

DAILY DEVOTIONALS

Prayer partners are available in Robbins Chapel during every plenary session!

*“But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile,
and pray to the Lord on its behalf,
for in its welfare you will find your welfare.” (Jeremiah 29:7)*



Day 1 "Seek the welfare of the city"

Meditation:

Henri Nouwen said, *“Peace is Shalom- well-being of mind, heart, and body, individually and communally. It can exist in the midst of a war-torn world, even in the midst of unresolved problems and increasing human conflicts. Jesus made that peace by giving his life for his brothers and sisters. This is no easy peace, but it is everlasting and it comes from God. Are we willing to give our lives in the service of peace?”* May we live our lives in such a way that peace comes to our hearts, and to all those hearts around us. And may the welfare of our communities, nation, and world be woven together in the fabric of God’s love and grace.

Prayer:

Almighty God, across the ages you have guided your people through the wilderness, assuring us of a home in your eternal city. Strengthen us along the way, that we might not neglect our call to serve the cities and towns where we live. Help us to trust in your unfailing presence amid all of our fears. Grant us wisdom to discern your way in this world even as we hope for the next. Amen.

(Ann Bell Worley at www.baylor.edu) © 2006 The Center for Christian Ethics at Baylor University

Action:

Many people throughout our nation are working to make their cities a better place to live. These are becoming Communities of Shalom. To find out more information, go to new.gbgm-umc.org/about/us/cim/programs/shalom

Day 2 "Sent you into exile"

Meditation:

Sometimes, no matter where we are, it feels like we are in exile. We might feel exiled from our families, friends, communities, churches, careers, our selves, and even God. Exile can be a very lonely place. But it can also be a place of tremendous growth and awakening. The Israelites were instructed to build houses, plant gardens, and raise families as they were brought to a foreign land. Even in the midst of exile, God showed them how to find life and live it abundantly. May we do the same. May we turn to God when the feelings of alienation overwhelm us, and may we look for signs of new life all around us.

Prayer:

Ever-present God, when we feel alienated, when we feel as if we have been sent where no one would dare go, help us turn to you. Cast away our fears so that our faith in you will become the foundation of our lives. Open our eyes to the new life growing within us and around us. And connect us with one another so that your family, the body of Christ, might continue to grow and be fruitful. Amen.

Action:

Support and pray for our missionaries who are sent to foreign lands in order to share the love of Christ. See a full list of our missionaries at www.umcmision.org/Explore-Our-Work/Missionaries-in-Service

Day 3

"Pray to the Lord"

Meditation:

Mother Teresa would remind those around her, *"Everything starts from prayer."* Prayer is a powerful way to deepen our relationship with God and Christ. Through prayer we open our hearts to God and begin to understand the amazing, unconditional love God offers to each and every person. Through prayer we bring our lives to God, all the good and all the bad. Through prayer we lift up one another for healing, comfort, and wholeness. Through prayer we reconcile ourselves to God and to one another. The power of prayer is so very real and so very mysterious. Let us pray for ourselves, one another, our communities, and our world.

Prayer:

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed by thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Action:

Visit Robbins Chapel during plenary for prayer and meditation, where prayer partners are available to support you. To discover resources that will help strengthen your prayer life, go to www.upperroom.org

Day 4

"For in its welfare you will find your welfare"

Meditation:

A blanket is woven with yarn and wool. A basket is woven with pine needles or small branches. A piece of clothing is woven with thread. We too are woven together. The Great Weaver, Creator God, has woven us together from many places and many times. God uses love, forgiveness, healing, grace, mercy, and joy to weave us together as the body of Christ. We cannot forget that we are connected, created to be the body of Christ for the world. When we take care of one another, we take care of ourselves. When we serve one another, we serve God. How will we keep the welfare of the city in the forefront of our lives? How will we become the "cup overflowing" for a hurting and broken world? May we be the ones who say "Yes" to God!

Prayer:

O God, we confess our need to be more diligent in seeking the welfare of the city. We often feel that the business (or is it busyness?) of the church is distant and completely set apart from the life of the communities that surround our buildings. Open our eyes to the spiritual, social, emotional and economic condition of the towns, boroughs, and cities where we live and worship. Enable us to see the struggles of the people around our churches and hear their cries for mercy. Give us courage to extend a hand, lend a shoulder of support, or share our faith as we find our own well-being entangled in the well-being of those around us. Amen.

(Safiyah Fosua, General Board Of Discipleship)

Action:

There are so many needs around the world. Thankfully, God has given us open hearts and open hands in order to help. To find a cause to support that fits with your passion, go to www.umcmmission.org/Give-to-Mission/Search-for-Projects

The Daily Devotionals was compiled by Rev. Karin Ellis of your Annual Conference Worship Planning Team. Resources used include: *Bread for the Journey* by Henri Nouwen and *Everything Starts from Prayer: Mother Teresa's Meditations on Spiritual Life for People of All Faiths* by M.D. Anthony. LIFT Renewal Ministries providing prayer partners during plenary sessions.