

Prayer Guide January 2022 - Part 1

(Content is used by permission from **Lectio 365**, a devotional app.)

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Lord, as this year draws to an end, please help me to be still. I am opening my ears to hear You now, quietly preparing my heart for the wonder of a new year.

I rejoice in God's guidance today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 25...

*Show me the right path, O Lord; point out the road for me to follow.
Lead me by your truth and teach me, for you are the God who saves me.
All day long I put my hope in you.
Remember, O Lord, your compassion and unfailing love, which you have shown from long ages past.*

Psalm 25:4-6 (NLT)

I pause to be still in God's presence.

I become aware of my thoughts; especially the things that are distracting and disturbing me.

Lord, I offer You my thinking, and I ask You to give me peace.

I notice my emotions; especially the feelings that are affecting my mood.

Lord, I offer You all that I am feeling right now, and I ask You to give me joy.

I notice my body; especially the places where I can feel tension and stress.

Lord, I breathe slowly and deeply once again. I set myself at rest in Your presence, and I ask You to make me whole.

- ***How do I feel about 2022?***
- ***What am I looking forward to?***
- ***What am I hoping for?***
- ***Am I anxious about anything?***
- ***I take a few moments to talk with God about how I'm feeling.***

Lord, what are You asking of me this year? How do You want me to be different? Is there some new spiritual discipline or practice that You're inviting me to develop?

Lord, I ask You to give me a verse from the Bible or a word or a story for 2022. Speak, Lord, Your servant is listening. (1 Samuel 3:10)

As I read Paul's encouragement to the church in Philippi, I open my ears to hear what God might want to say to me about the year ahead...

Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 3:13-14 (NIVUK)

What goal or prize is God inviting me to 'press on' towards this coming year?

Yielding Prayer

Jesus, I lay everything about the coming year before You. I fix my eyes on You and You alone. You are both the author and the perfect of faith. I yield to the story that You are writing in and through my life.

Yielding Promise

I am grateful for the assurance in the Apostle Paul's letter to the church in Rome that, 'in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.' (Romans 8:28, NIVUK) Even when I don't perceive it, God is at work in my life.

Prayer Guide January 2022 – Part 2

(Content is used by permission from **Lectio 365**, a devotional app.)

I pause again to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Loving Father, I still my soul now and remember that You are here with me, You are here in me, You are here for me. Lord Jesus, I worship You. Holy Spirit, I welcome You.

I choose to rejoice in God's goodness today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 100...

*Shout with joy to the Lord, all the earth!
Worship the Lord with gladness.
Come before him, singing with joy.
Acknowledge that the Lord is God!
He made us, and we are his.
We are his people, the sheep of his pasture.
Enter his gates with thanksgiving;
go into his courts with praise.
Give thanks to him and praise his name.
For the Lord is good.
His unfailing love continues forever,
and his faithfulness continues to each generation.*

Psalm 100 (NLT)

On this day in January, the birth of a new year, I reflect on the birth of the Early Church in the book of Acts, and also a key moment in the life of the church in the 1700s...

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Acts 2:1-4 (NIVUK)

At 3 am on New Year's Day, 1739, the Holy Spirit also came to an all-night prayer meeting in Fetter Lane, London. 'The power of God came mightily upon us, recorded John Wesley in his journal, 'insomuch that many cried out for exceeding joy and many fell to the ground.'*

Echoing the experience of those who were propelled out of the upper room in Jerusalem to preach the gospel, John Wesley, too, was propelled out of that prayer room in London to ride 125,000 miles preaching the gospel, while his brother Charles Wesley began writing 6,000 hymns. And their 25-year-old friend, George Whitfield, crossed the Atlantic to stir the fires of America's First Great Awakening. The world would never be the same again.

Jesus said that the Father loves to give the Spirit to those who ask (Matthew 7:11), just as John and Charles Wesley asked that day in London.

And so, as I open my hands in front of me, I ask You, Father, to fill me with Your Spirit. Fill me with new power for this new year, just as You filled those disciples 2,000 years ago in Jerusalem, and 283 years ago in Fetter Lane, London.

And now, I lift up my hands and I pray for my community, for my nation, and for the nations of the world. I ask You, Father, to stir the fires of another Great Awakening of Your Spirit.

As I return to this familiar passage, I try to imagine what it was like to be in that room, seeing what seemed like tongues of fire dancing in the air, being filled with the Holy Spirit for the very first time...

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Acts 2:1-4 (NIVUK)

The Holy Spirit enabled the disciples to speak in other tongues. As the story continues, the Spirit enabled them to speak about Jesus with boldness, to endure hardship and persecution, to perform miracles, to serve the poor, to discern and make difficult decisions, and much more.

These are the kinds of things that Spirit-enabled people do. **What might the Spirit be enabling me to do this year?**

Yielding Prayer

The Methodist Covenant prayer, written by John Wesley himself in 1755, is prayed by millions of Methodists at the start of every year. It's a liturgy of profound and beautiful surrender, and so I join with sisters and brothers in Christ around the world as I pray it now.

*I am no longer my own, but Yours.
Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will;
Put me to doing, put me to suffering;
Let me be employed for you, or laid aside for you,
Exalted for you, or brought low for you;
Let me be full, let me be empty, let me have all things, let me have nothing.
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things
To your pleasure and disposal.
And now, glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
You are mine and I am yours. So be it.
And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven.
Amen.*