

A Week of Morning and Evenings Prayers

written by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

These are the words of the Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr., adapted to reflect inclusive language for humanity and God throughout. At times, you may have questions about, differ with, or be challenged by King's theology or prayers. We encourage you to pray these prayers, adapting them as you need to, to make them not just words, but an active part of your experience of faith this week.

SUNDAY EVENING

Eternal God, out of whose absolute power and infinite intelligence the whole universe has come into being, we humbly confess that we have not loved thee with our hearts, souls and minds, and we have not loved our neighbors as Christ loved us. We have all too often lived by our own selfish impulses rather than by the life of sacrificial love as revealed by Christ. We often give in order to receive. We love our friends and hate our enemies. We go the first mile but dare not travel the second. We forgive but dare not forget. And so as we look within ourselves, we are confronted with the appalling fact that the history of our lives is the history of an eternal revolt against you. But you, O God, have mercy upon us. Forgive us for what we could have been but failed to be. Give us the intelligence to know your will. Give us the courage to do your will. Give us the devotion to love your will. In the name and spirit of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

MONDAY MORNING

God, help us as individuals and as a world to hear it now before it is too late: "Seek ye first the kin-dom of God and God's justice and all these other things shall be added unto you."

MONDAY EVENING

God grant that as we go out and face life with all of its decisions, as we face the bitter cup which we will inevitably face from day to day, God grant that we will learn this one thing and that is, to make the transition from "this cup" to "nevertheless."

TUESDAY MORNING

O God, we thank you for the fact that you have inspired people in all nations and in all cultures. We call you different names: some call you Allah; some call you Elohim; some call you Jehovah; some call you Brahma; some call you the Unmoved Mover. But we know that these are all names for one and the same God. Grant that we will follow you and become so committed to your way and your kin-dom that we will be able to establish in our lives and in this world a siblinghood, that we will be able to establish here a kin-dom of understanding, where all will live together as siblings and respect the dignity and worth of every human being. In the name and spirit of Jesus. Amen.

TUESDAY EVENING

God, give us strength of body to keep walking for freedom. God, give us strength to remain nonviolent, even though we may face death.

WEDNESDAY MORNING

God, grant that we wage the struggle with dignity and discipline. May all who suffer oppression in this world reject the self-defeating method of retaliatory violence and choose the method that seeks to redeem.

WEDNESDAY EVENING

God, remove all bitterness from my heart and give me the strength and courage to face any disaster that comes my way.

THURSDAY MORNING

O God, we thank you for the lives of great saints and prophets in the past, who have revealed to us that we can stand up amid the problems and difficulties and trials of life and not give in. We thank you for our foreparents, who've given us something in the midst of the darkness of exploitation and oppression to keep going. Grant that we will go on with the proper faith and the proper determination of will, so that we will be able to make a creative contribution to this world.

THURSDAY EVENING

O God, make us willing to do your will, come what may. Increase the number of persons of good will and moral sensitivity. Give us renewed confidence in nonviolence and the way of love as taught by Christ. Amen.

FRIDAY MORNING

Eternal God, out of whose mind this great cosmic universe, we bless you. Help us to seek that which is high, noble and good. Help us in the moment of difficult decision. Help us to work with renewed vigor for a warless world, a better distribution of wealth, and a siblinghood that transcends race or color.

FRIDAY EVENING

God, we thank you for the inspiration of Jesus. Grant that we will love you with all our hearts, souls, and minds, and love our neighbors as we love ourselves, even our enemy neighbors. And we ask you, God, in these days of emotional tension, when the problems of the world are gigantic in extent and chaotic in detail, to be with us in our going out and our coming in, in our rising up and in our lying down, in our moments of joy and in our moments of sorrow, until the day when there shall be no sunset and no dawn. Amen.

SATURDAY MORNING & EVENING

(in preparation for worship on SUNDAY MORNING)

We thank you for your church, founded upon your Word, that challenges us to do more than sing and pray, but go out and work as though the very answer to our prayers depended on us and not upon you. Help us to realize that humanity was created to shine like the stars and live on through all eternity. Keep us, we pray, in perfect peace. Help us to walk together, pray together, sing together, and live together until that day when all God's children -- Black, White, Red, Brown and Yellow -- will rejoice in one common band of humanity. Amen.