



Pathways Weekly Reading & Prayer Guide

Week 9: Jesus' Final Week

April 9-15 • Pastor Kenny Ellis

This week we turn our attention to the prayers of Jesus during the final week of His life. He was the only one who had unmistakable clarity about the details of His impending death. He could anticipate every agonizing detail of His betrayal, arrest, mockery, beating and death on the cross. How would this knowledge impact His prayers – His constant dialogue with His Heavenly Father? How would you or I pray if we were in Jesus' situation?

There is an undeniable mystery in the relationship that Jesus had with His Father and the final week of Jesus' life only deepens that mystery. However, the prayers of Jesus have much to offer us. They reveal deep truths about His trust, love, sacrifice and surrender. Yes, Jesus was the divine son of God, but He was also fully human. He did not float above the pressure, temptation, betrayal and suffering of those last days. Instead, He experienced the depths of every emotion as He made His way to the cross.

This week, you are invited to explore the pathways of Jesus' prayer life with 2 primary goals:

1. To marvel at Jesus' trust, obedience and sacrificial love. As best you can, slow down and enter the story of Jesus. Consider how the actions, words and prayers that Jesus prayed reveal His own journey of faith. At each step, stop to express praise, worship, adoration and gratitude. He went to the cross because of His love for you.
2. Learn from your master. Although Jesus' experience was incredibly unique given His identity and mission, the Bible teaches that his journey to the cross provides an example for us to emulate as we face the trials of life and the sacrifices required of those who follow Him. Trials, suffering and sacrifice are inevitable for those who choose to follow Christ. Do you know how to pray during these inevitable times of life?

Day One: Jesus prays for His followers

Read John 17:1-26

1. As Jesus faces the inevitability of His own suffering and death, who is on His mind and heart? What happens to our ability to focus on others when we are facing hard things? Pray that God would give you the ability to still care about and pray for others even when you are being stretched and challenged by life's difficulties.
2. What are the various things Jesus prayed for His followers? Spend some time echoing His prayers for yourself and for the FPC family.

Day Two: Jesus prays for another way, but then surrenders to His Father's will

Read John 12:27-28, Luke 22:36-39

1. What are some words you would use to describe Jesus' emotional state in these passages? What are the reasons He might feel this way?
2. Jesus models for us both a childlike instinct to ask if there is another way, but also a mature surrender to His Father's will. Which of these prayer paths are you more likely to use when facing difficult things in life?
3. Is there a situation you are facing right now (or someone close to you) that you can offer up both prayers for? (Ask for what you want, but surrender the outcome to God)

Day Three: Jesus prays for Simon

Read Luke 22:31-34, Hebrews 7:25

1. Nobody knows the sinful tendencies of your heart as well as Jesus does. But He does not use that knowledge to condemn you. Instead, He forgives and He prays for you just like He did for Peter.
2. How does that impact your confidence when facing temptation? Are there sin habits in your life right now that you could confess and pray for fresh grace to overcome?

Day Four: Jesus prays His despair

Read Matthew 27:45-50

1. Why is Jesus experiencing the abandonment or forsakenness of His father? Whose sin has caused His Father to turn away from Him?
2. Reflect on and then express your gratitude and awe at the costly love Jesus was expressing for you on the cross.

Day Five: Following Jesus' Example When Suffering

Read 1 Peter 2:18-23 and 1 Peter 4:12-19

1. In what way does Peter help us better understand how and why Jesus could endure the humiliation and suffering of the cross with a surrendered heart?
2. Are you or is someone you know experiencing trial or mistreatment because of your faith in God? Offer up prayers that have been shaped by these two passages.

Days Six and Seven: Praying Where Holy Spirit Leads You

Each day this week we have read, reflected and prayed about Jesus' final week and His example. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you back to a focus or day from this week's guide and continue the reflection and prayers.

Wisdom from Others
Book Suggested Readings
Too Busy Not To Pray (Hybels) - Chapter 6
A Praying Life (Miller) - Chapters 17-18
Prayer (Yancey) - Chapter 18