

a liturgy for anxious hearts & minds

This liturgy's fixed points are scripture and readings to begin and end your prayer time. There are a number of suggested scriptural passages included for reflection; you are welcome to engage with these as little or as much as you like.

—Drew Billups

At the beginning of the hour, read prayerfully and listen:

Scripture: Psalm 46

¹ God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.

² Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;

³ though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble with its tumult. *Selah*

⁴ There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.

⁵ God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved;
God will help it when the morning dawns.

⁶ The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter;
he utters his voice, the earth melts.

⁷The LORD of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge. *Selah*

⁸Come, behold the works of the LORD;
see what desolations he has brought on the earth.

⁹He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.

¹⁰“Be still, and know that I am God!
I am exalted among the nations,
I am exalted in the earth.”

¹¹The LORD of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge. *Selah*

First Prayer:

Jesus, many things we assumed were anchored have now broken loose.

The routines we have trusted have become untethered.

In incremental, quiet, unrelenting shifts the world is changing around us.

We feel acutely powerless and out of control.

Lord, be with us.

Hear our cry. Come to our aid.

Let us meet you as faithful, sure, and strong. Draw us into your triune love and reveal the concrete fullness of your presence with us in the midst of current hardships.

Lord, send your Spirit, full of comfort.

Send your Spirit and empower us to move in spite of our fear towards clear-eyed and constant love for you and our neighbors.

As our social circles become constricted and eerily still, send your Spirit and empower us to push past the selfish impulses we all feel and into the open fields of generosity and compassion.

Send your Spirit and empower us to push our awareness wider when we want to withdraw; to make decisions that benefit others before ourselves, to look for opportunities to keep our sisters and our brothers, to tenaciously commit to generosity when all we feel is scarcity.

Gift us confidence that the things we cannot control lie securely in your hands—that the quiet reassuring permanence we seek is found in you.

Help us to relax the strained grasp of our own anxiety and trust that you remain steadfast in your faithfulness to all the world.

In the very midst of threat, uncertainty, and fear help us to enter your rest—because at the core of our being we know you as a faithful God and a powerful savior.

In the midst of weighty matters, of things beyond our control:

Lord, be with us.

QUIET

Prayer and Scripture:

Spend time in prayer and reflection. As you pray, ask for the peace you need. Believe that God is ready to gift it to you. Be still in listening prayer. As you feel led, you are welcomed to meditate on any of the passages below:

Psalm 121

Isaiah 40:28-31

Romans 12:9-21

Psalm 94:18-19

Romans 8:35-39

QUIET

At the conclusion of the hour:

Scripture: Psalm 18:6, 16-19

⁶ In my distress I called to the LORD;
I cried to my God for help.
From his temple he heard my voice;
my cry came before him, into his ears.

¹⁶ He reached down from on high and took hold of me;
he drew me out of deep waters.

¹⁷ He rescued me from my powerful enemy,
from my foes, who were too strong for me.

¹⁸ They confronted me in the day of my disaster,
but the LORD was my support.

¹⁹ He brought me out into a spacious place;
he rescued me because he delighted in me.

Second Prayer:

Lord, send your Spirit, full of comfort.

For those who are sick, we pray that your healing would quickly appear.

For those at elevated risk, we pray your wisdom and protection.

For nurses, doctors, and other healthcare personnel, we pray your provision and strength.

For leaders in our communities, businesses, churches, local and national government, we pray for discernment and responsible action in quickly shifting circumstances.

For children disrupted from school routines and intuiting family stress, we pray your reassurance and blessing.

For the small business owners, artists, and musicians that give shape to our community, we pray for your provision and persistence.

For those feeling lonely and constrained in a time of social distancing, we pray that you would provide connection and community.

For those struggling with uncertainty, we pray for your persistent presence.

For those afraid, your strong shalom.

Send your Spirit, full of comfort.

Speak peace to us softly, dear Lord.

Quiet us in your love—with the confidence that you hear us and are near.

May you lighten our hearts and enable us to take these strange days—however long they last—with the quiet resolve of people aligned with your purposes and confident that your will be done.

Lord, send your Spirit, full of comfort.

Amen.

A Good Word: Numbers 6:24-26

²⁴ The LORD bless you
and keep you;

²⁵ the LORD make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you;

²⁶ the LORD turn his face toward you
and give you peace.