



PRAYER MEETING

July 12

The Fruit of the Spirit: Kindness

A close-up photograph of a hand with fingers spread, reaching upwards, set against a dark background. The hand is positioned centrally below the date and above the main title.

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Call to Worship

Galatians 5: 13-14, 16-24

New International Reader's Version

My brothers and sisters, you were chosen to be free. But don't use your freedom as an excuse to live under the power of sin. Instead, serve one another in love. The whole law is fulfilled by obeying this one command. "Love your neighbor as you love yourself."

So I say, live by the Holy Spirit's power. Then you will not do what your desires controlled by sin want you to do. The desires controlled by sin do not want what the Spirit delights in. And the Spirit does not want what the desires controlled by sin delight in. The two are at war with each other. That's why you are not supposed to do whatever you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the authority of the law.

The result of sin's control in our lives is clear. It includes sexual sins, impure acts and wild living. It includes worshiping statues of gods and worshiping evil powers. It also includes hatred and fighting, jealousy and fits of anger. Sinful desire is interested only in getting ahead. It stirs up trouble. It separates people into their own little groups. It wants what others have. It gets drunk and takes part in wild parties. It does many things of that kind. I warn you now as I did before. People who live like this will not receive God's kingdom.

But the fruit the Holy Spirit produces is love, joy and peace. It is being patient, kind and good. It is being faithful and gentle and having control of oneself. There is no law against things of that kind. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed their sinful desires to his cross. They don't want these things anymore.

Today, Lord, we thank you for the Holy Spirit's fruit of kindness.

Music

Quiet your hearts and minds as you listen to today's music. Open to God and listen to what the Holy Spirit might say to you.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SidOp4dmj6k>

Kindness, Chris Tomlin

Prayers of Praise Congregation

Congregational Reading from the Psalms

Read Together

Praise the LORD.

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever. Who can proclaim the mighty acts of the LORD or fully declare his praise?

Blessed are those who act justly, who always do what is right.

We have sinned, even as our ancestors did; we have done wrong and acted wickedly. When our ancestors were in Egypt, they gave no thought to your miracles; they did not remember your many kindnesses, and they rebelled by the sea, the Red Sea.

Yet he saved them for his name's sake, to make his mighty power known. Ps 106:1-4, 6-8

The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. The LORD is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made.

All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD, and all your saints shall bless you! They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom and tell of your power, to make known to the children of man your mighty deeds, and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.

Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations.

The LORD is faithful in all his words and kind in all his works.

The LORD upholds all who are falling and raises up all who are bowed down. The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season.

You open your hand; you satisfy the desire of every living thing.

The LORD is righteous in all his ways and kind in all his works.

The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.

He fulfills the desire of those who fear him; he also hears their cry and saves them.

Ps 145:8-19

Reading about the word of the day

“Kind acts, whether small or large, reflect a desire to serve others, and *service* is at the heart of any loving person. Kindness means serving someone else even if it involves sacrifice. Acts of kindness communicate, “You are a person of value.”

Most of us will admit that if we are going to become truly kind people, we need to experience a change of attitude. The false self of self-centered living says, “I’ll be kind to you if you will be kind to me.” The true self of authentic love says, “I’ll be kind to you regardless of how you treat me.”

If we live a life of authentic love, we will tie acts of kindness to words of kindness. Do the words you speak build up others? Or do they make life more difficult for others?

Kind words are not always positive words. Genuine love confronts people when their behavior is destructive. [But] even confrontation can hold words of kindness. The challenge is to speak the truth and to speak it in love.

We may not ever see the results of our sacrifice when we act kindly, but we are called to serve others simply because we know that one act of service can change lives. Kindness can be remarkable simple.”

Love as a Way of Life, Gary Chapman

Scripture Reading

When Israel was a child, I loved him, and I called my son out of Egypt. But when I called the people of Israel, they went away from me. They offered sacrifices to the Baals and burned incense to the idols.

It was I who taught Israel to walk, and I took them by the arms, but they did not understand that I had healed them. I led them with cords of human kindness, with ropes of love. I lifted the yoke from their neck and bent down and fed them.

My people have made up their minds to turn away from me. The prophets call them to turn to me, but none of them honors me at all.

“Israel, how can I give you up? How can I give you away, Israel? I don’t want to make you like Admah or treat you like Zeboiim.

My heart beats for you, and my love for you stirs up my pity. I won't punish you in my anger, and I won't destroy Israel again. I am God and not a human; I am the Holy One, and I am among you. I will not come against you in anger.

Hosea 11:1-4, 7-9 NCV

I will heal their apostasy; I will love them freely, my anger has turned from them. I will be like the dew to Israel; he shall blossom like the lily; he shall take root like the trees of Lebanon.

Hosea 14:4-5 ESV

Reflect

Scripture Reading repeated

When Israel was a child, I loved him, and I called my son out of Egypt. But when I called the people of Israel, they went away from me. They offered sacrifices to the Baals and burned incense to the idols.

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Individual Silent Prayer

A time to pray and talk to God about what you heard and noticed. Pray for your needs. Pray thanks. Confess sin. Ask for help. Pray for others, for direction, for guidance, for God's glory.

Response

Congregational response saying a word or phrase that the Spirit has brought to attention.

Responsive Reading

Leader: I will tell of the kindnesses of the LORD, the deeds for which he is to be praised, according to all the LORD has done for us— yes, the many good things he has done for Israel, according to his compassion and many kindnesses.

People: He said, “Surely they are my people, children who will be true to me”; and so he became their Savior.

Leader: In all their distress he too was distressed, and the angel of his presence saved them.

People : In his love and mercy he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

Is 63:7-9

Leader: This is what the LORD says: “Let not the wise boast of their wisdom or the strong boast of their strength or the rich boast of their riches,

People: but let the one who boasts boast about this: that they have the understanding to know me, that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,” declares the LORD. *Jer 9:23-24*

Leader: The LORD appeared to us saying: “I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness. ‘He who scattered Israel will gather them and will watch over his flock like a shepherd.’

People: For the LORD will deliver Jacob and redeem them from the hand of those stronger than they. They will come and shout for joy on the heights of Zion; they will rejoice in the bounty of the LORD

Leader: They will be like a well-watered garden, and they will sorrow no more. I will turn their mourning into gladness; I will give them comfort and joy instead of sorrow

Jer 31:3, 11-13

People: You who pass judgment on someone else have no excuse, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things.

Leader: Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. So when you pass judgement on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment?

People: Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance? *Rom 2:1-4*

Leader: But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions —it is by grace you have been saved.

People: And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

Leader: For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. *Eph 2:4-10*

Together:

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Col 3:12-14

Prayers for the World

Leader: Lord, we pray for God's love to be the foundation of our hope

People: We pray for God's mercy in stopping the spread of this virus

Leader: We pray for God's healing of those who are sick throughout the world

People: We pray for God's strength for medical personnel serving tirelessly

Leader: We pray for God's insight to be given to researchers seeking solutions

People: We pray for God's wisdom to guide and direct civic leaders, health officials, and world leaders

Leader: We pray for God's peace to guard us from fear or anxiety

People: We pray for God's provision for those whose livelihoods and income have been affected by this crisis

Leader: We pray for God's creativity to make us agents of love and compassion, that all believers would display the character of Christ

People: We pray for racial reconciliation, justice, compassionate civil dialog, understanding, and true unity

Together: Lord, we pray for healing for our nation, that Your righteousness and truth and justice would be known, and that the Holy Spirit would draw people everywhere to the saving power of Jesus.

Lord's Prayer

Prayer of Thanksgiving Leader

Thanks be to you, Lord, for the kindness you have shown. Thanks be to you because you are a God who came to earth in kind compassion.

You are mighty to save, and fierce in your holy righteousness, and true in your judgements, and yet also tender and infinite in love. How can we not praise you and stand amazed at who you are?

Thank you, our great God, for you are kind to us.

Closing Prayer

“O God, since you are love, and he that loves not you and his brethren knows you not, deliver us from injustice, envy, hatred, and malice; give us grace to pardon all who have offended us, and to bear with one another, even as you, Lord, bear with us, in your patience and great lovingkindness.”

Eugene Bersier, 19th century

Go in the lovingkindness of God.