

PASTORAL PRAYER: July of 1998

ETERNAL SPIRIT - WHO...whether we walk through green pastures,  
beside still waters,  
or through the valley of the shadow of death,  
canst be our guide and our helper -

BEHOLD US NOW - here in this sacred place of worship, seeking in  
a common prayer, light upon our separate ways,  
and strength and illumination within our individual  
lives...

SEEK US OUT - one by one - in those special circumstances of personal  
need that have drawn us here to this sanctuary on this  
Sunday morning. Help us now to "center down", to  
look up and to see life from higher ground. Remind us..

HERE - lift up the unhappy souls into joy and the discouraged souls into  
encouragement...the defeated souls into victory - and thus enable us:

"To fight the good fight, to keep the faith,  
to finish the course..."

BREATHE into our hearts, O God, goodwill and generosity.

BREAKDOWN our stubborn prejudices.

SAVE US from letting un-Christlike attitudes and actions take hold.

FORGIVE US that at times we can be such a part of the problems of  
the world, and such a small fraction of its solutions.

COMFORT US, LORD, where we are hurting.

REMIND US - as we worship YOU - that we cannot fellowship with You  
if in our hearts we reject or neglect our brother who  
is in need. And so we pray for the hungry, the homeless,  
the hurt and helpless of our society. Sensitize our  
heart-sight that we may see those in need of help.

HELP THOSE OF US who take Jesus seriously and who try to follow in His  
Way always to be -

Agents of His love. Pure in thought,  
gracious in speech, courageous in our  
actions.

Grant us the serenity to accept the things  
we cannot change - the courage to change  
the things we can, and the wisdom to know  
the difference.

ALL THIS we ask in the name and spirit of Christ, our Lord, in whom we  
see hope for ourselves and hope for our world.

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PASTORAL PRAYER:

ETERNAL SPIRIT...Father of our spirits and the Father of all mankind. We have come to Your house this day from different backgrounds and for different purposes.

SOME OF US are here because we're feeling the pressure and stress of life in the city...crowding in on us...and we have come to know from past experience that we cannot always handle the "bumps and bruises" of life entirely on our own...that things seem to go so much better for us when we slow down, think of You, and pause to see life from the "higher ground" of worship.

SOME OF US are here because we're lonely. We walk the crowded streets of this city...people pass us by...no one seems to notice...to care. We have "low" moments when we feel that no one loves us, but then deep in our hearts we feel that tug from You that reminds us that You care, that You love us, that our lives are precious in Your sight.

OTHERS OF US are here because at other times and in other places we have felt close to You...we have had a "mountain top" experience, a fleeting glimpse, an inner vision of what life could be if only all people took You seriously and lived by the Words You have given us in the Bible.

AND SO WE ARE HERE....anxious, but uncertain...seeking always to hear Your voice and to put our convictions into action.

LORD, GOD, whatever the reason may be that has brought us here this day, may each of us feel and experience something that will work a miracle in our lives, something that will permit Your peace and power to flow through us into the lives of others.

Help us to slow down that our "restless spirits" may grow quiet and serene as we feel the gentle invasion of Your love.

MAY WE DEPART from this sanctuary of worship spiritually refreshed - with renewed insight, a better perspective, with courage and also with compassion, with faith and also with trust to do battle with the stress and struggles of another week in this city.

May we carry away from here something of Your love for all mankind, and help us to share that love with others - the hurt, homeless, and hungry - the tempted and the troubled - the sick and discouraged and the dying.

All of this we ask in the strong name and the loving spirit of Christ, our Lord.