



LONGING TO BE LIKE CHRIST

Praying to Grow in
Christ-likeness Together

SUNDAY, JUNE 4, 2023 - DAY 36

40 Days of Prayer

Theme: Taking the very nature of a servant

Suggested Bible Reading: 1 Peter 4:10

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.

Prayer

By Jill Hamming of Charlottetown CRC on Epekwitk (Prince Edward Island)

Oh, Lord God,
I want to glorify you.
You came as Jesus, a gift to us all.
You gave every bit of yourself to us.
I want to share the gifts you have given me—wholeheartedly, without holding back,
humbly, secretly when possible.

Oh, Jesus, you spoke with wisdom and grace and love.
I want my words to be your words—
to speak kindly, to be encouraging—yet to listen well also,
when teaching, and to study well—to listen for your voice and to teach with grace
and love.

Oh, Jesus, you served us!
You served with all your mighty strength.
You served with humility.
You served us with love!
I want to serve others as you did—as you still do—
and yet in all these—sharing, speaking, serving, loving—I find it so hard to do well.
My self gets in the way—my need to control, my pride, my ignorance.

I am sorry; please forgive me.

Please help me to keep on coming back to you—

to learn your ways, to share, to speak, to serve, to love others—

to be filled over and over again

so that I can give you out—well, really, so that you can give out through me.

Thank you, Holy Spirit, that you will answer this.

Thank you, Holy Spirit, that you are always teaching me.

Thank you, Holy Spirit, that you let us be part of your work.

I praise you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Questions for reflection and/or conversation

What part of Jesus' character or one of his actions could you imitate today?

Where do you get in the way? What do you need to confess that keeps you from serving others?



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MONDAY, JUNE 5, 2023 - DAY 37

40 Days of Prayer

Theme: Taking the very nature of a servant

Suggested Bible Reading: John 12:25-26

“Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.”

Prayer (in Vietnamese)

By Matthew Le, pastor at Little Saigon CRC, Westminster, California

Lạy Chúa Ba Ngôi là Chúa từ ái của con. Ngài là Đấng Cứu Rỗi linh hồn và thể xác con. Ngài cũng là Người Bạn đồng hành với con. Cảm ơn Ngài đã chọn con, kêu gọi con, khích lệ con, và giúp đỡ con trong cuộc sống phục vụ Ngài. Giờ đây xin nghe lời cầu nguyện phát xuất từ tận đáy lòng của con trong tâm tình phục vụ Chúa Giê Su Christ.

Lạy Chúa! Xin dựng nên trong con một lòng trong sạch và làm mới lại trong con một thần linh ngay thẳng để con phục vụ Ngài qua đức tin đơn sơ của con, thông qua những công việc hàng ngày của con. Xin dạy con yêu Ngài với tất cả tấm lòng của con và vì Ngài mà phục vụ những người lân cận. Xin mở mắt thuộc linh của con để con nhận ra điều nào trong con chưa vâng phục trong sự hầu việc Ngài. Xin cho con biết những điều nào trong con mà Ngài chưa làm chủ. Xin dạy con biết từ bỏ những điều mà con đã vì sự sống mình mà không vâng phục Ngài. Xin Chúa Thánh Linh hướng dẫn con từ nay trở đi luôn phục vụ Chúa với lòng tin cậy hoàn toàn vào Ngài.

Lạy Chúa! Xin giúp con nhận ra những thái độ, suy nghĩ, ý kiến, lòng kiên định nào trong con mà không đến từ Ngài. Xin cho con phân biệt được những ước mơ, động cơ, kế hoạch và tham vọng đi ngược lại mục đích của Ngài trong đời sống còn lại của con.

Lạy Chúa! Xin cho con có lòng phục vụ Đấng Christ theo sự dạy dỗ của Ngài với một niềm tin chắc chắn vào lời hứa của Ngài về việc được Đức Chúa Cha tôn trọng trong đời này và đời sau, để con có sự bình an hầu việc Ngài. Con cầu nguyện trong Danh Chúa Giê Su Christ. Amen.

English translation:

O blessed Trinity, my loving Lord, you are the Savior of my soul and body. You are also my companion. Thank you for choosing me, calling me, encouraging me, and helping me to serve you in my life. Now hear the prayer from the bottom of my heart about my motivation to serve Jesus Christ.

O Lord! Please create in me a pure heart and renew in me an upright spirit so that I can serve you with my simple faith through my daily activities. Teach me to love you with all my heart and to serve you through serving my neighbors. Open the eyes of my heart so that I can see in what ways I have not obeyed you in my service. Show me what things in my life I have tried to keep away from you. Teach me to give up the things I have done in disobedience to you. May the Holy Spirit guide me from now on to serve you with complete trust in you.

O Lord! Help me to recognize my attitudes, my thoughts, my opinions, and the steadfastness of my heart that do not come from you. Let me discern dreams, motives, plans, and ambitions that go against your purpose for my whole life.

O Lord! Please give me the heart to serve Christ according to his teachings, with a firm faith in his promise to be honored by the Father in this life and the next life so that I may have peace to serve him.

I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Questions for reflection and/or conversation

Consider what you're planning to do in the next two hours. . . . What activities or interactions can be brought into greater obedience to Jesus?

What attitudes, thoughts, and opinions do you hold that may need to come more in alignment with God's heart?



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TUESDAY, JUNE 6, 2023 - DAY 38

40 Days of Prayer

Theme: Taking the very nature of a servant

Suggested Bible Reading: Galatians 5:13-14

You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Prayer

By Ken Lee, young adult leadership developer for Resonate in Matsudo, Japan

Father God in heaven,

We praise and exalt you that we are children of the living God. You left your heavenly throne to come and lower yourself to serve your people. Through your service, you have liberated us from shackles of slavery to sin and granted us freedom and salvation.

Lord, thank you for the freedom we have in Christ. Through your Word you have cautioned us to use our liberty, not disobeying the law, which weakens our soul to fall prey to sins of lust, but to grow in the Spirit and overcome the temptations of the flesh. Lord, help us to live in holiness and righteousness to your praise and glory. Remind us day by day that you came from heaven not to be served but to serve your children. Help us, Lord, to lower ourselves daily and follow your footsteps, using this gospel to serve our neighbors through Christ's love, which only comes as we continue to abide in you and you in us.

Lord, forgive us for not loving and caring for all people, not living like Christ. As we look around us, we see that so many people are in need of your love, yet oftentimes we overlook them or turn our heads. Help us to open our spiritual eyes and ears to see and hear what you are doing in this world so that we can take part in your

ministry. Bind us and unite us as one body in Christ, and use us to reveal your love to those who are suffering and in need of your love, that we will bring glory to you and your kingdom. Grant us your wisdom and empower us to make decisions that are in accord with your heart.

Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Questions for reflection and/or conversation

The prayer calls us to “lower ourselves daily and follow your footsteps.” Where do you need to lower yourself to follow Jesus?

What are some of the ways we can “indulge the flesh”? For which of these do you need to ask God’s forgiveness and strength as you use your freedom to serve others?



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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7, 2023 - DAY 39

40 Days of Prayer

Theme: Same Attitude as Christ

Suggested Bible Reading: Philippians 4:8-9

Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

Prayer

By Loise Githinji, associate director of Donor Relations for World Renew, Canada - Oakville, Ontario

Dear God,

I long to see and respond to what happens around me in the way that you do—in my family, in the work that you've called me to, in my community, in my country and the world. I long to live my life experiencing the reality of your beautiful promise—that you, the God who is the source of peace and well-being, will be with me. That sounds so inviting. I want that, Lord.

I know that you do not ask me to do anything that you will not give me the power to accomplish. So here I am. I'm weak, but I'm willing. Forgive me for the times I have neglected to obey you. Times when I have centered my mind on the opposite of what you desire for and of me.

By your Holy Spirit, give me the ability and the discipline to think continually on what is honourable and worthy of respect, what is right and confirmed by your Word, what is pure and wholesome. Things that are lovely and bring peace, and things that are worthy of praise, admirable, and of good repute. Help me to develop

habits that strengthen my capacity to see things from your perspective. Transform my mind and attitude and make me more like Jesus.

Help me to develop the discipline to practice what I learn through your Word and through the people you have sent into my life to sharpen me. I thank you for working in me, loving me, and showing me the ways that lead to the abundant life that you paid for me to have.

I love you Father.

Amen.

Questions for reflection and/or conversation

How does responding the way God does, as the source of peace and well-being, sound inviting to you?

What are two things you have learned or received or heard from God that you can put into practice this week?



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THURSDAY, JUNE 8, 2023 - DAY 40

40 Days of Prayer

Theme: Same Attitude as Christ

Suggested Bible Reading: Philippians 4:8-9

Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

Prayer

By Zach King, general secretary of the CRCNA, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Lord Jesus, gracious Savior, faithful God, we come before you on this day before the beginning of synod, thankful that you have heard our prayers over the past forty days.

You heard the prayers of your people Israel as they wandered for forty years.

You heard the prayers of your Son, Jesus, as he was tested for forty days.

You heard our prayers during the forty days of Lent as we remembered your passion.

Now we hear your words: **“Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable . . . excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.”**

Lord, let us think and speak truthfully, submitting our agendas to yours.

Lord, let us think and speak nobly, seeking to witness to your grace and love in us.

Lord, let us think and speak rightly, aligned with your Word and Spirit and not our fears.

Lord, let us think and speak lovingly, showing care and respect for those you have claimed.

Lord, let us think and speak admirably, witnessing to the world that we have the Spirit of Christ.

Lord, let us think excellently, giving praise to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with the voices you have created in us.

Lord God, Holy Father, give us the mind of Christ, that in the coming week all may see that it is not us, but Christ in us, who animates our words and thoughts.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Questions for reflection and/or conversation

In what specific area of your life do you need to pray, "Give me the mind of Christ so that others may see Christ in me?"

Which is more difficult for you—aligning your thoughts with God's will, or how you speak to others? Explain.