

# IBC 30 Days of Prayer and Fasting September 17 – October 15, 2023



## “He is Holy!”

*“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.”*

*Revelation 1:8*

Over the 30 days of Prayer and Fasting, we will be exploring each of the three statements God speaks of himself; He is the God who is, who was, and who is to come. This guide was created specifically for IBC by members of our congregation. With gratitude to them, and glory to God!

Immanuel Baptist Church, Wiesbaden  
FALL LAUNCH 2023

# **WEEK 1**

**September 17 to 23**

# Week One

## “He is the God who is!”

### Week 1, Day 1

The One who is..... I AM

*John 8: 56-58 (Jesus is speaking to the Judean establishment)*

*“Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad.”*

So the Jews said to him, “You are not yet 50 years old, and have you seen Abraham?”

Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am”

Abraham lived on earth roughly as long before Jesus as Jesus did before us so we might be forgiven for wondering how this statement could possibly be right; the dates just don't add up.

And any English teacher worth their salt will be reaching for the red pen to change that last word. What is Jesus saying? He's telling us who he is, closely identifying with his Father, who had shared his covenant name YHWH with Moses. The closest we can get to the meaning of this word is probably “the being one”. Jesus is saying he's neither stuck in the past or nor a vague future hope but living now and always, that our measurement of time does not and cannot contain him, that he is always I AM. And he is offering this eternal type of life to us.

### Prayer:

Thank you Jesus that you are alive here and now, unrestricted by space and time, and that in knowing you we too share in this eternal life, that it wells up in us as you have promised. Amen

ps: Did you know that speaking out the name YHWH mirrors our breathing pattern? Try saying YH as you breathe in and WH as you breathe out. He's the Living One!

## **Week 1, Day 2**

The One who is.....pleading for us

*Hebrews 7: 24-25*

*"But because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them."*

Unlike my homeland, Germany gives us a holiday on Ascension Day. We read that the disciples were left on the top of the Mount of Olives as Jesus stepped into eternity. Then there is an almost comical scene as angels appear and ask them what they are doing there, standing around, staring up into the sky, followed by the clear promise that Jesus will return (Acts 1). The account continues with the acts of the apostles but what about Jesus I always wanted to know, where is he and what is he doing now?

Today's verse from Hebrews speaks of him pleading on our behalf in the way legal defense counsel would before the judge, praying for us as a priest before a holy and perfect God. This is where justice and mercy kiss.

### **Prayer:**

Thank you Jesus, you know me in my need and weakness and you live forever to plead for me. Let me not be slow in coming to you and help me to bring others with me. Amen

ps: The Bible tells us we are a royal priesthood, we too have this ministry of reconciliation. Maybe there will be someone today you could represent in prayer before the throne of grace.

## Week 1, Day 3

The One who is..... judging

*Philippians 2:9-11*

*"Therefore (because he humbled himself, even unto death on a cross) God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."*

I remember the year one of my sons did his Abitur (German High School graduation exam); there was a mistake on the maths paper. No matter how well they had studied, the kids could not solve that particular problem because it was quite simply wrong. And so the tables were turned, instead of testing the kids' ability it turned into a test of the examiners.

People have always tested Jesus - we read of them openly trying to trip him up on many occasions, we know those who have moved on from such antiquated fairy tales, we are witnesses of what they are seeking to replace him with, and then others who have watched and seen and yet continue to ignore him.

The invitation to eternal life is extended to everyone but there will not be open, tolerant discussion followed by a majority vote on those who decline the invitation. The call of creation, the echo through eternity and therefore the bottom line is "Jesus is Lord".

### **Prayer:**

Dear Jesus, let me not be blinded by the call for tolerance, democratic rights, political correctness for *"You alone have the words of eternal life"* (Peter in John 6.68). Make me sensitive to your leading and bold to declare your truth for the love of man and the honor of your name. Amen

## **Week 1, Day 4**

The One who is ....speaking

*1 Samuel 3:10*

*"Speak, Lord, your servant is listening."*

Back in the day when we used to watch TV and suffer all those commercials at the most inconvenient moment in the plot there would be adverts on German TV for over-the-counter medication followed by a screen-size warning to read the "Beipackzettel" (package leaflet) or consult a pharmacist. We heard it so often that quoting it was almost a running joke. This Beipackzettel would list the dosage, any side-effects and the many benefits of the medication, but of course, everyone knows it's not reading the information that brings the benefits but ingesting or applying the medication.

This reminds me of my pastor when I was growing up - when talking about Scripture he would not stop at the word "read" but would encourage us to "read, mark, learn and inwardly digest". We can make Bible-reading an exercise in knowledge and intellectual ability - but let's not substitute this for the chance to pass into relationship and growing personal acquaintance with Jesus, into adoration and prayer in an interchange of speaking and listening. In the next verse, 1 Samuel 3:11, after Samuel signalizes his readiness to listen, God tells him He is about to do things that will make his ears tingle. O let us be people who live right there in that place of relationship - accept no substitutes!!

### **Prayer:**

"Take your truth, plant it deep in us, shape and fashion us in your likeness" Amen.

(Speak O Lord, Getty & Townend, 2006)

## **Week 1, Day 5**

The One who is .....building his church and extending his Kingdom

*Matthew 16:18*

*"I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it."*

In the days when cities were walled, any attack on the city would have to come at the gate. Jesus tells us that when we go and tackle the forces of darkness, the enemy's gate will not be able to withstand our attack in his name for He has already overcome. The opponents are not equally matched in this contest. In the words of yet another song:

*"We're not fighting for survival, we've come to take the land".*

(Dave Bilbrough)

Christ has no body now but yours,  
No hands, no feet on earth but yours  
Yours are the eyes with which he sees  
Yours are the feet with which he walks  
Yours are the hands with which he blesses all the world.  
(St. Teresa of Avila)

### **Prayer:**

Your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Here I am Lord, use me.

Amen.

## **Week 1, Day 6**

The One who is .....at work

*John 5:17, 19 (Jesus is speaking)*

*"My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working. Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can only do what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does, the Son also does."*

Just as Jesus had been apprenticed to his father Joseph and learned to be an accomplished "tekton" (someone who builds something, whether it be of wood or stone) here he is watching his heavenly Father and rather than making grand claims about himself is providing signs that will indicate whose son he is.

We often fall into the trap of having to do things for Jesus, a spiritual To Do list that helps us collect points and keep us in his good books. Ephesians (2:10) tells us, however, that he has prepared good works for us to do. So we don't go off alone and do things for him, we as the apprentices, watch what the master is doing and work with him on it. Jesus actually said we would do greater things than he as a result of his spirit within us. Let's keep in step and join in with what he is doing.

### **Prayer:**

Father, "even when I don't see it, you're working, even when I don't feel it you're working, you never stop, you never stop working, you never stop, you never stop working." Let me live in full assurance that this is true. Amen

(Waymaker, Sinach, 2015)



## **Week 1, Day 7**

The One who is....deeply aware of each one of us

*Genesis 16:13 (God sends an angel to rescue Abraham's maidservant Hagar, who has borne him a child and yet been cast out to perish in the desert).*

*"To the Lord who spoke to her she gave a name, saying : You are God who sees me."*

This is the verse I saw hanging on the wall in the entrance hall to a women's shelter we recently visited to bring and share brunch. Two of the residents were new and visibly distressed at having lost their homes, familiar surroundings and one of them was missing her dog, her only family member. As we shared food and stories we discovered that one of these ladies had the same first language as one of us. What a relief for her to be able to pour her heart out without a language barrier and to know this kind sister was just a phone call or text message away. After enjoying food and some singing we prayed for all of the ladies and their needs, including the one who had been separated from her dog. Imagine her (and our) joy when she very quickly found an apartment and was able to get her furry family member back. Together we gave thanks, quoting "Now I know you the are God who sees me".

### **Prayer:**

Father, you see me ....and those around me. You are longing to make yourself known to them so that they too can say "Now I know you are God who sees me". Help me to consistently offer this word of life. Amen.

# **WEEK 2**

**September 24 to 30**

## Week Two

### “He is the God who was!”

#### **Week 2, Day 1**

He is the One who was... the Word

*John 1:1*

*“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”*

Jesus was from the beginning ...He has always existed. He is eternal. The Word of God(Jesus) brings us to approach God in worship: It is in it that we see His glory. It teaches us that we are dead in our trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1); it reveals that God has provided for redemption, forgiveness, and eternal life through the work of Jesus Christ; and it presents the opportunity to come to faith in a right relationship with the Father.

Prayer:

Lord, I come to You, asking that you draw me into a greater worship of You. Please forgive me that I often adore and idolize other people and things above You. In the power of Your Holy Spirit, please draw me into Your Word and presence so that I can see your glory and be shaped and transformed by You. You alone deserve all glory, honor and praise. Amen

## **Week 2, Day 2**

He was the God who identified Himself to Moses.

*Exodus 3:6 Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God".*

The Lord identifies Himself in this verse, speaking out of a bush which is blazing with fire, but not consumed. He calls himself the "God of your father". God is a God of compassion and faithfulness throughout the ages.

When God refers to himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, he does not speak of them as dead but alive. This is a reminder that all of God's promises are living promises. When you think of God as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, let it be a reminder, that we serve a God who sees his word through to the end and will always do what he has said he will do. God can reach us wherever we are and whomever He chooses. God can perform the simplistic and the extraordinary, on His own and through His people.

### **Prayer:**

The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob you are my Lord and Master. In your hands Lord was our yesterday, today and tomorrow that is coming. We give you all praise, honor and glory. The one most high, seated on the throne who has all authority. God who sees and knows everything. You have always been in the world, long before creation drew its first breath. You are the Ancient of Days, and You will rule forever. We are in awe of you God and we stand still in your presence. Captivate our hearts once again and reignite the flame in us once more. We pray these things in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

## **Week 2, Day 3**

He was the God who split the red sea and gave a safe passage to the Israelites.

All the people of Israel, along with their livestock, were able to cross on dry land with towering walls of water on the right and left as Moses led them. He is of the God of Deliverance!

*Exodus 14:21-29, "Moses raised his hand over the Red Sea, and the LORD caused a strong wind to blow from the east. The wind blew all night long. The sea split, and the wind made the ground dry. The Israelites went through the sea on dry land".*

The story of the exodus testifies to Christians today about the power God has to defeat oppressors and deliver the oppressed, and about the special love God has for Israel. God has been delivering His people all along: from the waters of the flood, from famine, from slavery in Egypt, and from exile in Babylon. We are called to join the Israelites in their witness to God's victory. Stand, see, keep still, and believe.

### **Prayer:**

God of salvation, you rescued the Israelites at the edge of the Red Sea. Rescue us from the things of this world that threaten our lives and livelihoods, so that we might forever place our trust in you. We pray these things in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

## **Week 2, Day 4**

He was the God who visited Adam and Eve; they heard the Lord God walking in the garden of Eden.

*Genesis 3:8,9 "They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. Then the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, Where are you?"*

The Bible speaks of a God who not only exists, He is also personally involved in the lives of His people. The Lord God helps us to understand that He is interested in our lives. He created us in His image and likeness. Although he no longer walks in Eden, since Adam and Eve sinned, God still meets us regularly through his Word and Spirit. By his Word, God speaks to us and gives us wisdom for the challenges of each day. And through his Spirit, we find new strength to stick close beside the Lord as we live according to his will.

### **Prayer:**

Lord, you have created us to have fellowship with you. We pray that you will meet us today. Lord, we seek your help to visit our hearts, our homes, our families, our workplace. Help us to know you are the God who walks with His creation. Help us this month to understand what it means to walk with you. In Jesus name, Amen.

## **Week 2, Day 5**

God was, always has been, and always will be holy.

*Isaiah 44:6*

*"Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: 'I am the first and I am the last, and there is no God besides Me.'"*

God reaffirms His unique, sovereign status and distinctive holy character, by the declaration that He is King of Israel, the Redeemer of Israel, the Ruler of the heavenly Hosts, the Lord of the whole earth, the one and only unique God of gods and King of kings. There is no other viable object of worship. There is no other source of life. God, in His grace, makes it so clear to us who He is; the Creator of the universe, Redeemer of the world. The One who formed us in our mother's womb. The one true, living God; the only one worthy of our praise and worship.

### **Prayer:**

Heavenly Father, we praise you for the faithfulness you showed to your people in Israel. Thank you that you are the same yesterday, today, and forever. You are the first and the last, the Alpha and the Omega. You alone are holy, and You alone are our God and our Savior. May you be the Alpha and Omega to us, the beginning and the end, the first and last in each of our lives, from this day forward and into the eternity of eternities. In Jesus mighty name we pray. Amen

## **Week 2, Day 6**

He was the God who was in their midst.

In the Old Testament God manifested His protection and guidance in the form of a cloud. The cloud was a sign that God was in their midst. This cloud and the Tent of the Presence were constant reminders to the newly freed Israelites of the power and presence of their mighty God. Not only did he free them from slavery but he was also guiding them to their promised land.

*Exodus 13:21 "The LORD was going before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead them on the way, and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people".*

God did not leave the Israelites to just figure the things out on their own. He personally provided direction and guidance; and where to go, when to go. God has shown us very clearly in his word, that He does not try to hide His will from us. He wants to lead us. He wants to guide us, to direct our steps; our every step.

### **Prayer:**

May we know that you are supernaturally leading and guiding us every day in all that we do. God, may that be our reality today. All glory be to your name for your loving guidance and leadership in our lives. So, help us to make decisions according to your word and your will. Help us to think and desire, according to your word and your will. Direct, lead and guide us all day today, we pray. In Jesus name, Amen.



## **Week 2, Day 7**

He was the God who called to His people.

*"Yet even now", declares the Lord, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning" Joel 2:12*

From the beginning of time God has called His people to return to Him. He invites us in His perfect way to fast in a posture of repentance. He doesn't call us to fast just to be physically hungry. He wants us to come to Him fasting from whatever is keeping us from abiding in Him. He is calling us to fast and sorrowfully bring our sins before Him because He wants us to be in His presence and have fellowship, and He knows that our sin keeps us from this.

### **Prayer:**

Lord Jesus, thank You for the Cross. Thank you for the gift of forgiveness when I humbly come to You in confession. Help me to see the blessing of fasting in order to put down the things that keep me from having true fellowship with you. Please fill me with the desire to fast and use this time to evaluate the things and relationships in my life that have higher priority than my relationship with You. In the mighty name of Jesus, Amen.

# WEEK 3

October 1 to 7

**Since He is the One "who is to come", we now emphasize His promises and what He has commanded us to do.**

## Week Three

### “He is the God who is to come!”

#### **Week 3, Day 1**

Since He is the One who is to come, He gives us a promise of what is to come. Let's humble ourselves.

*2 Chronicles 7:14 “if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”*

There are Five things in this statement that “if” we do them, “then” God will hear us, forgive our sins, and heal our land. The first is that we are His people – called by His name. We must belong to Jesus and accept Him as our savior and follow Him as our Lord. Second, we must humble ourselves (less of us and more of Him). Third, Pray. Fourth, seek God. Fifth, turn from our wicked ways – notice that this is last in the order. God does not want us to clean ourselves up before we can come to Him. No, He invites us to come as we are. He is looking for heart change; our behavior will follow what is going on in our hearts.

#### **Prayer:**

Father God, we praise your holy name. We thank you Lord that through what Christ did for us we can be called by your name. Help us to humble ourselves and seek your face in prayer. Lord, help us turn from our ways and follow Jesus. We ask that you forgive our sins and heal our land. In Jesus' holy name, Amen.

## **Week 3, Day 2**

Since He is the One who is coming again, we are chosen for a purpose and a promise.

*John 15:16 quotes Jesus as saying, "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you."*

When our prayers line up with what the Bible says, God moves. The apostle John is pointing out in this scripture that Jesus says we are chosen by Him for a purpose. Jesus says that His intent for us is that we bear lasting fruit for His kingdom. He further gives a promise of power in our prayers when we pray "in my name" meaning when we pray according to His will. When our lives and prayers line up with God's word, there is no limit to what can be done.

### **Prayer:**

Lord, help us fulfill the purpose for which you created us and chose us. Lord, we humbly bring ourselves into submission of your unconditional love and your will for us here on earth. In the precious and Holy name of Jesus, Amen.

### **Week 3, Day 3**

Since He is the One who is coming again, we need to be obedient and intercede for others.

*1 Timothy 2:1-2 "I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people - for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness."*

Lift up in prayer all those in authority over you, including parents, teachers, pastors, deacons, local government leaders, national government leaders, even if you disagree with their ideologies.

#### **Prayer:**

Lord, we praise you and we thank you that your word says that you have set up the authorities for our benefit. We lift up our leaders now and pray that you would give them the mind of Christ. That you would give them wisdom and discernment to make the decisions that align with your will and with your purposes for your people here on Earth. We ask that you continually put your Holy Spirit in their hearts and minds and your Word in their mouths. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

### **Week 3, Day 4**

Since He is the One who is coming again, He has given us a command to "keep in step with the Spirit."

*Galatians 5:22-25 "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law, and those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit."*

There are so many things in our lives that may be good, but they are not best for us. If we can live a "crucified life;" if we can crucify the things that we want in order to swap them out with the things that God wants, then we can experience God's best for us.

#### **Prayer:**

Lord, we praise you and thank you for the opportunity to die to our flesh and to live by Your Spirit. We focus on the purpose for which you have created us, we humble ourselves and seek your will not our own, we offer our lives to you as living sacrifices. In the Holy name of Jesus, Amen.

### **Week 3, Day 5**

Since He is the One who is coming again, He gives us a command of how we are to treat one another.

*Hebrews 10:24-25 "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching."*

Despite busy schedules and commitments to our work life it is important to give meeting with other Christians a high priority. Attending a church service, being involved in a small group or participating in a missions trip can all encourage us in our walk with the Lord.

Encourage a friend or family member today by reminding them of God's unending love for them. Before the day comes when we see God face to face, He calls us to continually motivate one another to seek Him in all we do.

#### **Prayer:**

Lord, it is only through your grace that we have been saved. Help us in this time to seek you in prayer amongst others, in studying your Word, and fellowshiping together. When we gather in your name, you give us strength and endurance to face whatever life may bring our way. In Jesus name, Amen.

### **Week 3, Day 6**

He is the One who is coming again, He gave us a new command on how we should treat one another.

*John 13:33-34 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."*

We often think of 'love' as a feeling, but Gary Chapman describes 'love' as an action in his book 'the Five Love Languages.' Think about the actions that Jesus took on our behalf doing the will of the Father instead of His own will. He humbled Himself and washed His disciples' feet, He came to serve and not to be served, and He stood in our place to take the punishment for our sin upon Himself. When He says, 'as I have loved you, you also are to love one another,' He is inviting us, commanding us, to follow Him in sacrificially serving one another in action regardless of our feelings.

#### **Prayer:**

Father God, we love you, we praise you and we thank you for the example of love in action that Jesus has given us. Help us to love others in the way that you have loved us. Help us to be your witness and ambassadors of your good news to the broken world in which we live. In Jesus' Holy name we pray, Amen.



### **Week 3, Day 7**

He is the One who is coming again, and He gives us a wonderful promise!

*Revelation 21:4 "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."*

It's so easy in this world to lose sight of the fact that God promises us a restored reality. A world in which there is no lying, cheating, stealing or pain. Rather a place of pure joy where one can experience a relationship to God as He intended it to be – intimate, loving and free of sin.

#### **Prayer:**

Lord, as we wait expectantly for the day you come and make all things new on this earth, help us to keep our sights set on you. Through the Scriptures may we be reminded this sin-filled world is not our ultimate home. It is through the power of your Holy Spirit that we seek to do your will with the assurance of your second coming. In the holy name of Jesus, Amen.

# **WEEK 4**

**October 8 to 15**

**“Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!”**

**Psalm 150:6**

## Week Four

### “Praise Him!”

#### **Week 4, Day 1**

*1 Timothy 1:17 “Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen”*

#### A good reminder

My usual morning routine is sitting on the sofa with a big cup of tea while I start to read “the our daily bread” devotional of that day. I meditate on the scripture and sometimes my mind is wandering of to other events in my life. I admit, I am not perfect. It really can be a struggle to stay focused. I pick up my bible to read some chapters and end it with prayer as the amen is spoken....off preparing for a work day. Not too long ago I had Sally, a sister from church, to sleepover. In the morning. I discovered my tea went out so I stumbled in the living room to search for tea in a storage closet. Sally opened her eyes and said, “let us give thanks and praise to God. I don’t want to only ask to give me, give me, give me God. I think God likes it when we thank Him”. So with some teabags in my hand, I sat next to her and listened when she started to express what was on her heart. She praised and thanked Him for many things, she confessed to God; she doesn’t want to ask for things because “You already know what I need from afar.” Another thing she mentioned was that she thanked him for the good and the bad, “for you are a God who knows”.

It was a good reminder for me:

1. Everything and every good thing comes only from and through Him.
2. A confidence and trust was spoken; He will provide for our needs.
3. He has good and bad ultimately in His hands! We belong to Him who has all authority.

***Prayer:***

Lord we praise You, for through the sacrifice of your son Jesus; we are saved and belong to you! We praise You for knowing us better than we know ourselves. Lord we praise You for You reign overall. Help us today to yield to you as Lord over all! You deserve all glory and honor. Amen

## **Week 4, Day 2**

*Psalm 8:1 - Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!*

### How great is our God

I was in the Netherlands to visit family, but my main mission was to surprise my son Manoaah for his 23rd Birthday. Weeks before, I had been praying for ideas to bless him but nothing particular came; up only a few things crossed my mind. Like bringing his two guitars with me or stopping just before the border to go to Edeka and buy some of his favorite typical German foods.

Birthdays in our family are often chaotic, with loud talking, lots of laughing and many helping hands with whatever needs to be done. The food was good, the gifts made him happy, the conversations lively. A special warm summer evening was coming to an end. Some were sitting on the patio in the garden, some at the table with the door wide open when my oldest sister said: "Let's sing How Great is our God". It was late and I was worried for the neighbors but actually it was nice to end a day like that, so we started off singing. The next morning my sister received a message from her neighbor. She wrote: "it was beautiful - I was laying in bed with the window open hearing how great is our God". My sister send back a message and apologized for ending a birthday celebration so late. "Oh no" she answered: "I slept so good on this, it was a real blessing!" Thinking about this later, I imagined how reaffirming this must have been for her neighbor, laying in bed looking at the dark sky while she went to sleep and pulled the blanket with these truthful words over her.

### **Prayer:**

We praise you for the splendor of Your majesty. We praise you for you are the only true King. You watch our rising up and our laying down. We can lay down in peace knowing that from age to age You reign. How great you are! We praise you for the gift of song to exalt You with. We thank you for such an abundance of gifts and provision. Amen

### **Week 4, Day 3**

*Genesis 1:31 "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day"*

#### Culture Eden

I heard an interview with Johannes Härtl; he is a German philosopher, theologian and motivational speaker. He wrote a book named "culture Eden". In this present age of high technology, we spend most of our time indoors, although we can connect easier with others through internet, isolation of people is increasing because we are more connected to computers, smartphones, television, and electrical games than to the reality around us. An arising concern also is that people become more restless and afraid to miss out on something. Johannes Härtl recommends us to spend more time in the nature as it is God's beautiful creation, it is there to enjoy. Through spending time in the nature, we can get connected with God. He says it has a healing, restoration aspect for our restless soul. He encourages us to cultivate with all our senses more awareness for His creation and block out for certain times our smartphones. After spending time hiking or sitting at a pond watching lilies or grass swaying their heads back and forth, I often enjoy the peacefulness and tranquility found through spending time in the nature. The fresh air, the height of the heavens, different kinds of landscapes and seasons, seeing living animals, insects or plants makes me wonder and be humble at the same time. I realize that I came with nothing in this world but am allowed to see and experience the beauty of His creation. I am a part of all that He has planned from the beginning. Almost immediately a shift takes place in my inner being. My soul lifts itself up in gratitude and in praise for His majesty and infinite wisdom.

#### **Prayer:**

We praise You as the Maker of all creation. We praise you for giving us the best. Help us to admire and appreciate the beauty of Your hands, nature and all living beings. Help us to spend time in the nature as a place of rest and restoration for our souls. Amen

## **Week 4, Day 4**

*Revelation 7:17 - "For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; 'he will lead them to springs of living water.' 'And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes'".*

### Sadness and Joy

We had a celebration of life fellowship in honor of the life of the late Victor Frimpong at our church. As the hospitality team had prepared the room, it soon was filled with visitors dressed in black and white; a custom practiced in Ghana. The color black for the sadness that is felt in the mourning process, white to celebrate life as Victor trusted Jesus as his Savior. We ate together and fellowshiped. At the end I observed close friends dancing in a circle around the widow and family. Dancing is an expressing of joy; at the same time the sight was very comforting to me. The widow was not totally alone and amidst the feeling of great loss the focus was directed towards life and eternity. We as Christians may feel intense sorrow over the loss of a loved one. We may go through times of crying; overwhelmed by the new normal and when we don't know how to go on, we grab a hold of Jesus and hold on.

Day after day may pass in sadness. It is His promise of life eternal and grace that sustains us through this chapter. This is how we grieve, but not like the world does. 1 Thessalonians 4:13

Let's meditate on God the giver of life here on earth and in heaven. I am so grateful for knowing this truth.

### **Prayer:**

We praise you God for You are the Alpha and the Omega. While we can experience sadness, You alone can give us lasting hope and joy that can carry us through the storms of life. We praise You for You will wipe away every tear! Amen

## **Week 4, Day 5**

*1 John 4:16 "And so we know and rely on the love God has for us"*

### Eternal love

When I am at my sister's place, I'm welcomed by Mini. Mini is a little Chihuahua with long soft hair. He has an extraordinary sweet face with light brown little cushions above his eyes. He has tiny little feet and his mouth seems to be smiling. He follows me wherever I go and is always nearby. When we leave the house and return after a few hours, he greets us and makes awful noises, it sounds like he is choking. This happens cause the excitement makes it difficult for him to breath. So seeing us is breath taking for Mini. He is like that with all of my siblings.

When I write this story, he softly touches me with his tiny feet and looks at me like: "pick me up, please". I just can't refuse him and I pick him up. I enjoy very much his company. He spreads love and wants to receive much love in return. When he sits at my lap a thought struck me. Sometimes I find it hard to imagine what eternity will be like, I know that it will be beyond good. We will be in a state of overflowing love and completeness. I dread, however, the thought of maybe working, loving with no end. Will I not get bored or tired? Mini helps me to understand this better. Loving Mini goes automatically; it doesn't take much, it doesn't make me tired or bored. The opposite is actually true. The dog helps me to stand still and enjoy the wonders of God. Probably in heaven it is like that. A flow of pure and perfect Love will come from the Father to me and I in return will love Him back through my praise and worship with no end!

### **Prayer:**

We praise You for all encompassing eternal love. We say holy holy holy is the Lamb, who is and is to come. We praise you for You are love, pure love and through your love You make us complete! We praise You! Amen



## **Week 4, Day 6**

Psalm 121:1 "I lift up my eyes to the mountains—where does my help come from?"

### *Young hearts run free*

Young hearts run free is a song of 1976 sung by Candi Staton. Although the story is about a bad relationship, the title makes me think about the young men, age 20-25 in my family. Four of them wanted to go out to a Rhythm and Blues club in Rotterdam. It included a three hour drive by car in the late midnight hours. I just didn't like it, and started praying. To discuss this with them seems fruitless. "Time has changed, bad things happens everywhere at anytime", are often the arguments expressed. Young hearts want to run free, I guess. I don't want to give up, so I talk with my siblings; now they get from six others warnings, guidance, discussions. The young men listen, but they go.

Before they leave, I tell them about making good choices and what choices can do to their spirit. They look at me and are quiet, but young hearts want to run free....! They leave while my siblings and I scream: "If this and this happens, go away don't fight, run away"!!! "Yeah heh" and the door falls into the lock.

Before I go to bed I kneel down and say: "Lord I can't do anything anymore, it is out of my control. Please be merciful, be the Father, please send your angels to guard their ways into those places, let the plans of the enemy fall. Thank you." And I sleep, knowing I can't change it.

The next day on our way to church my sister tells me they are home; she got a message. "Thank you Jesus" I say to myself, "What a privilege that I know You and that I could pray to You".

**Prayer:** We praise you Father; we can tell you everything and You listen. We praise you for You are God who is sovereign. We often feel helpless and weak. We praise You for You are the God who sees, therefore we are not alone in our struggles. When others don't know where their help comes from, we are privileged to run to Your arms! We thank You Jesus! Amen

## **Week 4, Day 7**

*Psalm 117 - "Praise the Lord, all you nations; extol him, all you peoples. For great is his love toward us, and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever. Praise the Lord!"*

### The Prayer Call

During the pandemic the world froze and many things couldn't be done anymore. It was a time of slowing down and seeking the Lord's will. The urge for prayer was felt by many and so the prayer call began.

Thursdays evenings at 19:00 hours, through Zoom, people meet to pray. Especially praying together is encouraged; it connects you more with God and with each other.

The participants come from different countries and continents. It is a blessing to experience and learn about different ways of praying. Mary from Kenia praises often the goodness and faithfulness of God. She mentions this regular through tracing back the months like "You have been good to us from January till August" or recalling the days from the week that have passed. Nelli from Syria often prays in storytelling and relates to biblical stories and ends in telling God how far much better He is. Mang Kwong from Malaysia has found a service she likes to be a part of. Mavis and Mavis, both from Ghana, are good examples of giving thanks and exalting the name of the Lord. Carla from the United States is co leading and also prays on a morning call with Sharon from India and Sally from Sierra Leone.

If you don't know what to pray, you can ask Him regular to fill you with His love and desire for Him, Wait and see what happens...

### **Prayer:**

We praise You for You are holy and sovereign and worthy to be praised! Lord, we praise You because nothing can compare with you! You sustained us from January 2023 till now. You blessed us with seen and unseen blessings. Help us to meditate on your faithfulness and goodness. Amen and amen!