



# Touchstone

## Prayers for Deck & Dock 2022

### Holy Leisure

I read somewhere that leisure is “that time and space which we carry in our lives to get in touch with the ultimate”. It's an inner stillness that opens us to listen, hear and see the spiritual and emotional moves in our own lives. It opens us to creation, those around us and God's desire to communicate with us. We can become strangers to our God and lose a sense of the Spirit's activity when leisure is missing from our lives.

Leisure is not our recreation or entertainments which fill our lives with things other than the Eternal. Summer can offer leisure which connects us to God, creation, friends, and family in ways that help us be recreated by the Spirit.

**Listening deeply is one of the great leisure activities.** This is not just listening with our ears – this is listening with all our senses, emotions and creative faculties disposed to the Spirit, creation, and those around us.

**Leisure allows God** to speak to us in creation, Scripture, our shared stories, meals, and moments of quiet conversation – sensing the nudges of the Holy Spirit.

**Leisure allows us to listen deeply to hear and see** what the Spirit may have been doing, is doing, and guiding us towards.

**We can be reminded** that we are loved by God, and many who share life with us. Leisurely moments of reflection allow us to reflect and review losses, wounds, hopes, healing, comfort – we discover in leisure the presence of God in the dark and in the light, in the pain and in the healing, in the joy and in the sorrow.

### **A Prayer for Holy Leisure**

I CONFESS TO You, dear God, that holy leisure is far from me. I have a minute of empty space -and I rush to fill it. I act, I do, I talk. Why can't I simply be still?

YOU NEED TO KNOW, my child, that I will not compete for your attention. If you choose to be distracted, I will not force myself on you.

O Lord, it frightens me that I could crowd you out of my life. Plant in me a longing for stillness. Create in me a hunger for open, empty space.

As you wish...

Even if you don't want to commit to anything onerous you may find yourself one day on a peaceful sunny morning, the lake glassy and the air still. Just sit and soak it in. Listen to the sounds of water rippling, leaves rustling musically, and birds calling and know the God who reveals himself in this wants to speak to you.

These prayers are simply paths to begin the process of holy leisure on your deck or dock or wherever your inner sanctuary finds you. This psalm is a great place to begin a leisurely moment.

## Psalm 139:1-16

O Lord, you have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away.

You search out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, O Lord, you know it completely. You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain it.

Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there. If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast.

If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light around me become night," even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you.

For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well.

My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes beheld my unformed substance. In your book were written all the days that were formed for me, when none of them as yet existed.

## **A Veil Thin as Gossamer**

Be You, triune God, in the midst of us as we give thanks for those who have gone from the sight of earthly eyes. They, in Your nearer presence, still worship with us in the mystery of the one family on heaven and on earth. ....

If it be Your holy will, tell them how we love them, and how we miss them, and how we long for the day when we shall meet with them again.

God of all comfort, we lift into Your immediate care those recently bereaved, who sometimes in the night-time cry 'Would God it were morning', and in the morning cry 'Would God that it were night'. Bereft of their dear ones, too often they are bereft also of the familiar scenes where happiness once reigned.

Lift from their eyes the too distant vision of the resurrection at the last day. Alert them to hear the voice of Jesus saying: 'I AM Resurrection and I AM Life': that they may believe this.

Strengthen them to go on in loving service of all Your children. Thus shall they have communion with You and in You, with their beloved. Thus shall they come to know, in themselves, that there is no death and that only a veil divides, thin as gossamer.

(excerpt from prayer in George MacLeod *The Whole earth Shall Cry Glory*)

## **A Prayer of Confession**

O Lord, who has mercy on all, take away from me my sins, and mercifully kindle in me the fire of your Holy Spirit. Take away from me the heart of stone, and give me a heart of flesh, a heart to love and adore you, a heart to delight in you, to follow and enjoy you, for Christ's sake.  
(Ambrose: c.339-97)

## A Poem

i thank You God for most this amazing  
day: for the leaping greenly spirits of trees  
and a blue true dream of sky; and for everything  
which is natural which is infinite which is yes  
(i who have died am alive again today,  
and this is the sun's birthday; this is the birth  
day of life and of love and wings: and of the gay  
great happening illimitably earth)  
how should tasting touching hearing seeing  
breathing any—lifted from the no  
of all nothing—human merely being  
doubt unimaginable You?  
(now the ears of my ears awake and  
now the eyes of my eyes are opened)  
(e.e.cummings 1894-1962)

## Gobsmacked

I've been referred to as odd before.  
Nowadays, I prefer to refer to myself as “awed”.  
I want awe to be the greatest ongoing  
relationship in my life. I want to move through  
my days floored by the magnificence and  
generosity of my Creator. The breaking of a day,  
the silence between words, the light emanating  
from areal conversation, and kindness, truth,  
love and the apparently random hand of grace: I  
want to remain gobsmacked by all of it.  
Rendered speechless by wonder, I await the  
next unfolding. Peace, friends. Be awed today  
(Richard Wagamese, *Embers*, Douglas & McIntyre)

## God's aid

God to enfold me, God to surround me,  
God in my speaking, God in my thinking.  
God in my sleeping, God in my waking,  
God in my watching, God in my hoping.  
God in my life, God in my lips,  
God in my soul, God in my heart.  
God in my sufficing, God in my slumber,  
God in my ever-living soul, God in mine eternity  
(From *Carmina Gadelica*, III, 53 in *The Celtic Vision* Esther  
De Waal)

## **Jesus' Prayer for Us**

I'm praying not only for them but also for those who will believe in me because of them and their witness about me.

The goal is for all of them to become one heart and mind—Just as you, Father, are in me and I in you, so they might be one heart and mind with us. Then the world might believe that you, in fact, sent me.

The same glory you gave me, I gave them, so they'll be as unified and together as we are— I in them and you in me. Then they'll be mature in this oneness and give the godless world evidence that you've sent me and loved them in the same way you've loved me..... I have made your very being known to them— who you are and what you do— and continue to make it known, so that your love for me might be in them exactly as I am in them.

(John 17:20-23, 26MSG)

O Father, give perfection to beginners, intelligence to the young ones, aid to those who are running their course. Give sorrow to the negligent, zeal of spirit to the lukewarm, and to those who have attained, a good ending, for the sake of Christ Jesus, our Lord.

(Irenaeus: c.130- c.200)

