. It can look different for each family but it is important for you to reach out and help those in need.

MONDAY 9.13.21

Leviticus 19:9-10

Throughout the weeks of our new “iCare” sermon series, we will be looking at the six specific practices that Jesus suggested we participate in with regard to the least of those among us. According to Matthew 25:35, Jesus said, “For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat,” so our first week’s message is called “iFeed.” Jesus draws an inescapable connection between our willingness to provide relief to the food insecurity suffered by so many people in our world, and our own spiritual state. Our reading today from Leviticus demonstrates clearly that this concern God has for those who do not have enough food can be traced all the way back to the foot of Mount Sinai, where God gave Israel not only the Ten Commandments, but the entirety of The Law—the way of life that God wanted Israel to covenant with him to live by. It didn’t matter if you owned the crops and the vineyards—you were to leave the edges of your fields unharvested, and you were to leave whatever fell to the ground as you harvested on the ground. Trees and vines were not to be gone over a second time. All of *this* produce was to be left behind for the poor and the foreigner. Thus, everyone would be fed.

- Does this law feel *fair* to you by today’s standards? Why?

TUESDAY 9.14.21

Deuteronomy 24:19-22

“Deuteronomy” literally means “second law.” It is the account of Moses’ retelling of the Law received by him on Mount Sinai to a new generation of Israelites after forty years of wilderness wandering. You probably noticed how similar today’s reading was to yesterday’s, but you may also have noticed that the language is a little more explicit in both its guidance and in its description of who was to be fed through the unharvested crops. But especially notice that in verse 22, Moses explains *why* the people are to live by this command—“remember that you were slaves in Egypt.” Forty years later, many of those Moses were talking to had been mere children when they were enslaved. They may well have been beginning to forget that life. But Moses insists they must *not* forget. Remembering their heritage, identifying strongly with the previous generation that had been oppressed, was meant to engender compassion for those who would suffer in the coming life in the Promised Land. Moses wants them to ask themselves—“wouldn’t it have been nice if someone had left some sheaves, olives, and grapes for Grandma and Grandpa when they were destitute slaves? Maybe I should do that for others, today.”

- How much do you empathize with the poor today? Do you remember that “we were once slaves in Egypt”?

WEDNESDAY 9.15.21

Ruth 2:1-23

In chapter two of the story of Ruth, we see the practical application of the laws we read from Leviticus and Deuteronomy on Monday and Tuesday. Ruth is a poor widow, living with her mother-in-law Naomi (another poor widow), with no surviving men to provide sustenance for them. Boaz is a rich landowner, and a somewhat distant relative of Naomi’s dead husband. Boaz is portrayed as a righteous man, insisting that Ruth must continue to glean the crops from *his* fields, rather than risk being attacked in another field. What’s more, he directs his employs to not only obey the gleaning laws, but to actually pull harvested sheaves out of their bundles to leave behind for Ruth to gather! Through Boaz’s kindness, Ruth is able to provide for herself and Naomi throughout the entire seasons of barley and wheat harvest. As the story continues, Boaz will again portray his righteousness through a willingness to marry Ruth—again going the extra mile by taking on a responsibility he did not strictly have to take on. The law did not require him to leave behind harvested grain, and the law did not require him to marry Ruth when there was a closer living male relative. But righteous Boaz did both.

- Are you willing to go the extra mile to care for the poor?

THURSDAY 9.16.21

2 Kings 4:38-44

Famine was dreaded in the ancient world. In times of famine, many people starved to death. In the story from Ruth yesterday, it was famine that had originally driven Naomi away from her homeland. Many years have elapsed from the time of Ruth to the time of the prophet Elisha in today’s reading, but famine is still a great tragedy. First, in an attempt to make a more satisfying stew, gourds from an unknown vine are mixed in, resulting in a poisonous mixture that Elisha is miraculously able to make edible. Then, in a scene that is the backdrop of the well-known story of Jesus feeding 5,000 with a few barley loaves and fishes, Elisha is able to feed a hundred men with twenty barley loaves—even producing leftovers! All of these stories portray God’s great desire that people be fed. Elisha the prophet, as a representative of God’s will, ensures people can be fed safely and abundantly. Jesus, too, ensured that a starving crowd was fed abundantly. Famine is still a fact of life for many people throughout our world. These stories demonstrate that those who claim to be aligned with the will of God, like Elisha and Jesus, will do all they can to ensure the hungry are fed.

- What specific activities can you point to, to demonstrate that you are aligned with God in feeding the hungry?

FRIDAY 9.17.21

Amos 6:1-7

Just in case any of us might still be thinking we can be the people of God, and yet be complacent about the plight of the hungry, the prophet Amos is there to show just how wrong we are. The language of “the ruin of Joseph” refers to the everyday Israelites who went hungry while the first-class military leaders and royal courts were basking in the luxury of their spoils of war. The upper class of Israelites “dined on choice lambs and fattened calves,” “lounged on ivory-inlaid couches,” and “drank wine by the bowl-ful,” while “strumming away on their harps like David.” Meanwhile, hunger and suffering were rampant among the everyday Israelites. Amos warned that God was watching, and that the feasting would come to a sudden end. In fact, within 30 to 40 years of Amos’ prophecy, the kingdom of Israel had been devastated by Assyria, and its entire upper-class populace carried off to various other nations conquered by the Assyrians. These exiled peoples became the “lost tribes of Israel,” assimilated into the foreign lands where they ended up, never to return. Amos’ call to repentance is intended as much for us as it was for them. It is easy to exploit the poor and the hungry—but Jesus insisted that what we do to/for them, we are in fact doing to/for Him.

- How would you rate your own level of complacency?

SATURDAY 9.18.21

Acts 6:1-7

It’s somewhat of a relief to read this passage from Acts and recognize that even in the very earliest church, the actual everyday logistics of feeding the poor and the hungry were being dealt with. The early church was a mixture of Jews of different ethnicities—and the Jews of Greek descent were convinced that their hungry were being overlooked in favor of the Jews of Hebrew descent. We should take note that within this early church there was a “daily distribution of food” to the widows who had no men to support them. The problem was that the Twelve disciples were so busy dealing with the practicalities of the food-distribution problem that they had no time for spiritual leadership, whether that was prayer or proclaiming the Gospel! Recognizing that both the spiritual AND physical needs of the people were important, the Twelve devised a solution. A subset of Christians, who were required to be “full of the Spirit,” would take charge of the distribution of food. These people were set apart to this purpose through prayer and the laying on of hands, and now, both the spiritual needs and the physical needs of the people could be met. The result? “So the word of God spread.” People were being fed, both spiritually and physically, just as Jesus wanted.

- Do you prioritize physical or spiritual hunger? Or both?



Daily Study Guide

September 12-18, 2021

Sermon Series: iCare

Week One: “iFeed” - Rev. J. David Israel

Scripture for Sunday, September 12: Matthew 4:1-11

“Then the Spirit led Jesus up into the wilderness so that the devil might tempt Him. After Jesus had fasted for forty days and forty nights, He was starving. The tempter came to Him and said, ‘Since you are God’s Son, command these stones to become bread.’ Jesus replied, ‘It’s written, *People won’t live only by bread, but by every word spoken by God.* After that the devil brought Him into the holy city and stood Him at the highest point of the temple. He said to Him, ‘Since you are God’s Son, throw yourself down; for it is written, *I will command my angels concerning you, and they will take you up in their hands so that you won’t hit your foot on a stone.*’ Jesus replied, ‘Again it’s written, *Don’t test the Lord your God.*’ Then the devil brought Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. He said, ‘I’ll give you all these if you bow down and worship me.’ Jesus responded, ‘Go away, Satan, because it’s written, *You will worship the Lord your God and serve only Him.*’ The devil left Him, and angels came and took care of Him.” (CEB)

Things that really impacted me from today’s sermon:

Prayer Requests

- Jerry Primm
- Ruck Family
- Fowler Family
- Young Family
- Helen Rager
- Taylor & Baby Finley
- Ruck Family
- Alyssa Kellhofer
- McKay Family
- Beverly McIntosh
- Mitch Mitchell
- Karen Patton
- Josh Luter
- Charlotte Ottley
- Delaney Digman
- Bill Reichter
- Bob Vincent
- Sophia Miller
- Judy Hoffman
- Nini Schneider
- Larry & Kathy

Family and friends on the loss of Clella Malloy

The Brown family on the loss of Cindy Brown’s sister, Tina

The Hughes family on the loss of Liz Hughes father, Walter Huber

Victims of Hurricane Ida

Victims and their families suffering from the violence in Afghanistan

Share prayer requests online at livingwordumc.org