

CONFESSION PRAYER

BRINGING YOUR SINS IN PRAYER TO GOD WITH A SPIRITUAL FRIEND

“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.” (James 5:16 NIV)

We are all troubled with thoughts, actions, and inactions that lead us away from God and the full, abundant life he has for us. The practice of confession is not for condemnation or so we can experience a deep sense of shame! No, it is for our freedom and for healing that we are invited to enter into the regular practice of confessing our sins to one another and God. Confession is an act of courage to tell the full truth of your brokenness and also to have faith in Jesus, who fully forgives you of your sins.

We need the help of the Holy Spirit and the community in understanding the exact nature of our sins and entering into freedom.

PREPARE YOURSELF

Pray asking the Holy Spirit to help you see areas you have grieved him. Examine your conscience against a passage of Scripture, like the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20) or the confession prayers in this prayer book, and honestly reflect on your behavior in the past day or week. If you have more time, you may want to use a passage like the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7).

MEET WITH YOUR CONFESSION PARTNER/SPIRITUAL FRIEND

Find a confession partner of the same gender who you can trust and build an ongoing relationship. Establish a semi-regular schedule to meet with your friend. You may want to schedule no more than a half hour. Longer prayer times in mutual support begin idealistically but are very hard to sustain with the actual demands of life.

SPEND TIME IN CONFESSION AND PRAYER

Start your time with prayer. Then confess your sins specifically and to the point without explanations and rationalizations. Let your friend pray for Christ's forgiveness and his blood to cover you. Now do the same for him or her. This is not a time to offer advice or accountability but simply to help one another take your sins to Jesus for healing.

Prayer during this time can be for healing and freedom but also prayers of faith in God's forgiveness and compassion. These can be powerful times when the Holy Spirit brings great insight and healing. Say to each other after each person confesses and prays: *Almighty God, have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, keep us in eternal life. Amen.*