

RELATE

O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer; give ear,
O God of Jacob!

Psalm 84:8

The Church is here for you. Having faith connections with trusted adults helps us grow, learn, and hear the voice of God. God calls us into relationship with each other to point each other to Christ. Our church is available to “give ear” to you, now and beyond this week.

- Share your prayer requests with your church. We can pray for specific requests or offer general prayers. Meet with people in your church family and pray together.

ADMIRE

O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer; give ear,
O God of Jacob!

Psalm 84:8

Nature is visual evidence of the creative power of God - a God who loves beauty and peace. It is so easy to see God's hand in the world when taking in creation. Observing nature helps us remember to slow down and enjoy life, maybe helping us slow down enough to hear the soft, still voice of God within us.

- Find a place to sit outside. Thank God for this creation, the land and ourselves, His beloved.
- Sit in silence. Listen to the sounds of creation, the heartbeat of God's handiwork.

SURRENDER

O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer; give ear,
O God of Jacob!

Psalm 84:8

If you were talking to someone, with your back turned to them, how does that affect the conversation? When we use the positions of our body in prayer, we are turning more than just our words and thoughts to God, we are turning everything. Even if this feels awkward, try it out and focus completely on surrendering to God. When we surrender our body to God, we are taking a courageous step, moving out of our comfort zone.

Spend time in prayer, moving through these positions:

- **Open hands.** Sitting in a chair or on the floor, rest your arms on your legs, palms opened towards the sky. This reflects that we are open to God, to receive what he has for us.
- **Kneeling.** By kneeling before God, we tell ourself and God that we are His, that we are present before Him with our life.
- **Laying Down.** We are completely surrendering our body to God when we lay on the floor before Him. We embrace how great he is.
- **Standing with our hands raised.** Reaching as high as we can, we glorify God with all that he has created us with and given us.
- **Closed hands.** Returning to our initial position, we sit before God, acknowledging his presence in our life by placing our palms down, saying that we have met with him, and received from Him.

LISTEN

O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer; give ear,
O God of Jacob!

Psalm 84:8

Talking to God is usually easier than listening to God. It is hard to calm our minds and still our bodies to allow room for the Holy Spirit to speak to us. It takes practice and patience. Pray the following prayer, then follow the steps below:

Oh Lord, You know my heart. You know I sincerely want to grow closer to You and spend time with You, but I get so easily distracted. My mind wanders, and I find my thoughts far from You. Forgive me. I really want to know You more. I want to spend time in Your presence, to learn and sit quietly at Your feet without a million thoughts distracting me. Teach me, Lord, how to be still. Like a Good Shepherd, lead me beside still waters. Quiet my soul. Bring order and calm to the chaos in my mind, so that I can spend time in quiet and joyful meditation with You. Thank You that You are willing and able to do these things, and that when I am weak, You are strong. I love You. Amen.

- Sit still and do nothing.
- Use a sand timer or set a timer for a few minutes. Just BE.

READ

O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer; give ear,
O God of Jacob!

Psalm 84:8

The Episcopal Church uses the Book of Common Prayer to guide our liturgy. It unites us with members of our faith family all over the world. When we worship in a church on Sunday mornings, we know that we are joined in prayer by the millions of Christians around the world saying the exact same prayers. The BCP is rich in prayers, giving us the words when we can't come up with them on our own.

- Flip to pages 211-261. This section includes the “Collects,” prayers that are used to gather the congregation and focus the worship.
- Read several that stand out to you and offer them up in prayer.

WORSHIP

O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer; give ear,
O God of Jacob!

Psalm 84:8

Singing is a form of prayer. Did you know the most common command Jesus gives us in the Bible is to rejoice and praise the Lord? Singing knits us together as a community, draws us to God, and helps us follow Jesus.

- Flip through the hymnal we use in church.
- Pick a song to read to yourself, offering the lyrics to God as a prayer.
- Keep this idea of worship music as prayer in mind as we sing together.

LEARN

O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer; give ear,
O God of Jacob!

Psalm 84:8

Engaging with Scripture helps to familiarize us with the voice of God. It gives us a better understanding of God's character, the teachings and life of Jesus, and attunes us to the work of the Holy Spirit. This knowledge makes us more aware of how God is present in our lives and how He speaks to us. *Lectio Divina*, "divine reading," is one way to deeply engage with Scripture and apply it to our lives.

Passage ideas: Psalm 137:1-18, Matthew 18:12-14

- *Lectio*: Read through the Gospel once. What is this particular scripture saying?
- *Meditatio*: Read through the Gospel a second time. What words or phrases stand out to you? What does this scripture say to me, today, in my life?
- *Oratio*: What can I say to God in response to what I read?
- *Contemplatio/Actio*: Read through the Gospel one last time. What is God asking me to do? What can I do to make my life a gift to others?

CREATE

O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer; give ear,
O God of Jacob!

Psalm 84:8

Prayer isn't only verbal; it can also be visual. Our God is a creative God. We are made in His image, which means we are creative beings. Using our God-given gifts is a form of praise, a way to thank God for what makes us special. Sometimes emotions and relationships just can't be summed up in words. The same is true of our relationship with God.

- Take some time to be creative and connect with God in a different way.
- Color a coloring page, or draw on blank paper.

UNITE

O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer; give ear,
O God of Jacob!

Psalm 84:8

The Prayers of the People always include prayers for the Universal Church, its members and mission; our country and those in authority; and the welfare of the world. A common prayer you might have heard is “Break my heart for what breaks yours.” Our world is big and filled with so much darkness. However, as followers of Christ, we are called to bring light to the world and spread Jesus’s message of hope to the ends of the earth. The light is so much brighter than the darkness. One way we can bring this goodness into the world is by praying - for other countries and the people living there.

- Pick a spot on a map or a globe. Close your eyes and pick, or spin a globe and stop. Wherever your finger lands, pray for that place.
- Pray for their government, their struggles and successes, our brothers and sisters living there, and for hope.

REMEMBER

O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer; give ear,
O God of Jacob!

Psalm 84:8

Death is hard, but as Christians we take hope in remembering those who are now in the kingdom of Heaven every time we take communion. Communion is a thin place where we join the heavenly banquet with the whole kingdom of Heaven. Our lives are built and shaped by family members and the people who surround us. The communion of saints who have gone before us can continue to guide us and point us to God. We know that Jesus will one day bring us back together again.

- Light a candle in honor of a saint in your life who has gone before you.
- Thank God for their life, your relationship with them, and the influence they have had on you. Pray for those here on earth who grieve.

REFLECT

O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer; give ear,
O God of Jacob!

Psalm 84:8

Journaling can be a way to deepen your relationship with God. If this is a practice that speaks to you, use it to keep an ongoing conversation with God. You can turn your writing into prayers - prayers of thanks, praise, dreams, questions, doubts, frustrations, and records of answered prayers. Writing can help us reflect on our lives and see things differently. Maybe it can help you see how God has been working through you and in you.

Respond to one or more of the following prompts:

- Where have you seen God today? Where have you seen God in your life?
- Who are you blessed to have in your life and why?
- What questions do you have about your faith?
- What is the hardest thing about prayer?
- How have you connected with God in the past? What is a new way you want to try to connect with God?
- What are you thankful for?
- How do you want to grow in my faith?
- What is something new you have learned today?