

# *Uphold one another in prayer*

## 1. PRAYER OF THE HEART

True, whole prayer is nothing but love  
- Augustine

Know thy self  
- Socrates

### Prayer

Speak, God to the heart of your servant,  
that my heart may speak with You.  
- Giogo Il The Carthusian, second meditation.

### Introduction

We begin a journey into prayer. Prayer is not simply an activity of the mind, but an invitation into an extraordinary relationship with God. In prayer we enter into a mystery. We develop an awareness and a relationship with the Holy Other.

When Jesus' disciples ask him where to start, he says love God with all you heart and soul and mind, love your neighbour and love yourself. Our whole being is called upon to know what it feels like to love.

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Uphold one another in Prayer

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## Prayer of the heart

Whilst practicing this style of prayer, you are invited to become conscious of what your heart is feeling as you live and move through your days and nights. Wake up your heart and become aware of the Spirit of God already praying in you. Call your heart to the surface, to the consciousness, and move through your day to the rhythm of prayer. Prayer is the abundant heart, fully awake, fully alive to your present reality.



## Daily practice

- Remember that the seed of prayer has already been sown in your heart. Your soul is God's garden.
- Set aside a moment each morning to listen to your heart's longings or desire for the day. You could do this when you wake, in the shower, while eating breakfast or as you travel each morning to your work or school.
- Take a moment to become quiet and relax your body. Speak the words of prayer at the top of this resource. Listen for God's longings and desires in your heart. What might be God's longing for you today?
- Formulate a phrase or an image that reflects your desire. The phrase or image could come from scripture or from your prayer.
- Make the phrase simple and write it down or draw the image.
- Pray this phrase often throughout the day or bring the image to mind.

## Further exploration

- Write your longings as a prayer, call to worship, poem, song or blessing.
- Talk to God about your longings and invite God to refine and sharpen them.
- Remember 'It is God's longing for us which evokes our longing for God'- From a sermon by Bernard of Clairvaux, 12<sup>th</sup> century.
- Make something to reflect your heart's prayer and place it in your home. You might like to make something you can give away as a reflection of your prayer.

## Background reading

Christian Scripture frequently uses the metaphor of heart to describe this call to inner orientation toward God in love. *You examine me and know me, you know when I am standing or sitting... God examine me and know my heart, probe me and know my thoughts* (Ps. 139). *The heart is the place of yearning and desire: 'God grant the desires of the heart* (Ps. 20). *Be loyal to God and serve him with all your heart and soul* (Josh. 22: 5).

The heart can be oriented toward God and, at times, away from God – *People approach me only in words, honour me only with lip-service while its heart is far from me* (Isa. 29:13). Jesus uses the metaphor of heart to criticise our inner orientation: our hearts are 'blind, obdurate and closed' (Mk.: 8:17); 'sluggish and slow' (Luke 24: 25); 'full of darkness, weighed down with pleasure and sorrows' (Matt.: 13:15). Yet God seeks us out, frees our hearts and restores relationships. *I shall pour clean water over you and you will be cleansed; I shall cleanse you of all your defilement and all your idols. I shall give you a new heart, and put a new spirit in you, I shall remove the heart of stone from your bodies and give you a heart of flesh instead. I shall put my spirit in you* (Ezek. 36:25-27).

Jesus comes to write the law of love upon our hearts. Our heart lies deep within us. Like the organ pumping life's blood around our body, our inner orientation is hidden, yet vital. As we give our hearts in love to God, as we become aware of the Spirit already praying within us, relationship with God is born. In our heart, our truest most real self, God meets us and draws us toward life in the Holy Trinity of love. *A person's words flow out of what fills their heart* (Matt 12:34, Luke 6: 45).

## Acknowledgement

This resource draws from Andre Louf '*Teach us to Pray*'. Darton, Longman & Todd.