

# SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER - May 16, 2021

PRELUDE

WELCOME

SONG

INVOCATION

Life-giving God, your love and light guides us on the path of courage, compassion, generosity, and grace.  
We seek to follow your transformative love that turns sorrow into joy, and despair into hope.  
O God, help us embrace your guiding love that calls us to live as your faithful witnesses, who reflect your grace and redemptive love.

God, our open hearts to receive your gracious love, and strengthen us to carry the Good News of your healing power found in the light, love and life of Jesus the Christ. Amen

SCRIPTURE READING      [John 17](#)

REFLECTION

PASTORAL PRAYER - THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

SONG

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

What difference does it make to overhear Jesus praying for us? How might we hear Jesus' words differently because we are able to hear them for ourselves? How might we understand prayer in a new way? It really is nothing short of astonishing to envisage this passage as a model for prayer. In the Gospel of John there is no request "Teach us how to pray," followed by the Lord's Prayer. We might imagine that this is the Lord's Prayer according to John. Karoline Lewis - (Commentary on John) - Fortress Press

# FAMILY CORNER

## **Last Sunday of Easter- Week of May 16, 2021**

Begin your devotion time by praying this prayer: Merciful God, through your son Jesus we learn how to walk in the way of love. Open our eyes to see the needs of the world around us, and receive our prayers. Amen.

Reflect on the Way of Love together: This week's practice on the Way of Love is PRAY. In what prayer practices do you engage at home? What new prayer practice can you try this week?

### **Adult and Small Child**

Read: John 17:6-19

Reflect: Praying together is a powerful experience and it's something I miss deeply about worshipping in-person on Sunday mornings with my church. I feel connected to people with whom I pray and am reminded that we are all in this messiness of life together. Even when we go to church online, we pray for ourselves and we pray for the world; we pray for those we love and those we struggle to love. One of the important things we do as Christians is pray, but not just on Sunday morning. We are a people of prayer who are called to share our Sunday morning experiences on other days and with other people and in other places.

Praying out in the world away from the safety of church can be scary and Jesus knows we'll need his help to do it. In this passage Jesus asks God to gift us protection we need to be his followers out in the world. Jesus says that he guarded his disciples while they were ministering together and now that he's leaving, he needs God the Father to take over. Jesus loves his followers so much that he asks God to protect us like a shepherd protects their sheep.

Respond: This passage invites us as Jesus' followers to share God's generous love with the whole world. Sharing something with the world is a tall order, but what if we started with the people who live on our street?

This week, take a prayer walk down your street or through your apartment building to say a prayer for your neighbors. As you pass each house or door, pray for specific needs if you know them, like healing for neighbors who are sick, employment for those who are without work, patience for students in virtual school. Pray for your neighbors who lie alone. Pray for neighbors whose names you do not know, that God might bless and protect them, too.

### **Adult and Elementary**

Read: John 17:6-19

Reflect: In the Gospel of John, there are dozens of times when Jesus says "I am" to make his identity clear. In seven of those instances, Jesus uses a metaphor to describe himself, and some of those may be familiar: "I am the good shepherd" and "I am the bread of life," for example. Why this focus? The author of the fourth Gospel wanted to emphasize that Jesus is fully divine and fully human, both God and the revelation of God. Jesus is God, but not God the Father. In other words, within the mysterious Trinity there is unity and distinctiveness. Our passage today invites us to continue to explore God's name and relationship with Jesus. This is part of Jesus' final prayer before the crucifixion, and we hear what Jesus has done for and hopes for God's people. Make a list of all of the verbs that describe what God has done for Jesus, and another list of what Jesus has done for God's people. What do you notice about the relationship between God the Father and God the Son? Do these lists offer clues about what Jesus followers ought to do when we are sent into the world?

Respond: The unity between the Father and Son that Jesus describes is natural because God is perfect. Humans live in a broken world, one marked by the sins of racism, classism, sexism, xenophobia and other injustices. Before we can achieve unity, or anything close to it, we must tell the truth about ourselves and the world, apologize for the harm we have done, and work to repair what is broken. A prayer that can help us is called the Examen, a prayer to review your day and discern God's guidance for the future. There are different methods for practicing this prayer, but essentially there are five steps: Rest in God's presence. Give thanks for the day's gifts. Review the day and pay attention to your feelings. Pick one part of the day and pray about it. Look ahead to the next day. Where is God calling you?

### **Adult and Youth**

Read: John 17:6-19

Reflect: Our Way of Love practice this week is pray. When we pray, we dwell intentionally with God. This practice is directly reflected in the reading – Jesus is praying for his disciples – for God to protect them while they do God's work in the world. As you read, you can feel how strongly Jesus cares for his people; how much love and teaching Jesus put into them. This is a prime example of dwelling intentionally with God. Every bit of Jesus' attention seems to be put into this prayer. Have you ever

felt a moment like that? Where you felt so connected to God through prayer or reflection? Share about a time like this with your family. If you don't have one that's ok – share about any time when you felt strongly connected to God.

Respond: Take as little or as much time as you would like for this activity. Remove distractions from the space you are in; maybe bring the lights down or light a candle. Start off by thinking of people that are important to you or ideas that you are passionate about. Then, start to talk to God about them. Maybe this is asking for guidance or protection. Maybe this is thanking God. Wherever your mind takes you in prayer, go with it and dwell intentionally with God. When you finish, leave the space so that others who are still praying can continue without distraction.

### **Adult and Adults**

Read: John 17:6-19

Reflect: This passage in John's gospel offers us one of the most tender insights into the heart and love of Jesus for his friends and disciples. It is Jesus' own prayer of intercession to God on behalf of his dearest friends. While we call the portions of Matthew 6 and Luke 11 "The Lord's Prayer," in some sense this prayer in the garden before Jesus's arrest is an even closer look into the praying spirit and loving heart of Jesus. In this prayer we can see a few key themes. First, his prayer brings others to his conversation with God, with loving attention and thanksgiving for them. Jesus then acknowledges that this little community is connected because of God's love for all of them. He prayed for their protection and spiritual growth. Finally, Jesus prayed for the ministry that his friends were being called to do, that they might be faithful and remember the bigger picture of God's work in the world. This structure of Jesus' prayer can also be used in our own prayers for our communities, churches, family, and friends.

Respond: This week, try out this pattern of prayer in John 17:

Begin by deciding who you want to pray for. This might be an ongoing area of prayer in your life, or holy coincidence might bring someone to mind.

Bring that person or persons to God with loving attention and thanks.

Acknowledge and honor that your relationships with them are a gift from God.

Pray for their protection and spiritual growth.

Pray that God would give them support and they would be faithful to the work and ministry God is calling them to do.