



Welcome to the Time For Everything Pack . During the last 2 weeks services a PowerPoint has been shown to explain how we as a church can assist each

other to help us name the emotional impact of the pandemic, how it has affected our relationships and who we are now. The process will help us to get the words out of heads and share with those around us. If you wish to see the PowerPoint , there is a link on the website for it. Go to the Time for Everything tab. There are other resources that you can use, to support this pack



We aid recovery through sharing our experiences:

1. To help us acknowledge and process all that the pandemic has done to us.
2. To help us recognise how we have been changed and what it means to be in this changed world.
3. To help us listen to each other and grow again as a community.

There are many ways in which we can work together to aid recovery. The process will help us to get the words out of heads and share with those around us. We have come up with 4 ways you can join in. You don't have to do them all, feel free to participate in some or all of the activities.

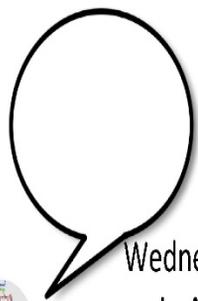


Self Reflection
This is included in this pack, there are supporting documents on the website to help us to reflect on the pandemic.

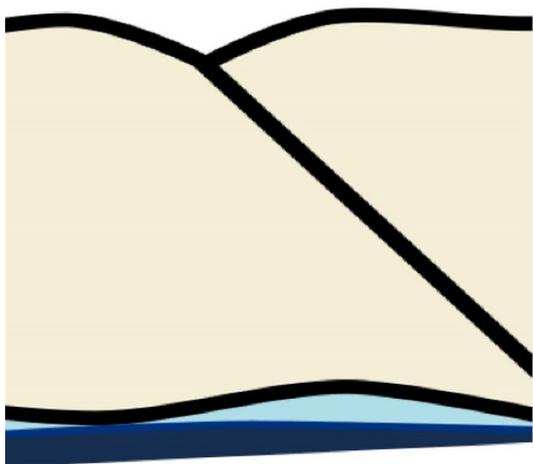


Gather as a group to talk and share our experiences of the pandemic.

TBC, possible date 4/9/21



Wednesday Mornings
In August 11-12 meet up in Church, have a brew and share our experiences.



Create a record of the pandemic, we have already started this with the Moor than a Square.

It would be great to have something that shows a full range of what we have experienced over this period. Send anything to the office, you wish to share.

The Worship Group



A Time or Everything.....

Recovery is important after an illness, a traumatic event or an unexpected challenge in life. It takes time, often longer than expected, and involves a process of engaging with our emotions, integrating our losses, and embracing our new reality. Healthy recovery includes:

- Remembering
- Reflecting
- Recuperating

This guide is to assist you in reflecting on your experience of the pandemic. Included are some extra resources to help you fill the different sections in. The pack is also on the website, where you can access further resources if you require.

There are 4 sections which have questions to help you, which address the areas that need to be explored to assist in a healthy recovery after trauma.

Thanksgiving and Lament are part of the remembering with thanks those who have served and cared for us. We also remember our losses and lament over the way the world is not as God would want it.

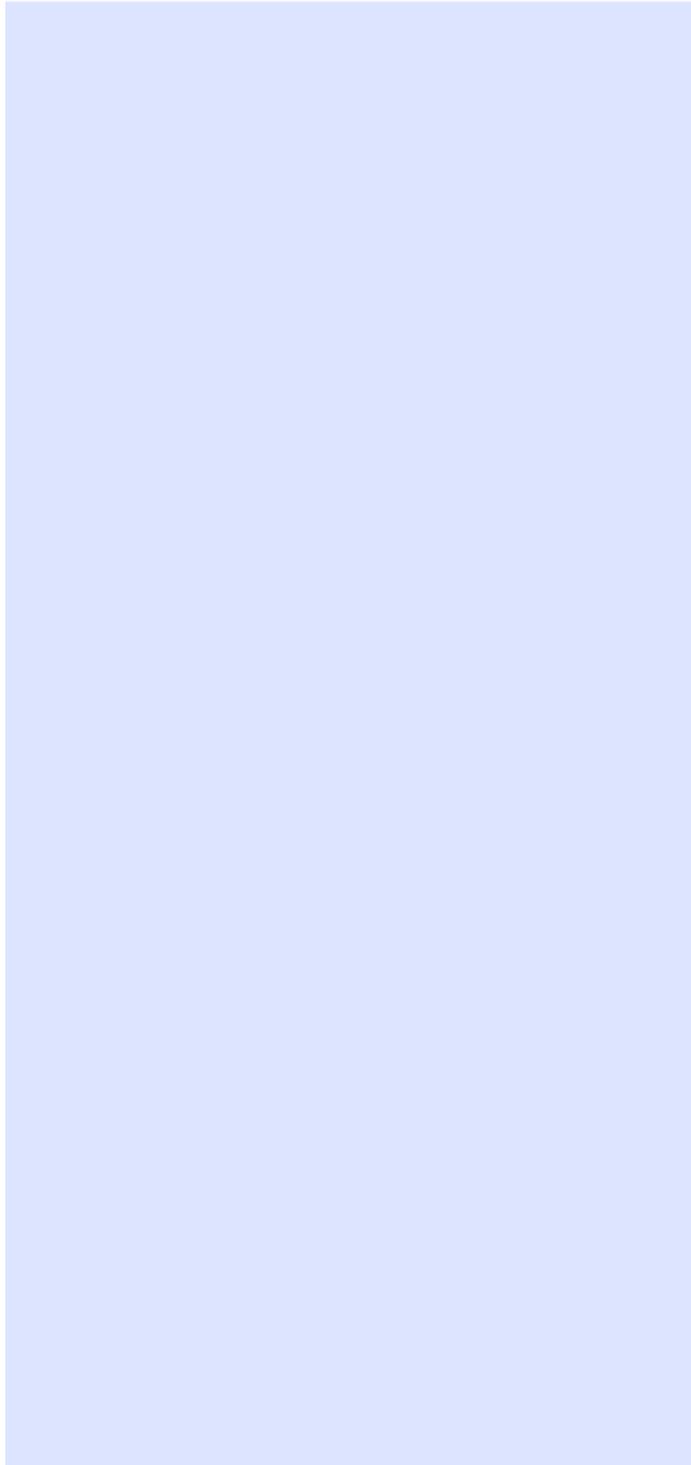
Learning, through reflecting on what we have experienced (good and bad) what have we learnt and what will we do differently post pandemic.

Prayer, what would it be good to think about in your praying over the next coming weeks.

Recuperating, will weave itself through the process and you start to look forward to things and restore you through this process.

THANKSGIVING

What are you thankful for? Think about small daily things, such as food, as well as bigger wider things, such as frontline workers.



Thanksgiving is embedded in Christian practice as a way of recognising all that God has given to us. Paul writes 'Give thanks in all circumstances' (1 Thessalonians 5:18). We don't give thanks for everything, but we do seek things to give thanks for in any situation. Interestingly, neuroscience shows that the brain is like velcro with negative experiences (they stick and are hard to release) and teflon with positive experiences (they slip off too easily). Taking time to give thanks helps them to stick.

PRACTICES

- Keep a gratitude list. Write down three things each night you are grateful for from the day.
- Use the prayer of Examen, a simple way to end the day.

PRAYING THE EXAMEN

A SIMPLE GUIDE FOR ALL AGES

The Examen

This simple guide offers a variety of ways of praying the Examen, for adults, children and young people, a quick two minute version, a 10-20 minute version, and a longer version reviewing the whole of life.

The Examen was created by Ignatius in the fifth century as a way of encouraging people to reflect on their day with God. He suggested it was done twice a day, but many people do it just at the same time each day (generally at the start, middle, or end of the day).

Originally it consisted of five movements or stages, which have been summarised in a variety of ways. I've drawn on a variety of these outlines to create the one below.

1. THANKSGIVING

Remember that God has created all things and that we are always on the receiving end of his gifts. Begin by looking over the day and see what arises that you are thankful for, both small and big things. Allow gratitude to take hold of you and express this to God.

2. ASK FOR THE SPIRIT/FOR GRACE

Before looking at the moments in the day when we did not act so well, we ask God to fill us with his Spirit so that the Spirit can lead us through this difficult soul-searching. Otherwise, we're liable to hide in denial, wallow in self-pity, or seethe in self-loathing. Therefore ask the Holy Spirit to show you what he wants you to see.

3. FINDING GOD IN ALL THINGS

Again look over the events of the day. This time ask

the Lord to show you where he has been present in your life, either in you or in others, and what he has been asking of you.

Look over your interior moods, feelings, urges, and movements, and see what stands out even slightly. Look for such things as joy, pain, turmoil, increase of love, anger, harmony, anxiety, freedom, enchainment, presence of God, isolation. In what general direction do you think you are being drawn by the Lord? How have you been responding to these experiences or situations that draw you towards the Lord and invite you to be more like him?

More particularly, what attitudes are manifest in these experiences? What do I really desire? Remember that your experience helps you to discover the underlying attitude, and your actions and choices flow from these attitudes. Is there any one place in your heart or any one area you are being asked to focus your attention on, to pray more seriously over, to take action on? This is where your energy needs to focus instead of on the many other things you think are important.

Ignatius spoke often of consolation and desolation, and this part of the examen is a way of getting in touch with these things. Freedom comes as we begin charting the desolations and consolations of our daily existence. Consolation is what is moving me toward God, toward living happy and healthy and holy and free. Desolation is what worries, frustrates, and diverts us from the goal of transformation in Christ. We know we are in desolation when there is a certain restlessness, listlessness, an 'Is this all there is to life?' tone and texture in our soul.



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Desolation may be caused by our not living up to the demands of discipleship. Desolation is not always disagreeable, and consolation is not always comfortable. Parents doing the hard work of disciplining and loving a recalcitrant teenager may not seem to be at peace, but they are in consolation. To know true consolation, we need to know our deepest, truest desires. The Examen can become the habitual work of discernment, paying attention to where we are moving and what is moving us in our relationship to God, others, and our deepest, truest selves.

4. THE GIFTS OF SORROW AND FORGIVENESS

Ask: where did I turn away from God? Seek forgiveness from the Lord for the moments you did not respond to his love. Do not be afraid to ask for the gift of an ever-deepening sorrow for not co-operating with him who loves you.

Take one aspect of life that is a bit off-track and strategise on how to rectify direction in the next 12 or 24 hours. Really doing something is the goal here.

5. HELP AND GUIDANCE FOR TOMORROW

Ask the Father for your needs for tomorrow. For example, you may need to pray to overcome something – or to accept your ‘thorn in the flesh’ – to persevere – to be more sensitive to the Lord’s activity in your life – to let go – to love more – to have a conversion in some area – and so on. There is nothing that can be done without God’s loving assistance and guidance, so ask, look for, trust and co-operate with the Father, Son and Spirit living within you.

A Short Version

This can be practised at any time during the day but is especially suitable as a final thought in bed before falling asleep. Some people do it while brushing their teeth using the timer on their electric toothbrush. One minute of giving thanks, one minute of saying sorry and asking for help. Although it is a short form, it incorporates the principles of the Examen into a regular, instinctive habit of self-awareness.

Of the things that I have done today:

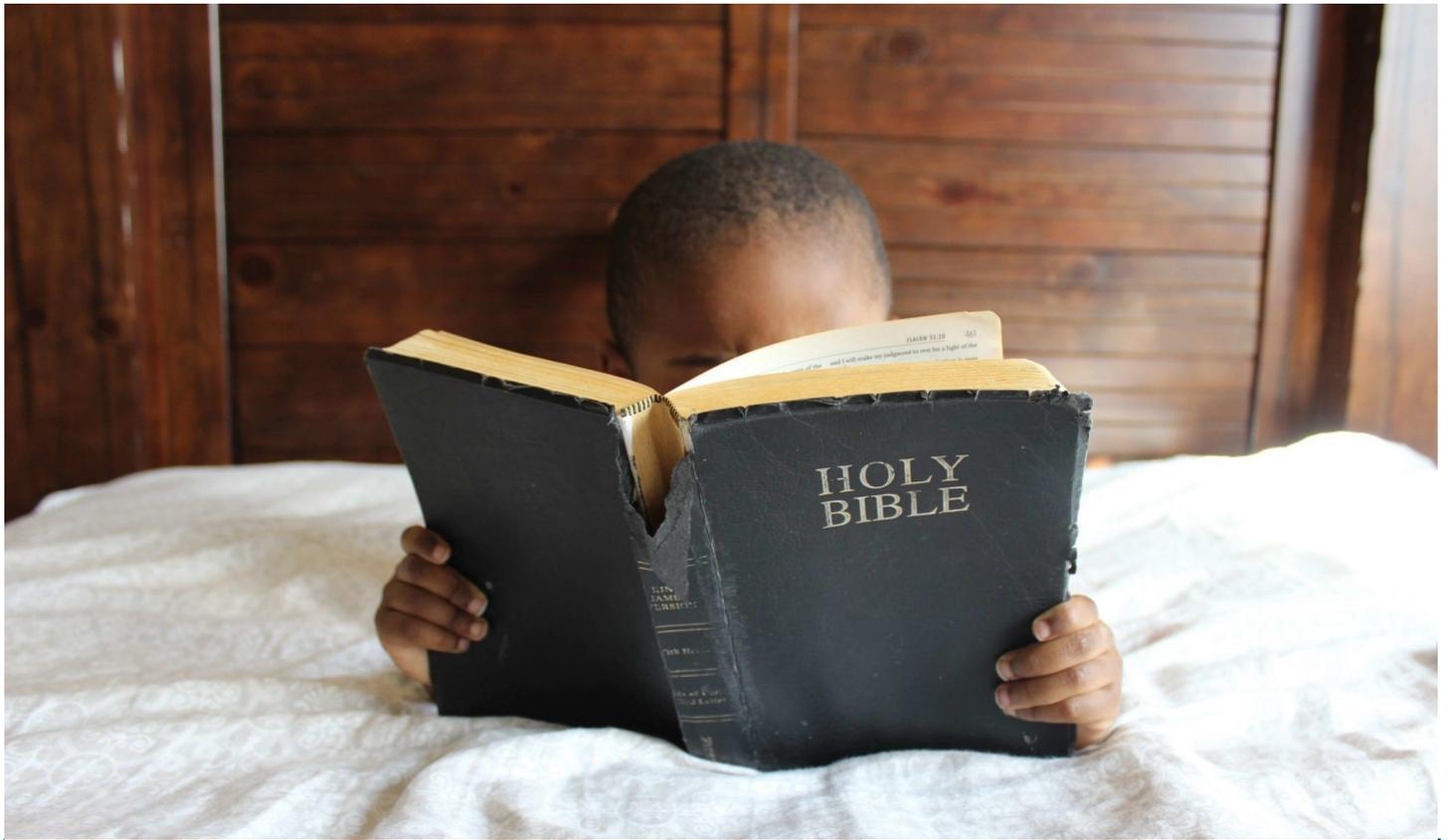
- Which do I now feel most content/happy about? I will thank God for these times.
- Which do I now feel most discomfort about? I will ask for God’s help to cope better with such situations in the future, and, where fitting, I will say that I am sorry.

A Version for Young Children

A simple way to prepare young children for a lengthier, more involved Examen is to begin with a daily ‘highs and lows’ check-in. The whole family can participate.

At the end of the day (perhaps over dinner), have each person share their ‘highs’ and ‘lows’ for the day: What was the best thing that happened today? What was the worst? As each person shares his or her highs and lows, have another person offer a prayer for whatever that person mentioned.

Explain that we can give the events of our days back to God in prayer. We can give the ‘highs’ back to God in the form of



our joy and thanks, and we can give the lows back to God by 'offering them up' – that is, uniting our suffering (no matter how small) with the suffering of Christ on the cross, so that God might take our suffering and turn it into something good, just as he did in the resurrection.

A Version for Older Children

- **Breathe** Be still and say hello to God. Breathe in deeply saying 'You are here God', breathe out saying 'I am with you.'
- **Give thanks** Think about the day – what are you thankful for? Thank God for it.
- **How do I feel?** Think about how you feel (you can think about it, imagine a picture or draw how you feel). Once you know how you are feeling share this with god.
- **Captured moment** Think about a moment of the day that stands out. Talk to God about it.
- **Look forward** Think about the next few hours/next ay, and choose to trust in God and be hopeful.

There is a [video](#) explaining this approach with a hand gesture for each stage, and downloadable card.

Various Ways to Remember the Examen

People use a variety of aide-memoires to practise the Examen, either as a whole or in part.

- **Replay** the day in order to recognise your emotions and God's presence with you. Ask: what happened today?
- **Rejoice** in all the good things of the day. Ask: where did I feel grace today? Where was God particularly present?
- **Repent** of the ways in which you did not follow Jesus wholeheartedly. Ask: where did I feel emotional pain today? Where did I sin?
- **Resolve** to live differently tomorrow, if need be. Ask: what help do I need from Jesus to help me live for him tomorrow?

Alternatively:

- **Presence** Stop. Breathe. Be here now. Let the sense of the nearness of God settle into your consciousness.
- **Praise** For who he is and what he has done.



- **Process** What's going on in your consciousness?
- **Penance** Ask God to reveal to you if there is anything that needs tweaking in your life.
- **Promise** Trust God's promises and ask for God's grace to live by them.

Examen of a Whole Life

Here is an example of how one could make an Examen of one's entire life. It is best made with pen and paper to hand. The basic principles of the Examen can be applied to any period of time – the preceding hour (as in the review of prayer), day, term, year... the time one has lived in the same place or done the same job... or one's entire life up till now.

- I begin from the desire to see my life as part of salvation history. As well as the external human history, there is another dimension – the story of God's work in me. On the one hand are the opportunities God has provided; on the other are my half-hearted responses. So I begin with thanking God for bringing me to where I now am.
- I want this examination to be as honest as possible. So I ask God for knowledge of the truth, including knowledge of my sins.
- This third point is the main part of the exercise. I make a note of the most important steps in my growing relationship with God (about eight is a good number). These steps, or stepping-stones, may be single events, or they may be periods of growth. They may be explicitly religious, or they may be connected to the human process of maturing that I did not think of in terms of God at the time. I make a brief note of each as it occurs to me. Afterwards I can order them chronologically, so I have an idea of the overall shape of my life. There may also be steps backward, or perhaps sideways. When I have done this I am in a position to see what in my life I want to thank God for. I take time over this, being grateful for all that now seems positive in my history. Only after I have done that do I look at the ways in which I have fallen short. Remembering the events that I am now grateful for, how could I have given more room in my life for the things that really matter?
- I express my sorrow for the ways in which I have sinned and the areas of my life in which there is still an element of sin.
- What priorities would I like to reaffirm for the future? Are there any practical steps I can take that would help redirect my life on better lines?
- I may close the exercise with the Lord's Prayer, which puts my request for forgiveness in the context of God's will for the world.

Taken from Margaret Hebblethwaite, St Ignatius – Finding God in All Things, Marshall, ISBN 0-00-628101-X.

James Lawrence
August 2020



LAMENT

What are you missing, longing for? This may be people or things you have lost, hopes that have been dashed or longings for a better future.

Lament is woven through the Christian tradition, rooted in the Psalms of lament, for example [Psalm 42](#). It involves honest recollection of how we are feeling, and a passionate expression to God of the pain and difficulty that we are experiencing.

PRACTICES

- Pray aloud the Psalms of lament (e.g. 3, 6, 7, 13, 17, 22, 28, 31, 32, 35, 42, 43, 51, 52, 54). Allow these prayers to become your own.
- Write your own prayer of lament, and pray it daily.

Prayer Everywhere

Prayer Tool: How To Lament

What?

Lamenting is prominent in the Bible. This prayer tool will show the significance of using lament scriptures in our own lives.

Why?

"I am beginning to see that much of praying is grieving" Henri Nouwen

Bible references:

"Oh that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people" Jeremiah 9:1

"Evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint and moan" Psalm 55:17

A quick introduction to Lamenting

The most helpful aid to our prayer life during seasons of unanswered prayer, particularly those that bring with them a surge of acute pain, is the genre of Bible passages known as "Lament".

In another Prayer Tool, "Praying the Psalms", the Psalms of Lament are highlighted briefly -and this prayer tool will unpack them further:

Unanswered prayer implies the enduring of some of type of loss which ultimately leads to the processing of grief and disappointment. Hopes and expectations have been unfulfilled, loved ones have been lost, dreams have been smashed. God hasn't come through as you thought He might.

It is here we must remember that pain is not the enemy. Pain is pain. Pain needs to be expressed, for pain that is not expressed can never be transformed, and pain that is not transformed will be transmitted.

The Lament Passages

One of the most under-valued and misunderstood parts of scripture are the lament passages most notable in the Psalms, Job, Jeremiah and Lamentations.

Jeremiah expresses gut-wrenching anguish in his own book and through Lamentations. Job faces and experiences many unanswered questions and tormented wrestling. And over one third of the Psalms are full-throated, no-holds-barred songs of disappointment and searing pain.¹

“This is why I weep and my eyes overflow with tears. No one is near to comfort me, no one to restore my spirit. My children are destitute because the enemy has prevailed.” Lamentations 1:16

“Save me, O God, for the waters have come up to my neck. I sink in the miry depths, where there is no foothold. I have come into the deep waters; the floods engulf me. I am worn out calling for help; my throat is parched. My eyes fail, looking for my God.” Psalm 69: 1-3

“What did I do to deserve this? ... I expected good but evil showed up. I looked for light but darkness fell. My stomach’s in a constant churning, never settles down. Each day confronts me with more suffering. I walk under a black cloud. The sun is gone. I stand in the congregation and protest. I howl with the jackals” Job 30:24-29 (The Message)

Do it: How to Lament

It’s a travesty that many of us have sidelined these passages in our personal devotion and our corporate worship, particularly when they were gifted to us to help us through the many days of disappointment, grief and loss we all inevitably face.

The lament passages of holy scripture are there to sit with us in our pain. Though it appears all trace of God’s presence has left, these passages mysteriously convey to us the truth that God is not simply trying to rush us out of our pain but rather first and foremost be with us in it.

He is present with us – experiencing our pain, carrying our sorrows, listening to our rage, understanding our doubts.

¹ Find a specific list of Lament Psalms in the Prayer Tool “Praying the Psalms”

The Old Testament writers were made of stern stuff. Rather than try to control or ignore the pain, they encourage us to lean towards it, even when it seems like insurmountable grief. They call us to face our grief, express it wholeheartedly in the presence of a Holy God because they know that even though it feels like we have lost our lives, we don't have to lose our souls too.

In his book, *Luminous Dark*, Alain Emerson describes how he processed the death of his beloved wife Lindsay when she was only 23, and unpacks his discovery of the lament passages:

“As I look back on those survival days, I remember the newfound appreciation I developed for the integrity and honesty of the scriptures. It was strange to me but I began to experience a kind of holy connection, a recognition that the Bible made space for such outbursts of utter hopelessness and pain. Without rushing me from this place, the words of sacred scripture rested on me and gave voice to my despair.”

Don't rush through the Psalms of Lament, even if you are having a good day. Instead allow your soul to be shaped by these holy words so that when the difficult days come, you have a well-developed go-to prayer language to help you through.

If you are in a dark season of unanswered prayer, unsure how to pray or express your anger or disappointment to God, know there is an invitation to bring all that is inside you to the Father.

Receive the lament passages of the Bible as a rare treasure helping you speak out holy words when you don't have your own. As you do you will slowly become aware – contrary to how impossible it currently seems – that God can do something with the brokenness of your life beyond what you can imagine. He will turn what seems irreversible into a message of resilient hope. But that resilience will only be formed in us after we have prayed ourselves through the process of pain. That's why the holy laments of the Bible are God's gift to us.

Books on Lament

- *A Grief Observed* - C.S. Lewis
- *Luminous Dark* - Alain Emerson
- *God on Mute* - Pete Greig

LEARNING

What have you learned? What does God want you to learn through this experience that perhaps you can only learn at a time like this: about God, about life, about yourself? What will you do differently as a result of the pandemic?

God specialises in redemption. Out of difficult times, hard places, struggles and suffering, God longs to lead us to greater dependence on him, and deepening Christ-likeness (Romans 5:1-5, 2 Corinthians 12:7-10).

PRACTICES

- Journal to aid reflection. It doesn't have to be done everyday, or even written; take a look at this guide.
- Talk through your experience of the pandemic with someone, inviting them to ask questions and to listen carefully.



JOURNALING – A BRIEF GUIDE

Hints and Tips on How to Journal

A journal isn't primarily a diary of events, but rather a personal tool to aid reflection. Through journaling we monitor what is going on in our lives. Like all tools it helps to find the one that most fits our purposes.

- Some keep a journal on a daily basis, but others do it weekly, monthly, or occasionally.
- Some use a computer or tablet, others use paper and pen, often buying a particularly nice 'journal' (and some even using a particular pen!).
- Some write prose, others write down bullet points.
- Some draw, paint or sketch, others write poetry, Psalms or songs.
- Some write prayers (in fact some write all their prayers), others copy out key quotes.
- Some take five minutes, others much longer.

There is no one way of doing it, the key is to find a way that works for you.

Here are some suggestions of what to cover in a journal:

- **Meditation on the Scriptures** What is God saying to me at this time and what am I going to do about it?
- **Reflection on life** What am I enjoying/struggling with? Why? What am I learning?

- **Self-reflection on our mood, attitudes, feelings, health, stress, dreams** What I've thought and felt, the highs and lows of the day, ways I've experienced change within myself.
- **A record of spiritual experiences** Ways I've been aware of God's presence, what this might mean.
- **Working through relational issues** How to engage with a particular person, why I struggle in particular relationships, coming to terms with a bereavement.
- **Saying things to God** Hopes, longings, dreams, worries, anxieties, fears.
- **Pondering problems** Decisions I'm concerned about, discerning God's perspective on life and seeking his will for the future.

You may also like to use the following four questions:

- What is the next step in my relationship with God?
- What is the next step in the development of my character?
- What is the next step in my relational life?
- What is the next step in my work?

'AN UNREFLECTED
LIFE IS NOT
WORTH LIVING.'
SOCRATES



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THE 22 QUESTIONS OF JOHN WESLEY'S HOLY CLUB

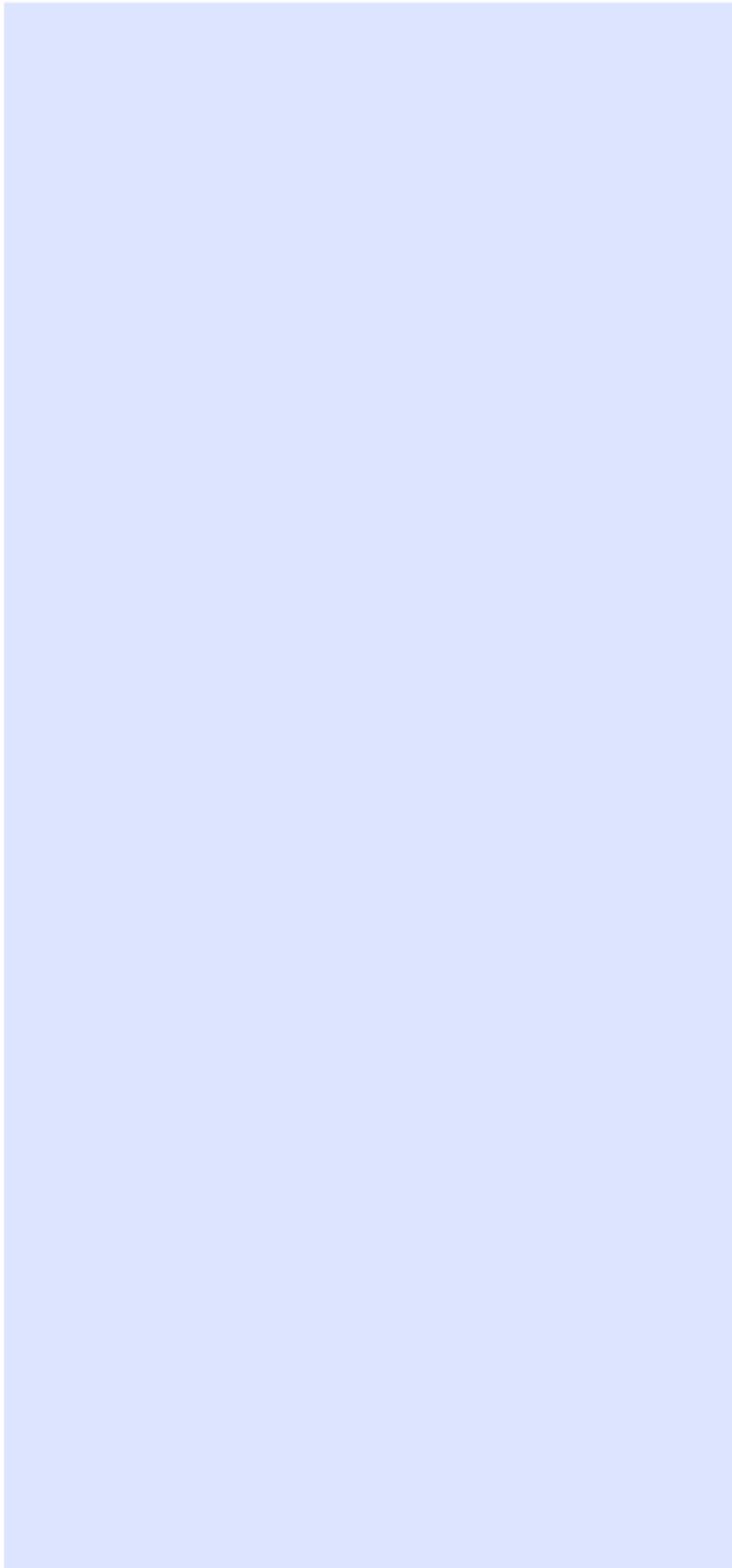
Over 200 years ago when Charles and John Wesley were students at Oxford University, they started a small group that met for regular prayer, Bible study, and discipleship. In their private devotions, they would use these questions to 'methodically' examine their spiritual lives to help them be spiritually accountable in the faith and encourage growth in their commitment to Christ. This became the beginning of the Methodist movement.

John Wesley asked himself these questions every day and recorded his responses in a journal in order that he could grow spiritually. How might a commitment to this kind of honest examination of your spiritual life sharpen your commitment to Christ? How might this kind of spiritual accountability impact the mission of Christ in the world?

1. Am I consciously or unconsciously creating the impression that I am better than I really am? In other words, am I a hypocrite?
2. Am I honest in all my acts and words, or do I exaggerate?
3. Do I confidentially pass on to another what was told to me in confidence?
4. Can I be trusted?
5. Am I a slave to dress, friends, work or habits?
6. Am I self-conscious, self-pitying or self-justifying?
7. Did the Bible live in me today?
8. Do I give it time to speak to me every day?
9. Am I enjoying prayer?
10. When did I last speak to someone else about my faith?
11. Do I pray about the money I spend?
12. Do I go to bed on time and get up on time?
13. Do I disobey God in anything?
14. Do I insist upon doing something about which my conscience is uneasy?
15. Am I defeated in any part of my life?
16. Am I jealous, impure, critical, irritable, touchy or distrustful?
17. How do I spend my spare time?
18. Am I proud?
19. Do I thank God that I am not like other people?
20. Is there anyone whom I fear, dislike, disown, criticize, hold a resentment toward or disregard?
21. Do I grumble or complain constantly?
22. Is Christ real to me?

PRAYER

What would it be good to think about in your praying over the coming weeks? People, situations, and concerns - local and global.

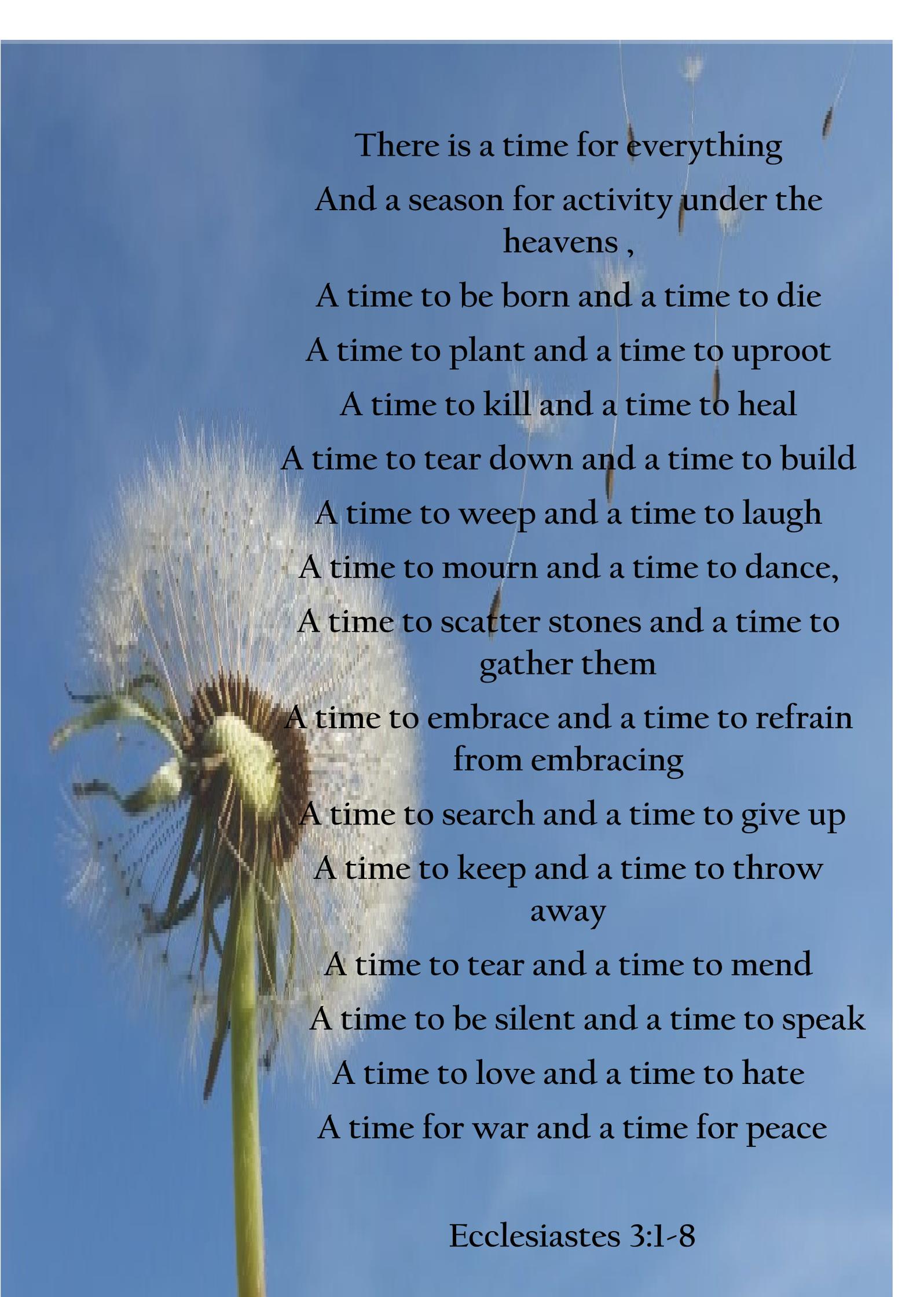


In prayer we bring all of who we are to all of who God is. We also bring all that is going on in our lives and the world around us to the one who is creator and sustainer of all things.

For resources to help you pray try [learning to pray](#) or [simple ways to pray](#), a toolshed of [30 ways to pray](#), and Justin Welby's short [video](#) based course. You could also try the [Lectio 365 App](#).

PRACTICES

- Take 15 minutes a day to read some of the Bible and pray. This can be done almost anywhere: in a quiet place, during your commute, out walking the dog.
- Try [Bible in a year](#) as a great way to structure your Bible reading.



There is a time for everything
And a season for activity under the
heavens ,
A time to be born and a time to die
A time to plant and a time to uproot
A time to kill and a time to heal
A time to tear down and a time to build
A time to weep and a time to laugh
A time to mourn and a time to dance,
A time to scatter stones and a time to
gather them
A time to embrace and a time to refrain
from embracing
A time to search and a time to give up
A time to keep and a time to throw
away
A time to tear and a time to mend
A time to be silent and a time to speak
A time to love and a time to hate
A time for war and a time for peace

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8