Inward Prayer Triads

Tending our souls with sharing, prayer, confession, assurance, blessing and grace.
At St. Peter's Fireside, our community groups embrace four rhythms: upward, inward, withward, and outward. The inward rhythm is about the second great command of Jesus: loving one another. The point is to create space for one another to be seen and known, and to experience the life giving power of God through prayer and assurance of God's grace. If you are struggling with our inward rhythm over Zoom and want a change, we understand. While we live through a pandemic, we must find safe ways to nourish our souls, and for some, this may mean intentionally including a few others in your “bubble”, or meeting with social distance, in order to pray and connect in person. We’ve put together this guide to help you get started.
PRAYER TRIADS

A prayer triad is a group of three people who meet on a consistent basis for the purpose of checking in with one another, listening, sharing honestly, and praying for one another. These are often (but not always) people of the same gender. The advantage of a prayer triad in our pandemic context is that it is a small, consistent group of people. There is more flexibility as to where you meet and at what time you meet (although it is best to have a consistent time). Whether you choose to “bubble” with a triad, invite people already in your “bubble”, or follow governmental guidelines for safe, socially distant meetings, is fully up to the responsibility of the individuals in the triad.
WHAT DO TRIADS DO WHEN THEY MEET?

A prayer triad meeting will look similar to an Inward meeting. Here are some recommendations:

1. Meet at a consistent time and for a set length (1 hour, every other week, for example). Set an end date for when to reassess (maybe the end of 2020).

2. Follow a consistent pattern to keep your focus (see the example liturgy, however, adopt whatever pattern works best for your group).

3. In your time of sharing, respond in prayer for each person. You may want to read a piece of Scripture at the end to assure one another of God’s grace (Romans 8.1-2 is a good option).

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I WANT TO START A PRAYER TRIAD THIS FALL?

1. Consider one other person whom you could pray with consistently and go deeper in the relationship. Start with the people in your CG, if you are in one.

2. Be clear about what you’re asking: to meet x times a month, for an hour, for the purpose of checking in and prayer.

3. Once you have two people, consider together a third to invite.

4. Consider together your comfort levels in meeting, specific concerns, and the safety precautions you will adopt. Do not assume the others are willing to meet in the same way you might be willing to!

If you are in a community group, this means the Triad will be your inward rhythm for this time, therefore you would not be expected to join additional CG inward meetings.
A Liturgy for Inward Prayer Triads
Remind one another that you are gathering with a specific intention. While it's important to socialize and enjoy one another's company, the goal in gathering is to care for one another's souls through listening and prayer, confession of sins and declaration of forgiveness, and to leave with God's blessing. The richness of this time together will deepen with this intention, and if you connect socially at other times.
INTRODUCTORY SCRIPTURE

You can choose a favourite verse, or use: “I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”

John 15:5

PSALM

Choose a Psalm. You can choose them at random, or read them sequentially through the year. However, don’t just read the Psalm. Pray with the Psalmist!

SHARE AND PRAY

Each person takes a turn to share as others listen intently, ask clarifying questions, and pray.

First, aim to keep what you share to five minutes. Rather than recap what has been happening in your life since you last met, focus on where you’ve seen God at work in your life and identify areas where you need to see God move. It is better to focus on one or two specific areas rather than offer broad strokes.

Second, after a person has shared, one person can ask one or two clarifying questions. A clarifying question is an open ended question that requires more than a “yes” or “no” answer. For example, if someone shared that they’re struggling with a serious conflict with a co-worker, you might ask, “You said this conflict is especially hard, what makes it so difficult?” If you ask clarifying questions, the goal is to better understand; not to problem solve. However, it is appropriate to ask, “How do you think God wants you to handle this?” or “What help do you need for this challenge?”

Third, after one person has asked clarifying questions, the remaining person will pray for the person who shared. As you pray, do not preach, and refrain from giving advice. What we need, even more, is God’s empowering presence and guidance. Bring the specifics of what was shared to God, and ask God to meet these requests.
CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE

After each person has shared and received prayer, take a minute of silence to reflect and examine your heart in light of God’s nature and kingdom. It may help to slowly read the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17) or the Summary of the Law (Matthew 22:36-40).

Begin by saying this confession together:

Heavenly Father, we confess that we have sinned greatly against you in thought, word, and deed, and have done that which is wrong in your sight. We ask you to forgive us our sins, and to give us grace always to resist temptation and to do your holy will; for Jesus Christ’s sake. Amen.

Next, each member will take a turn to lead another through this liturgy of confession and forgiveness:

**Leader**  May the Lord be in your heart and on your lips, that you may truly confess your sins to Almighty God.

**Confessor**  I confess to God that I have sinned in thought, word, and deed, by my own fault. And especially ... [Allow time for silence and quiet self-examination. Do not rush. When you’re ready, briefly name specific sins and areas of remorse or great need] ... I pray to God to forgive me all my sins for the sake of Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

**Leader**  Hear these words from Jesus Christ: “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld”

*John 20:22-23*
Leader (with a hand placed on the confessor’s shoulder or head)

Our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given power to his followers to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in him: Of his great mercy forgive you your offences. And by his authority committed to me, I forgive you from all your sins, In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Leader

Hear these words of comfort from Psalm 103:11-12, “For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.”

Leader

Do you believe you are truly and fully forgiven by Jesus Christ?

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Affirm your faith together with the Lord’s Prayer, the Apostle’s Creed, or both:

THE LORD’S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

APOSTLES’ CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.

CLOSING INTENTION

Remind each other that what was shared was in confidence. It will not be repeated elsewhere. If there are areas of concern, make sure to follow up personally with each person. If someone needs more help and guidance, meet with them and ask them if they’d be open to connecting with a pastor to receive additional care in addition to this group.

BENEDICTION

Proclaim these words of benediction together:
“Now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified .... The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all forevermore.”

Acts 20:32 and 2 Corinthians 13:14