



radiant life church

14

DAYS

PRAYER & FASTING

14 DAYS OF PRAYER AND FASTING

Day 1: PRAYER POSTURE

How should we approach God when we pray? Does our "posture" make a difference? Does He hear our prayers better if we are kneeling or standing? Eyes open or closed? Should we lift our hands in the air when we pray or lay prostrate on the floor? During the next 14 days of prayer and fasting, we will talk about a few different physical prayer postures, but first of all, we need to recognize that the most important posture when praying is *the posture of our heart* - the attitude with which we come to God in prayer.

The harshest words Jesus ever spoke to people were spoken to those who were trying really hard to look good and righteous to others. In His day, that was a group of people known collectively as the "teachers of the law". They were the ones who were supposed to have it all together, who were supposed to lead by example. But because God looks at our hearts, Jesus knew they were just "posturing". And he called them out. (See **Matthew 6:5, Matthew 6 23:27**)

Our relationship with our Heavenly Father in its truest sense is worship and is meant to be personal; to include conversations with Him about anything and everything. God longs for an intimate relationship with each of us. In order to do that, we must be honest and vulnerable. During these next 14 days, we invite you to explore prayer postures with us, especially the posture of the heart. Let the Word of God search you and challenge you. Ask Holy Spirit to sit with you; allow Him to search your heart. Thank Jesus for freeing you to know God personally and to spend eternity with Him. Be honest. Be eager! Begin to lean into what God has for you in the next two weeks.

Father, we bless Your Name today! We lean into You and desire to hear from You, Holy Spirit. May the posture of our hearts be attentive. Open our ears to hear and our eyes to see. We promise to pay attention to what You reveal today as we fast and pray. In the Name of Jesus, Amen.

Jesus: Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship my Father in spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth. John 4: 23, 24 NIV

Day 2: POSTURE OF WORSHIP

Today as you come to prayer, approach God with a posture of worship and adoration. Watch that you don't barge into God's Presence. What might your physical posture be as you enter into conversation with Him -softly - deliberately - recognizing that He is God of the Universe? Approach the King of Kings with reverence and wonder: "Our Father, hallowed be thy name."

Think about who God is: Sovereign, Creator, Mighty God, Peace, Hope, Healer, Protector...

Meditate on His wonders in the world around you. Spring is coming. In your mind, picture the amazing renewal that happens this time every year. The sap rises in the trees. The temperature moderates. Change is in the air.

Play your favorite worship song. Close your eyes and let the words, tempo, and melody flow into your spirit.

Open God's Word to a favorite Psalm and let the words saturate to your bones.

Acknowledge His Presence with you.

Can you feel your physical posture changing? End your time with your Father in joy and praise. Today is not an time to ask; today is worship and adoration!

*Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Know that the Lord is God. It is he who has made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the Lord is good, and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations. **Psalm 100 NIV***

For your journal: Describe your posture when you first approached God in worship today.

Did your physical and/or heart posture change during your time alone with God? If so, how?

Today I heard God say...

Dear God, I just want to say...

Day 3: POSTURE OF CONFESSION

Enter into your quiet time with God today with the posture of confession. As the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin - tells us in our spirit that we have missed the mark with God - His conviction prompts confession. "Yup, I did it".

But we must not stop there. Repentance is the necessary next step. Repentance is more than "I'm sorry, I won't do it again, God". Repentance is godly sorrow and truly regretting our sin. It is wanting to be clean and asking for forgiveness. It is, by the help of His Spirit living in you, choosing not to do it again.

As you come into God's Presence today in a posture of confession, you may not already know what you need to confess (own up to). Stop and ask His Presence to search you and to show you. (**Psalm 139:23, 24**) We desperately want God to hear us and to have our prayers answered. But unconfessed sin distances us from God. Oh, He knows where we are, and we know where He is, but it creates an uncomfortable space (for us) and if left too long, creates a real breakdown in relationship with our Heavenly Father. You have probably experienced this in human relationships. Not so good.

God and sin do not mix. And He knows what unconfessed sin does to us. Physically and spiritually. Listen. Don't be uncomfortable with calling your sin what it is - "sin". It is best to call it what it is because, praise God, there is a remedy for it! Christ went to the cross for it!

Hear this: **1 John 1:9** is a verse written to Christ-followers. Saved folk. *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just (because of what Jesus did on the cross) to forgive us our sins and (get this good news) cleanse us from ALL [emphasis mine] unrighteousness.* NIV

Clean! Such a good feeling!

Still reluctant to confess? Sit a while with Your Father. Bask in His lavish love. Trust His searching is for your good. Come clean; be clean.

For your journal: How does unconfessed sin affect your relationship with God? With others? Reflect on a time when you repented and experienced His cleansing "from all unrighteousness?" How did you feel?

Today I heard God say...

Dear God, I want to tell you...

Day 4: POSTURE OF SUBMISSION

We are often encouraged to surrender to the Lord. Surrender is a churchy word and is often understood as giving up, as in "waving the white flag", which makes us think of defeat.

Surrender with submission is an entirely different posture than that of defeat. Surrender to God in this light means putting our life in His hands. Taking our hands off. It releases control back to Him so that He leads our life and covers our circumstances. It is not passive. That is where submission comes in.

Submission is a posture of obedience. It is a posture of respect and trust. It acknowledges that God is God, and we are not. It yields. It is the posture of a willing servant of a benevolent God who knows best.

It is also a posture of readiness. It is a posture of listening. It is a posture of availability and action. When Isaiah heard the voice of God, he was ready: *Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I, send me!"* **Isaiah 6:8**

On the eve of the crucifixion, Jesus prayed to be spared the cross if there was another way His mission could be fulfilled. But he submitted: *Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.* **Luke 22:42**

Submission is faith in action.

Hebrews 11 is often referred to as the "Hall of Faith." Take some time today to read through this incredible chapter and be ready to add your name at the end as an act of surrender and submission to your heavenly Father.

For your journal: Begin today's journal this way- "By faith [insert your name], surrendered and submitted..."

Today I heard God say:

Dear God, I want to tell You...

Day 5: THE POSTURE OF SEEKING

Seeking is a posture with purpose. For the unbeliever, it is reaching out and asking questions. It searches God's Word. It listens to God speak through others. It questions. It is a posture that leads to Jesus.

For believers, it is also questioning, but trusting. Seeking is the desire to know and be known by God. Seeking desires to be in the center of God's will. Seeking is openness. Eyes open, ears open, heart open to see Him and to hear His voice. It is aligning ourselves with what God is doing in the world instead of asking God to align with what we are doing. It is seeking God's Presence.

Seeking is being wise and alert. Seeking desires to please God first, only, and always.

Jesus tells us to seek instead of worry:

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things [food, clothing, shelter – the stuff we worry about and ask for] will be given to you as well. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Matthew 6:33 NIV

Consider these words of Jesus: *So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened...If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!*

Matthew 7:7; 11 NIV

Seek, knock, ask. All appropriate postures that lead to answers from our Heavenly Father.

For your journal: What are you seeking from God today?

Today I heard God say:

Dear God, I want to tell you...

Day 6: POSTURE: PRESENT IN HIS PRESENCE

The story of Mary and Martha is one of contrasts. Martha, the busy older sister with the audacity to scold Jesus for not asking Mary to help her, is usually considered the bad guy. Mary is pictured as the sweet younger sister who is content to sit at the feet of Jesus to listen and to hang out with Him despite (says Martha) all the other things that need to be done.

But maybe this story is more about learning that we need to be *with* Jesus more than *doing* something for Him or *needing* something from Him.

Sitting at His feet is certainly listening and learning. But it is more a picture of being present in His Presence. It is companionship and relationship, of just being near the One you love. It is rest, and peace, and restoration. It is the awareness that whatever else might be calling us or trying to pull us away, this is the place we are meant to be in this moment. At the feet of Jesus. In His Presence.

The Psalmist pictures it this way:

But I have stilled and quieted my soul: like a weaned child [content in their mother's arms without need] with its mother, like a weaned child is my soul within me.

Psalm 131:2 NIV

Mary needed nothing more from Jesus than to just be with Him. What about you? Today, sit a while in His Presence. You might get comfortable.

For your journal: When was the last time you were present in His Presence/spent time with Him just for the sake of just "being" in with Him? Describe that experience. If it has been a while, why not take the time today.

Today I heard God say:

Dear God, I want to tell You...

Day 7: POSTURE OF COURAGE

Courage is a strong posture. It means to stand firm in God, no matter what comes because He is always with us. It is a posture we take in times of spiritual warfare – which **will** come in the life of every Christ-follower. It is an erect posture, a posture of readiness, a posture of defense. It is a posture that also engages in battle. It is a posture that trusts. It is not the absence of fear, but it perseveres despite fear.

Listen to what God's Word has to say:

*Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go. **Joshua 1:9 NIV***

*Finally, be strong [courageous] in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes... Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. **Ephesians 6:10;13***

Therefore my dear brothers, stand firm, Let nothing move you. Always give yourself fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. 1 Corinthians 15:58 NIV

*Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong. Do everything in love. **1 Corinthians 16:13 NIV***

*So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed. I will strengthen you and help you. I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. **Isaiah 41:10 NIV***

*For God did not give us a spirit of timidity [fear], but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline. **2 Timothy 1:7 NIV***

For your journal: Come into God's Presence with a posture of courage. Mentally put on the full armor of God, and at the end of the day, consider how each part of the armor reinforced your courage and helped you to stand.

Today I heard God say:

Dear God, I want to tell you...

Day 8: POSTURE OF CONFIDENCE

*This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us -whatever we ask-we know that we have what we asked of him. **1 John 5:14-15 NIV***

*In him and through faith in [Jesus Christ] we may approach God with freedom and confidence. **Ephesians 3:12 NIV***

*Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence [boldness], so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. **Hebrews 4:16 NIV***

We talk with God about so many things. We share our thoughts and ask questions. We share our fears, our desires, and our concerns. We pray for our needs and the needs of others. We ask that His Kingdom will come to earth, just as it is now established in heaven. We ask for His Presence!

So how do you approach God when you pray for each of these things? Do you have a posture of fear? Doubt? It is important to consider your heart posture. **James 1:6-7** cautions that the one who doubts will not receive what he asks for.

The posture of confidence is not brash or arrogant. It is humble, yet sure. It is bold. It prays God-sized prayers! Confidence is a posture of belief and comes through faith in Jesus and praying according to His will. How can you know His will for a situation? Ask him. Search His Word. Get to know Him better.

Nothing, prayed in accordance with God's will, is impossible. God can do anything!

Ask. Confidently. Boldly!

For your journal: What have you been reluctant to ask God for? Why? Pray before you pray... ask God what you should pray for. Then pray!

Today I heard God say:

Dear God, I want to tell you...

Day 9: POSTURE OF GRATITUDE

Much of our time in prayer is spent in asking. We are needy! It is okay to ask, to seek, to knock. But what do we do when we get our answer? How do we respond to God's blessings? Does He only hear from us when we are in need?

After His ministry began, Jesus could not go far before a crowd gathered. They enjoyed His teaching, marveled at how His parables made perfect sense, and wondered if He might be the Messiah. But mostly they came for the miracles and the healings.

The story of the ten lepers (**Luke 17:11-19**) makes us wonder how many of those He healed were truly grateful. Ten were healed – nine kept going, but only one came back to Jesus and expressed his gratitude. Was Jesus's ministry those three years a thankless one?

The posture of gratitude is more than a casual, "Hey, thanks Jesus". Gratitude is a heart full of genuine appreciation and praise for what He has done on our behalf.

"Thank You for hearing me. Thank you for healing me. Thank you for going before me. I am grateful for showing me how to pray. Praise...for answered prayer. Thank You for unanswered prayer because it may be a protection and, Lord, You have plans that are higher than mine! Thank you, Jesus, that..."

As we ponder Good Friday and celebrate Resurrection Sunday, Lord, let us be more filled with gratitude than candy!

For your journal: What physical posture might you take as you express your gratitude to the Father? Keep a gratitude journal for the rest of the days leading up to Easter.

Today I heard God say:

Dear God, I want to say...

Day 10: POSTURE OF WAITING

Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord. Psalm 27:14 NIV

Waiting is hard. We live in such a "fast food" society that almost everything we want is at our fingertips 24/7. The posture of waiting is often characterized by heaviness, of being bowed down. In light of God's promises in His Word, the Bible, waiting should be a time of expectancy.

Right now, you may be waiting for an answer to a prayer you have been praying for a long time. Make no mistake. We can be certain that God always hears. He always answers. And sometimes that answer is...wait. Because He is working out the details. He knows what is best for us and what best glorifies Him in the answer. (see **Mark 9:1-12**)

In the meantime, it is easy to "worry" our prayers or try to figure out contingency plans for "what if God does not come through".

Oswald Chambers suggests a remedy for the uncertainty we may feel as we wait:

"To be certain of God means that we are uncertain in all our ways, [in other words] we do not know what a day may bring forth. This is generally said with a sigh of sadness; it should rather be an expression of breathless expectation."

The posture of waiting is characterized by "breathless expectation" when we look for He is going to do next on our behalf, even while we wait. Breathless expectation is knowing that God hears and is already in the process of answering. It is joyful anticipation!

God's answer and timing will be just right. Just wait and see!

For your journal: How would my waiting look different if I waited in breathless expectation?

Today I heard God say:

Dear God, I want to tell you...

Day 11: POSTURE OF PETITION

The posture of petition is asking something for yourself. It is God asking you: What do you need from Me? Some people do not feel that they should pray for themselves because it is selfish.

Prayers can be selfish if we ask for things that are not in line with God's will for us. They can be selfish if God has already given us an answer or direction, and we pray for Him to change what He has already said to us.

There are, however, so many things that God wants us to ask for ourselves:

For His Presence (see **Exodus 33:15; Psalm 51:11**)

To allow Him to search us (see **Psalm 139:23-24**)

To be filled with His Holy Spirit (see **Ephesians 5:18**)

To be filled with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (see **Galatians 5:22-23**)

To be more like Jesus (see **Philippians 2:1-12**)

For healing (**James 5:13-16**)

For His will to be done (in any aspect of our life – job, finances, family, health) on earth, just like His will is done in heaven (see **Mathew 6:9-13**)

For wisdom (see **James 1:5-7**)

For what we need to live a godly life (see **2 Peter 1:3-10**)

Ask God what to ask for yourself – then ask.

For your journal: What are some of your personal petitions? Are they in line with **James 4:2b – 3**? How has God been answering your prayers for yourself?

Today I heard God say:

Dear God, I want to tell You...

Day 12: POSTURE OF INTERCESSION

The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. James 5:16b

Intercession is probably the most common prayer posture. It simply means praying for someone else, asking on their behalf. Intercession is a posture that brings other people's requests and needs to the Lord.

We call it praying for "prayer requests". At Radiant Life, our prayer ministry is structured around praying for others. We ask for God's will in their lives and circumstances. We pray for the pastors, for the services, for the ministry and outreach of Radiant life. We pray for people to be free from bondage and for God to heal wounds of the past.

We pray for the various needs in our church family. We pray for physical healing. We diligently pray for marriages. We earnestly pray for the unbelievers to come into personal relationship with Jesus. We must continue to be faithful in prayer for our communities, country, and nation. We pray!

It is encouraging to know that intercession is not our work alone. Even now Jesus is at the right hand of God, interceding for each of us:

Christ Jesus, who died – and more than that – was raised to life – is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Romans 8:34. NIV

In this last week before Easter, take the time to read **John 14 -17**. John, His best friend, records the last teaching and prayers of Jesus before He was arrested, tried, and crucified. Let His own words sink in and make note of how Jesus prayed. Even then He was praying for you.

Jesus's "work" at this very moment is to pray for us and to petition the Father on our behalf. As we pray in His Name for the needs of others, He then takes them to the Father.

Let us pray...

For your journal: How is your posture of intercession? Do you find it easy or hard to pray for others? Examine your answer.

Today I heard God say:

Dear God, I want to tell You...

Day 13: POSTURE OF GRIEF

One might not think of grief as a posture, yet grief and loss most often prompt people to pray. Even those who do not believe pray in a time of loss.

Our loving God is compassionate. Jesus is called a "*man of sorrows, acquainted with grief*." (**Isaiah 53:3** KJV) Because He came to earth in human form, He identifies with our human emotions, our physical pain, and the grief, sorrow, suffering that we all experience.

In **John 11**, we read the story of Lazarus and Jesus. Lazarus and his sisters, Mary and Martha, were close personal friends of Jesus. Lazarus died (read the chapter to get all the incredible details), and Jesus brought him back to life. Miraculous!

But notable in this story are all the other details that John includes. He notes that Jesus, who knew the miracle he was about to do, was still "deeply moved in spirit and troubled" as he comforted the grieving sister with the hope of resurrection. He was moved with compassion for those who were grieving, especially for those who had no hope. He grieved. He wept. Do you realize that this means God grieves with you? He hears your grief. He sees your pain. He identifies with your sorrow.

Don't be afraid to bring your grief to God. Your heart may be breaking. Your spirit may be bowed down. As you come to God, you may feel like you are barely crawling. Often your heart is simply sprawled before Him. That's okay. Pour it all out.

Easter is about hope. Life after death. Jesus hears our cries! He identifies with our grief. Not just the grief over the loss of someone we love, but the grief we experience with any loss – job, health, relationships, dreams. Just know that our hope and comfort is found in Him alone.

Never be ashamed to bring Him your sorrow. He gets it. Tears? Share them freely with the One who wept! *Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.* **Matthew 5:4** NIV

For your journal: Reflect on a time of personal grief where Jesus met you in your pain.

Today I heard God say:

Dear God, I want to tell you...

Day 14: POSTURE OF CELEBRATION

Covid 19 has put a bit of a kink in college and professional sports. For some, going to a baseball or football stadium, or sitting in the bleachers at a basketball game represents the highlight of the week. And the noise and the standing and cheering – rapt attention focused on the quarterback or star center? Yes! Let's go! Victory!!

So - what would it look like today for you to celebrate the greatest victory ever? Jesus conquered death forever by His willingness to endure the cross. He knew the end of the story. Resurrection! Freedom!

Jesus endured the cross because of the end result! The joy of eternal life for all who believe. (see **Hebrews 12:2-3**)

What is the posture of celebration? Is it jumping up and down, fist bumps, and face paint? Well... Remember, posture begins with our heart attitude. Go to the Lord, heart full of excitement and celebrate life with Him. See what physical posture follows!

Consider the following lyrics:

Oh we're free, free

Forever we're free.

Come join the song

Of all the redeemed

Yes we're free, free

Forever, Amen

When death was arrested

And my life began From *Death Was Arrested*/North Point Worship

Not a song you sing quietly or sitting down! Voices raised, hands lifted high. Celebration! This is what Easter is all about!

Perhaps our gatherings as believers should be more like tailgate parties for heaven. Think about it. Celebrate!

For your journal: Jesus rose from the grave that Easter Sunday morning long ago. He IS alive today. Express your gratitude to the Lord for the resurrection and think of one way you can celebrate that right now.

Today I heard God say:

Dear God, I want to tell you...