

# SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

## in uncertain times

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### 2. Praying for each other's needs

This exercise, like the previous one, is for use by groups. These notes are for the group leader.

1. Having assembled the group, probably on Zoom, and found out how people are doing, the leader should say that today we will be asking God to meet each other's needs. This is on the assumption that Jesus was right when he said that God knows our needs and loves to meet them. Ask the group if they have ever experienced getting their needs met through prayer; have some stories of your own ready.
2. Ask the group to turn to Mark 10: 46-51 and ask one member of the group to read. Then set the scene: Bartimaeus is blind, there is no welfare state, so Bartimaeus is more or less obliged to beg. Jericho was an important crossroads, many people travelled that way, so it was a good place for beggars to operate; this is how Bartimaeus came to meet Jesus. Jesus asked Bartimaeus to say what he wanted Jesus to do for him. This is what prayer is; it is asking Jesus to do something quite specific to meet our needs. We can see that Bartimaeus' prayer was immediately answered, so today we will be identifying our own needs and then asking Jesus to meet them.
3. Next turn to Matthew 17: 14-20 and again ask someone to read. Say to the group that getting our needs met by prayer depends on someone in our prayer group having faith. Say that faith is either something we have or something we don't have; if we don't have faith it is best to ask for it because faith itself is a gift from God. So say that you will begin by asking that our group may be given the gift of faith, the ability to believe that what God says he will do, he will do. Say that when you have prayed, if someone else wants to add a prayer, that would be fine.
4. Now turn to Matthew 6 and read out the following verses:  
*Your father knows your needs before you ask him*  
*Pray then in this way*  
*Give us this day our daily bread*  
*Forgive us our sins*  
*Do not bring us to the time of trial*



Explain that in this teaching Jesus identifies 3 needs that every Christian has:

- Physical needs; food, clothing, shelter, health
- Whenever we do wrong we need to be forgiven
- We need God's help whenever we are tested

Beginning with yourself, ask the group to identify any physical needs, any ways in which they have done wrong, and any trials they face. Before anyone shares, give the group time to think carefully. Point out that Bartimaeus could have asked for many things, but he asked for one thing, for him, the most important thing. As each person shares, be sure to take some notes. Next time it will be important to find out if the prayers from today have been answered.

After you have shared your own needs, say to the group, "in a few minutes we are going to pray for each other. To pray for me you will need faith like a grain of mustard seed. Who in the group has that tiny bit of faith which means you could pray for me?" Then move in turn to the others in the group, asking them each to share, and in each case identify someone who is willing to pray. Make sure that each person has agreed to pray for someone, but if two people wish to pray for the same person then it would be good to allow that. Whatever you do, make sure that each person gets prayed for and each person prays for at least one other.