

The Path of Prayer:

Scriptures and Spiritual Practices for Lent

By Janice Brauer

Lent typically is a time of reflection as we recall our desperate need for a Savior and God's gifts of forgiveness and eternal life through Jesus. This year, we will combine those reflections with a focus on prayer. Each week during Lent, Pastor Marty Hufford will share insights about prayer in his messages on Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings. Our daily devotions will help us ponder Scriptures about prayer, about praise and thanksgiving, and the peace God gives us as we pray.

In addition to the devotions, each week includes a suggested spiritual practice to experiment with in your daily faith walk. Think of these practices as an invitation from Jesus for you to draw closer and closer to Him. Also included are personal stories from fellow believers about their prayer journey. May these encourage you as we walk The Path of Prayer together.

Note: Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the English Standard Version.

Ash Wednesday, February 18, 2026

“Ask, and it will be given to you ... for everyone who asks receives.” Matthew 7:7a, 8a

Ask

What a bold statement! What an amazing promise! Can it really be true? Can we ask God for anything and know we will get it? As with all Scripture, we must read this verse in context.

In the Sermon on the Mount, of which today's verses are a part, Jesus has been teaching on prayer. He warns against religious hypocrisy and hasty judgment of others. He encourages His followers to be single-minded in their devotion to God, to guard their hearts against earthly worries, and to lay up treasures in heaven. Perhaps most importantly, He gives them the Lord's Prayer, with a pattern of prayer that focuses on God's kingdom coming and His will being done.

That helps us so much, doesn't it? It reminds us to ask in ways that align with God's heart and God's purposes. That doesn't mean we can't pray about our personal concerns, but we do so with a bigger perspective, trusting that God knows how best to care for us and accomplish His will.

In response to Jesus' invitation to ask, seek, and knock, what might we ask of Him as Lent begins? What request would He delight to answer? Let's echo Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3, that we "*may be able to grasp how wide and deep and long and high is the love of Christ—and to know for ourselves that love so far beyond our comprehension*" (Phillips translation).

Dear Jesus, Please make Your home in my heart. Show me how wide and long and high and deep Your love for me truly is. Amen.

Thursday, February 19, 2026

“Seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you ... the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.” Matthew 7:7b, 8b

Seek and Knock

Progressive imperative. That is the English verb form that is used for the words ask, seek, and knock. It indicates an ongoing action, something that continues. That's why some Bible translations say, “Keep on asking ... keep on seeking ... keep on knocking.”

Perhaps the repeated instruction, using these three different words, is a way Jesus emphasized the importance of this teaching. Or perhaps asking, seeking, and knocking suggest an increasing intensity. Although all the verbs are active, asking is something we might do from a chair, but seeking and knocking put us into motion! And that is what we are trying to do during Lent—get active on the Path of Prayer. Does this sound daunting? Don't despair, because we have a prayer partner: the Holy Spirit.

Think about how you learned to ride a bike. Once the training wheels came off, you didn't magically know what to do. Your father or mother probably ran alongside you, keeping you steady until you gradually learned the trick of balancing on two wheels. Similarly, the Holy Spirit comes alongside us as we pray. Romans 8:26-27 (NLT) says, *“The Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God's own will.”* With the Holy Spirit guiding us, we keep asking, keep seeking, keep knocking.

Holy Spirit, Please guide me on the Path of Prayer. Turn my thoughts heavenward. Touch my heart as I ponder the love of our Savior and the gift of prayer. Amen.

Friday, February 20, 2026

“Which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!” Matthew 7:10-1

How Much More

Did you ever receive a gift that exceeded your expectations? You had a special item on a birthday or Christmas wish list. Then, when you opened the gift, it was all you had hoped for and so much more! That’s a tiny picture of the “how much more” gift that Christ describes in today’s reading.

In Luke’s account, the Lord’s Prayer and the well-known “ask, seek, knock” verses are separated by a parable about a man with unexpected house guests who goes to a neighbor at midnight asking for bread. The neighbor is not too happy about it, since he and his family are cozy in bed. But because the man persists, the neighbor gets up and fulfills the request.

Sometimes we interpret this parable to mean that we should be persistent in prayer—not a bad thing, of course, but the real point is that God is not like the reluctant neighbor. We don’t have to force His hand. Rather, we come as dearly loved children, and His Father’s heart is inclined toward us. That’s why both Matthew and Luke use the phrase “how much more.”

We can count on our Father’s timely and perfect provision. During Lent, we remember some of His good gifts—abundant mercy, undeserved grace, perfect pardon. And even beyond these, He gives the Holy Spirit, our Teacher, Guide, and Comforter. What a good, good gift!

Dear Father, Thank You for the gifts of the Savior and the Spirit. You are so, so good to me! Amen.