

PRAYER MEETING

Morning Prayer Service **Fruit of the Spirit: Joy**

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Leader

Lord God, you are worthy to be praised and we praise you. You are worthy to be obeyed, so we ask that our hearts would be faithful. You are worthy to be trusted, and we trust you.

Thank you for your care and provision. Thank you for your intervention in our world. You bring truth and righteousness, wisdom and mercy. We pray for eyes to see your presence, and for faith to see your ways.

Help us to have the vision to see that all you do is for your glory and our good. Help us to know that your desire is to lead us into joy. Even when we can't see it, joy is at the center of our relationship with you. Lead us more deeply into your joy that we may be people who rejoice that we are yours. May your joy increase our trust, our faithfulness, and our hope. May our joy, found in and through you, help us love and serve and bring hope to our world. In the name of Jesus, who prayed for our joy, Amen

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 and ask for the Holy Spirit's fruit of joy.

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=x3gLeCiMJqI>

Joy of the Lord, Rend Collective

Praise

Invite spoken words or phrases of praise to God from congregation.

“This day, we praise You, O God for your attributes and your works. We praise you for your gift of joy.”

Congregational Psalm / Passages from Psalms

Leader and people together

Listen to my words, LORD,

consider my lament.

Hear my cry for help,

my King and my God,

for to you I pray.

In the morning, LORD, you hear my voice;

in the morning I lay my requests before you

and wait expectantly.

But let all who take refuge in you be glad;

let them ever sing for joy.

Spread your protection over them,

that those who love your name may rejoice in you. Ps 5:1-3,11

Keep me safe, my God,

for in you I take refuge.

I say to the LORD, “You are my Lord;

apart from you I have no good thing.”

LORD, you alone are my portion and my cup;

you make my lot secure.

You make known to me the path of life;

you will fill me with joy in your presence,

with eternal pleasures at your right hand. Ps 16:1-2, 5, 11

May we shout for joy over your salvation,

and in the name of our God set up our banners!

May the LORD fulfill all your petitions!

Now I know that the LORD saves his anointed;
he will answer him from his holy heaven
with the saving might of his right hand.
Some trust in chariots and some in horses,
but we trust in the name of the LORD our God. Ps 20:5-7

O LORD my God, I cried to you for help,
and you have healed me.
Sing praises to the LORD, O you his saints,
and give thanks to his holy name.
For his anger is but for a moment,
and his favor is for a lifetime.
Weeping may tarry for the night,
but joy comes with the morning.

You have turned for me my mourning into dancing;
and clothed me with gladness,
that my glory may sing your praise and not be silent.
O LORD my God, I will give thanks to you forever! Ps 30: 2,4-5,11-12

Reading about the Word of the Day

Joy in the Lord's Sufficiency – by Hudson Taylor

Don't be dejected and sad, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.
Nehemiah 8:10

What is the joy of the Lord that he calls our strength? Is it joy that there is such a Lord? For we cannot realize that He exists without joy. Or is it joy that *He* is our Lord? For possession of Him is a fruitful source of joy. Or again, is it joy that He has imparted to us and shed abroad in our hearts by His Spirit? Or, lastly, is it *His own joy* that is our strength? While all these sources of joy are ours, there is no doubt that it is the last of them to which this verse specifically refers.

John 15:11 refers to our Savior's joy in the bearing of fruit through His branches. It was His will that His joy might remain in them and that, consequently their joy might be full. Here we see the joy of the Lord distinguished from the joy of His people.

In Hebrews 12:2, we have the joy of the Lord in the redemption of his people—joy to despise the shame and endure the cross. It was strength for self-sacrifice.

In Zephaniah 3:17, we have the joy of the Lord in the possession of His purchased inheritance. How wonderful is this joy! “He will rejoice over you with great gladness. With his love, he will calm all your fears. He will exult over you by singing a happy song.”

It is the consciousness of the threefold joy of the Lord—His joy in ransoming us, His joy in dwelling within us as our Savior and power for bearing fruit, and His joy in possessing us as His bride and His delight—that is our real strength. Our joy in Him may fluctuate, but His joy in us knows no change.

Scripture Reading John 15:9-11, 16:22, 17:1-5,13

Notice what God brings to your attention.

Hear the words of Jesus:

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.

Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed. I am coming to you now, and these things I speak in the world, that the people whom you gave me may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

Reflect

A time for sorting and paying attention to what you noticed.

Scripture Reading repeated

Individual Silent Prayer

A time to pray and talk to God about what you heard and noticed. Invite the Spirit to search, teach, encourage, comfort, and correct you. Let him reveal and dispel your illusions, pride, self-centeredness, lack of gratitude, control, and other ways. 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 their attention

Responsive Reading

Isaiah 35

Leader and people

Leader: The desert and the parched land will be glad;
the wilderness will rejoice and blossom.
Like the crocus, it will burst into bloom

People: It will rejoice greatly and shout for joy.
The glory of Lebanon will be given to it,
the splendor of Carmel and Sharon;
they will see the glory of the LORD,
the splendor of our God.

Leader: Strengthen the feeble hands,
steady the knees that give way;
say to those with fearful hearts,
"Be strong, do not fear;
your God will come,
he will come with vengeance;
with divine retribution
he will come to save you."

People: Then will the eyes of the blind be opened
and the ears of the deaf unstopped.

Then will the lame leap like a deer,
and the mute tongue shout for joy.
Water will gush forth in the wilderness
and streams in the desert.

Leader: The burning sand will become a pool,
the thirsty ground bubbling springs.
In the haunts where jackals once lay,
grass and reeds and papyrus will grow.
And a highway will be there;
it will be called the Way of Holiness;
it will be for those who walk on that Way.

People: The unclean will not journey on it;
wicked fools will not go about on it.
No lion will be there,
nor any ravenous beast;
they will not be found there.

Leader: But only the redeemed will walk there,
and those the LORD has rescued will return.

Together: They will enter Zion with singing;
everlasting joy will crown their heads.
Gladness and joy will overtake them,
and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

Lord's Prayer

Together

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Leader

Lord God, giver of Joy, and Joy of our hearts, we stand amazed of the fullness of joy that you plan for us. We thank you that you are

not a god of gloom and despair but the true God of surpassing satisfaction and joy.

We are grateful that **You** have joy as we come to you, as we pray to you, as we live in you and with you, and as we speak lovingly of you in this world. May we learn to count it as joy when we encounter various difficulties, knowing that all things are in your hands, for our good and for your glory.

We thank you for Jesus who was able to lift his eyes beyond the cross to see the reason for his sacrifice... the joy of being our Savior and of bringing people into freedom and forgiveness and restored relationship with you.

We thank you for the Spirit who leads us into joy and fills us with Your joy. We thank you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen

Closing Prayer

And now, may you go out with joy, singing praises to the name of our Lord and great God. And may you be filled to the fullness with God, our Joy.

Amen