



# *PRAYING WAYS* imagination prayer

## **Imagination Prayer**

**Intention:** To imagine you are physically present in a biblical scene (primarily of Jesus life, but can be extended to any biblical narrative) and to allow that scene to become prayer for you.

**Explanation:** God created every part of you and can use every part of you to enable you encounter him in love. You can know God not only with your intellect by studying his Word, but also with your imagination and emotions. Through prayers of imagination the Holy Spirit makes present a mystery of Jesus' life (or an aspect of another biblical story) in a way that is meaningful to you now. It allows the person of Christ to penetrate into places that the intellect does not touch, bringing Jesus into our hearts as he engages our feelings. Praying in this way can be a tool to help us know and love God more intimately

Some people find imaginative prayer difficult and just can't picture things in their minds. Yet they may have an intuitive or gut reaction to the story. Or they may hear or feel the story more than seeing it. We are all different. Just pray as you are able; don't try to force it. Rest assured that God will speak to you, in a way that works for you. He knows you best.

### **Exercise:**

Begin with a preparatory prayer asking God to guide every aspect of your prayer, asking that your intentions, actions and imaginings be inspired by his Holy Spirit and used to draw you closer to and glorify God.

Read a short passage contains one narrative. On the first reading, simply take in the story. Pause in silence. Read it a second time slowly, seeing the depth and detail of the scene, visualizing the scene as though you were making a movie of it.

With your mind's eye see the location, the surroundings. Is it dusty, damp, cold, dry? Is the movement quick or slow? Are there crowds or open spaces? Place yourself in the story. What part do you play in the scene as it unfolds?

What sounds do you hear? What are the characters saying? Do you speak? What do you say? Does anyone speak to you? Do you hear other sounds near or in the distance? Is it quiet?

What do you smell? Maybe animals or nature or cooking or other smells of life?

Is there a taste connected to the scene? Linger and notice?

In your imagination, move around the scene and touch various people and things. Notice the sensations as you touch various people or things. How do you feel as you do this? Is there any response.

As you complete your prayer time, let your Spirit inspired imagination run free as you embrace this whole scene. Linger and interact with the characters. If Jesus is present in the scene be sure to take time to meet him personally. How does he look at you? Hear that words he has to say, as recorded in the Scripture passage. Respond to him in some way. How does he then respond to you? How do you feel as Jesus (or another character if not a gospel story) engages you?

When you finish the imagination exercise think about the meaning of that particular and conclude with a time of talking to God in prayer. You may want to end with the Lord's Prayer.

Record your impressions, any guidance, challenge affirmation you received.