

Appendix 3: Extended Prayer Experience

Purpose: This block of time is intended to be a gift. It is an extended time for you to be in God's presence—an expanded version of what you have recently been doing on a daily basis. The increased time will allow you to go deeper—and to experience God's love and grace more thoroughly. Prepare:

- to be more relaxed and reflective
- to not only read Scripture but also to ponder or meditate upon it
- to speak more extensively with God as you have time for varied aspects of prayer
- and to listen and allow the Holy Spirit and God's word to speak into your life on areas ranging from your identity to your relationships, attitudes, and activities

You determine the length of time for your prayer experience—but try to stretch yourself, whether by 30 minutes, an hour, or several hours. Our hope is that you will discover more of God, and his love, grace, mercy, and help.

Some of you may opt for a less individual, more group-oriented version of this. You are warmly invited to attend any of our Soul Care Retreats (typically offered three times per year)—see www.grace.org/soulcare for details.

Scripture to keep in mind

- Hebrews 4:16 – “Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.” (The “throne of grace” is an image of entering into God's presence, which is what prayer does.)
- Jeremiah 29:12-13 – “Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”
- James 4:8 – “Come near to God and he will come near to you.”

Ideas on how to use this time

- Gather your Bible, *Mizizi* book, journal, and perhaps a cup of coffee or tea or water bottle.
- Find a quiet place where you won't be interrupted and distracted (turn off cell phone).
- Take time to sit still, quiet your heart and mind, focus on God, and invite His presence. It may take 5 or 10 minutes to shed the pressures of daily life and the to-do lists that can dominate your mind. You may want to often first to “unload” stresses.
- Use a Psalm of praise, such as 8 (or 19, 96, 100, 104, 147—there are many ☺) to focus on God.
- Review the pages from this past week in your *Mizizi* book, as you may want to make use of various ideas, such as the “acts” of prayer in Day 5: A Model for Prayer.
- Write in your journal what God has been saying to you—things to mull over, attitudes to develop, or actions to take. What Scriptures or ideas have grabbed your attention?
- Read “Half Day in Prayer” in *Mizizi* as it provides a simple and good structure.
- Pray the Lord's Prayer slowly and deliberately—Luke 11:2-4 or Matthew 6:9-13.
- Pray for others, starting with those closest (relationally or geographically) and radiating outward—family, friends, neighbors, workmates, world-wide.
- Take a walk and notice the beauty of creation—and use that to praise your Creator.
- Write a prayer in your journal; talk to God out loud; enjoy the time!