

Lenten Prayer Group Guide

Week 2

There are four sections to this guide in addition to the option to listen to or sing a song. Plan to spend about a quarter of your time on each section, adjusting accordingly whether or not you choose to use the song, which is between the third and fourth prayer sections this week.

Feel free to print out this guide to give to the people in your group. It is also available on the website under the Lenten Prayer Event.

Also, it is important that you make sure that everyone understands at the beginning of each prayer time that anything said during the time is confidential and should not be shared outside the group without permission.

Praise

We start with praise because it helps us to focus on God's character and tune into His presence with us.

Begin by reading aloud the following scripture.

Most of the crowd spread their garments on the road ahead of him, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. Jesus was in the center of the procession, and the people all around him were shouting,

“Praise God for the Son of David!

Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

Praise God in highest heaven!”

Matthew 21:8-9 (NLT)

Here we see the people shouting, announcing, declaring, and singing! They are laying down at Jesus' feet what they have—their cloaks—or whatever they have access to—the branches—all for God's glory. This is an outpouring of worship, making a general fuss over Jesus!

Let's take some time to make a fuss over Jesus! Make sure each person in the group gets a chance to tell Jesus just how wonderful they think He is.

Consecration

We have learned that consecration means to devote or set aside someone or something for a purpose. When we set ourselves apart for God, it inevitably involves sacrifice. It usually means giving up things that our world sees as normal or acceptable in order to make room for that which is better spiritually. Jordan Seng says in his book *Miracle Work*, “For heaven to gain space in us, the world must lose.”

Please read the following story which takes place during Passion week.

Meanwhile, Jesus was in Bethany at the home of Simon, a man who had previously had leprosy. While he was eating, a woman came in with a beautiful alabaster jar of expensive perfume made from essence of nard. She broke open the jar and poured the perfume over his head.

Some of those at the table were indignant. "Why waste such expensive perfume?" they asked. "It could have been sold for a year's wages and the money given to the poor!" So they scolded her harshly.

But Jesus replied, "Leave her alone. Why criticize her for doing such a good thing to me? You will always have the poor among you, and you can help them whenever you want to. But you will not always have me. She has done what she could and has anointed my body for burial ahead of time. I tell you the truth, wherever the Good News is preached throughout the world, this woman's deed will be remembered and discussed."

Mark 14:3-9 (NLT)

This was a costly sacrifice. "Whatever the specific act of consecration might be, it must be truly costly," writes Seng, "otherwise there's no serious contest and no ground gained." King David felt the same way. He is known for having refused to take land and animals which he intended for sacrifice to God without having paid for them; he would not give God something that cost him nothing (2 Samuel 24:18-25).

What does this story and these thoughts stir in you? Any desires? Any fears? Give everyone in the group a chance to talk to God about what is stirring inside them and to invite Him to work in us.

Confession

Here is another story which occurred during the week leading up to Jesus' crucifixion.

Please read the following aloud.

While Jesus was in the Temple, he watched the rich people dropping their gifts in the collection box. Then a poor widow came by and dropped in two small coins.

"I tell you the truth," Jesus said, "this poor widow has given more than all the rest of them. For they have given a tiny part of their surplus, but she, poor as she is, has given everything she has."

Luke 21:1-4 (NLT)

When we give something to God such as our finances, our time, or our efforts, it can be tempting to look around and compare our gift with those that others are giving (or not giving). We may be tempted to envy or entertain feelings of inadequacy because someone else's gift looks "bigger" than ours. Or we may find ourselves looking down on someone else, judging their gift which looks "smaller" than ours. This story reminds us that we do not see as God sees.

Now, spend some time as a group confessing to God when you have given in to either of these temptations and asking for His help to avoid them in the future.

Song *(optional)*

Consider worshiping God with one of the following songs. Click on the song title to hear the song.

We Fall Down

We fall down
We lay our crowns
At the feet of Jesus
The greatness of
Mercy and love
At the feet of Jesus

And we cry holy, holy, holy
We cry holy, holy, holy
We cry holy, holy, holy
Is the lamb

Source: LyricFind; Songwriters: Chris Tomlin; We Fall Down lyrics ©
Capitol CMG Publishing

Jesus Have It All

Verse 1:
Jesus, have my heart, my will, my soul
Jesus, have my hopes, my dreams, my world
With joy, I lay it down
With joy, I cast my crowns
Jesus, have it all

Verse 2:
To You, I bring my praise, my lips, my song
A living sacrifice as one reborn
Your life is now my own
Your will is what I want
Jesus, have it all

Chorus:
Jesus, have it all
Jesus, have it all
To You belongs the glory
The praise of all the world
Jesus, have it all
Jesus, have it all
All blessing and all honor
All majesty and awe
Jesus, have it all

Verse 3:
Jesus, have Your church, Your love, Your bride
The joy for which You freely gave Your life
Radiant in white
Washed and purified
Jesus, have us all

Verse 4:
Jesus, have Your worth, Your due, Your sum
The praise of every nation, tribe, and tongue
Let all that has been made
Glorify Your name
Jesus, have it all

Source: Musixmatch; Songwriters: Jeremy Riddle

Asking

Mark 12:30 (NIV) says, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength."

Here are some ways to think about these different categories:

Heart = our affections and emotions

Soul = our devotion and passion

Mind = our intellect and thoughts

Strength = our resources and gifts

Consider these questions as you formulate your prayers. Which of these comes easiest for you? Which do you find most challenging? Which one comes most naturally to our congregation? Where do we need to grow as a church body?

Take some time asking God to help us and our church to be better at loving Him with our whole selves.