

PRAYER | *Praying For One Another*

- In this time of increased distance from one another, we want to continue to still **be with** one another in every meaningful way we can. Being part of community means we love each other, take care of each other, help to carry each other through turbulent times. One of the best ways we can do that is by praying for each other.
- We believe prayer does something real, that it has genuine power to change the atmosphere. Not only for ourselves but in *our collective experience* of God in this world. So today we are going to take some time to practice praying – for one another.
- So start by just thinking of someone you care about, who might be having a rough go of things these days. Could be in your family, a friend, maybe someone in the broader community (coworker, teacher, etc.) Who can you think of?
- I get that prayer can seem intimidating, depending on what kind of baggage or expectations we put on it. But praying for someone is really just a simple 3-step process of considering:
 1. What are they facing?
 2. What do they need right now?
 3. Looking to God's presence for help
- Learning to bring our whole selves into prayer takes practice. We don't want to rush the process or it will just feel like an empty ritual. We're going to walk through these steps together one at a time.
- So, you can close your eyes if you want, for better focus, and just start by bringing to your mind the person you want to pray for. And then, give yourself space to really try to feel/imagine what they might be experiencing in their life right now. **What** are they facing? **How** might it be feeling? **Where** are things hard? Take a minute to try to tune your heart into theirs.
- Next, let yourself imagine – if you *really could* make things go differently for them right now – **what would that different look like?** What do they need?
- Our first instinct is usually to want some circumstances around them to change. But we also know that what happens inside a person is often WAY more the space where God's Spirit loves to do transforming work. So we're actually going to break this step into two parts. First, take a minute to get clear on what change you do long for God to make in the circumstances around them. What would help on the outside look like?
- And now... what could God also do inside of them, regardless of what's going on around? Do they need comfort, peace, strength, wisdom, maybe breakthrough or release from something that is torturing them. What could different *inside* look like for that person?
- And finally, using the full strength of your heart, bring those hope-filled desires before God. You can put it into words, if words come well enough to you. It's great to pray with that kind of specific clarity when we can. But prayer doesn't always have to mean words. You can also just focus on holding that hope in your heart and pointing it towards the God who moves mountains.

- And whether with words or in silence, try not to just pray up in your head, in your logical thoughts. Try to sink into the deeper parts of your own heart and spirit. Into the mystery where the God of the Universe meets us, hears us, holds us, and works with us to transform this world. Give that a try.
- **“And now to the God who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen.”** (Ephesians 3:20-21)