

### **RESOURCING WITH PRAYER**

Psalm 46:1, “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.”

For these troubled times, knowing and practicing prayer skills are needed.

These days people are not only having to figure out new ways of doing things and but learning some of the old skills that they themselves perhaps never adequately learned.

Back when I was in high school, I remember Dad reading the Foxfire books – forgotten know-how and learning from the past, like preserving food, toolmaking, how to build a log-cabin.

- It was the log-cabin making that interested Dad. We lived in the Minnesota Northwoods. One day Dad announced we’d be building a log-cabin by hand. There was a lot to learn.
- He cut down the trees himself. We worked together on peeling off the bark using the old-fashioned hand tools, like a two handled bark-skipping draw knife. We did it wrong at first.
- The old-timers laughed at us when our first attempt was in the fall. We learned you don’t peel the bark until spring, when the sap is running and the bark just slides off.
- We had to learn the old ways.

Some people these days are having to learn the old skills. Cooking. How to be a family all together for long periods of time. One of the old skills that I deeply encourage us all to learn if you don’t know how is prayer.

- Have you only prayed along while someone else prays? Carry-out prayer is not enough. It’s time to learn how to make your own prayers.
- Have you only dabbled in prayer but never really developed the practice? Now is the time to learn. We all need to resource ourselves with a living and active spiritual life.

The first lesson is that it helps immensely to have a structure or roadmap to your prayer time. A prayer structure Lori and I often teach is simple but effective, the TRIP method.

- T. R.I.P. – Trip. Like taking a trip, a prayer trip.

Each letter stands for something.

- T – Thanksgiving. R- Repentance I – Intercession. P – Purpose.

Yes, it’s easy for the mind to wander in prayer. That’s okay. That’s normal. A prayer structure helps you effortlessly get back on track from mind wandering.

- Sometimes, something I call “holy mind-wandering” can happen.
- These can be times when the Holy Spirit is talking you about something and you’re so lost in the thoughts, you don’t even realize it at the time. That’s good prayer.

#### **The T in TRIP is Thanksgiving.**

- Counting your blessings helps you become aware of the blessings you do have.
- Do you have a home? Give thanks.
- Do you have water? Electricity? You mean you even have internet, TV, and a cell phone?

- Know that real hardship usually looks much worse this and is for much of the world.
- We begin in thanksgiving.

### **The R in TRIP stands for Repentance**

- The word repentance means “turning away”. Like if you are headed toward cliff and then turn away from it. And not just turning away from the bad but turning toward the good.
- Yes, repentance means searching your heart for sins and confessing them to God. But repentance is also a time for setting your will to good and godly choices.
- Repentance also means a change of heart or mind that is then followed by a change of choices or actions.
- Prayer time becomes rich when you use it examine what kinds of basic changes would be good and life-giving to make in your life and attitudes, especially now.

Before we get to the next TRIP letter, these days call for the interjection here of an addition to the basic TRIP form. (I know it messes up the acronym but roll with it.)

### **The added letter is L and stands for Lament.**

- Lament is special type of prayer.
- It is seeing and naming woundedness, fear, and suffering – in yourself and in others.
- It God’s permission to say directly to God hard words like, “I’m hurt.” “Why?” “I’m angry.”
- It’s okay, God can take it. God knows you need to tell God your pain and truth.

Lament naturally flows into the next TRIP letter – I - Intercession.

- Intercession is a church word that means praying for the needs of people, yourself, and the world. Name the needs. Name the people. Bring it to the Lord in prayer.

Finally, **the P in TRIP stands for Purpose** and can be one of the richest parts of prayer.

- Purpose is reporting to God for your marching orders.
- You’ve prayed your prayers, now what is God calling you to do about it?
- What is God’s calling for you today?

These days call for all of us to return to the old practice of prayer. Prayer in Christ’s name is where you will experience God as your refuge and strength, your ever-present help in trouble. Amen.