

## My Prayer Journal

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

### Prayer of Confession:

Holy and gracious God, we confess to You our role in harming those who are already suffering. Stigma is an ugly word, and it is one that we have created with our cold shoulders, lingering stares, and unhelpful whispers. Forgive us for creating a world where those who suffer fear the very help they so desperately need. Enlighten us with new understanding, empathy, and compassion. By the power of Your healing Spirit, help us to stand with the most vulnerable among us. Lead us to shalom. Amen.

### My Prayers this Week:

### Family Time:

We talk this week about healing in many different ways; how Jesus heals people in the Bible, how doctors heal, and how God can heal our hearts. Sometimes it can be difficult for kids to understand that healing can happen physically but it can also happen spiritually. Spend time this week as a family talking through ways they can call on God to help heal them. Whether it is physically or spiritually how can your family invite God in to heal? Who are people who help us heal in different ways?

### MONDAY 10.11.21

### Exodus 15:22-27

In Matthew 25:36b, Jesus says "I was sick and you took care of me." Therefore, our topic for week five of our "iCare" sermon series is "iHeal." Today's reading from Exodus takes place during the days after the Exodus from Egypt, when the Hebrews are wandering in the desert. First, the people could find no water at all, but then, when they did, it was too bitter to drink. In a vivid demonstration, God "heals" the water to make it potable, and then declares "I am the LORD who heals you." This is actually one in a series of statements by God in the book of Exodus in which God reveals more and more about His identity—a revelation that began in Exodus 3:14 when He told Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." Now, the people who have just escaped from slavery in Egypt learn that their God's ultimate desire is for the people to be free from sickness and death. God promises that if they are obedient to His covenant, they will not suffer any of the diseases that the Egyptians had experienced. Immediately after this declaration, the people are led to an oasis with twelve springs of clean water. From the earliest days of His covenant, God has made it clear that the ministry of healing will be central to His peoples' faith lives.

- What does it imply to you that God's desire is our healing?

### TUESDAY 10.12.21

### 2 Kings 20:1-11

Late in Israel's history, and after a long succession of both good and bad kings, a good king, Hezekiah, rose to the throne of the southern kingdom of Judah. During his reign, the powerful nation of Assyria besieged and destroyed the northern kingdom of Israel. But when Hezekiah offered a humble prayer to be saved from the Assyrian army, God responded and Jerusalem was spared. Even so, Hezekiah himself became deathly ill, and again prayed for God to extend his life. Again, God responded to Hezekiah's faithfulness. The story can be challenging for us, because we know that not every faithful person who prays for such an outcome receives it. But take notice of just HOW God responded to Hezekiah's prayer. The prophet Isaiah served as doctor, ordering a prescription of poultices which began the healing process. The God who could make the sun's shadow back up the stairs did not simply "snap his fingers" to heal Hezekiah. Rather, he used the people close to Hezekiah, and the medical practices of the day, as a means to provide healing. Unfortunately, if you read on to the end of the chapter, you will see that Hezekiah became proud, acting rashly in a way that ultimately led to Judah's destruction at the hands of not the Assyrian, but the Babylonian army.

- Through whom do you think God heals people today?

### WEDNESDAY 10.13.21

### Isaiah 53:1-5

Today's reading from Isaiah is one of the most famous of Isaiah's "suffering servant" passages. The amazing revelation of this passage is the reality that an entire people would be healed by the suffering of another person. This servant of God was not some beautiful person loved and respected by everyone, but rather, someone despised and easily ignored. And yet, by an act of God's mercy, this servant "carries our sickness" and "bears our suffering." Because of our crimes and disobedience to God's covenant—our rebellion against God—this servant is pierced and crushed, bearing our punishment for us. Yet, miraculously, by the wounds the servant receives, WE are healed. Those who were the earliest witnesses to Jesus' crucifixion, death, and resurrection immediately saw the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy in Jesus. With their foundation in the Old Testament's insistence that our God is the God who heals, they understood in Isaiah's prophecy and in Jesus' experience of the cross that God had acted once and for all in a way that would provide His people with perfect healing. The suffering servant would accomplish it for all humanity by bearing the punishment for their sins—all of them.

- What kind of healing has Jesus accomplished in your life?

### THURSDAY 10.14.21

### Matthew 10:1-8

During Jesus' earthly ministry, He was the absolute embodiment of God's statement in Exodus that "I am the God who heals." Healing the sick was one of the most significant aspects of Jesus' life as a wandering rabbi. But not only did Jesus heal the sick, he gave those disciples who chose to follow Him the authority to do the same—to "heal every disease and every sickness." According to Jesus, these activities, along with raising the dead and casting out demons (themselves forms of healing), were the primary evidence that the Kingdom of Heaven had drawn near. In other words, in a world in which God in Heaven is truly King, there will be no sickness, no demons, and no death. This ministry was to begin among the "lost sheep of Israel" because they were the ones who were expecting a Messiah of God to arrive in order to inaugurate such a ministry, and they would be more open to its reality than the Gentiles. Later, the commission of the disciples to be the vehicles for God's healing would be expanded to include the people of all the nations of the world. Where God is acknowledged as King, those who put themselves under His authority will likewise participate in a ministry of healing.

- How do you think Christians today are meant to "heal every disease and sickness"? What can you and can't you do?

