

*A prayer guide for use  
during examinations*

*Dion A Forster*

*John Wesley College, Pretoria*

*Equipping all people to proclaim the Gospel for  
Healing and Transformation*

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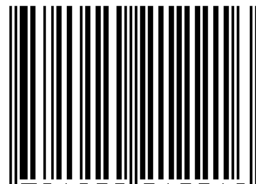
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## *A few words of encouragement. . .*

Preparing for, and writing, your final assessments and examinations can be a cause for great concern and stress! This little booklet of prayers<sup>1</sup> can be a useful guide to remind you that you are not alone as you prepare and write your exams.

Of course you need to remember that God, who has called you to this ministry, is with you as you prepare, and as you write. Then there are your family and friends who are praying for you. It is also worth remembering that your sisters and brothers here at College experience similar anxieties and concerns as you do, so remember to pray for one another. Lastly, I can assure you that the faculty and staff of the college remember you in their prayers.

Another point to remember is that these examinations are a marker on your journey towards Ordination. Each of us has a responsibility to offer God, and God's people, our very best! So, it is important that you take your studies very seriously (not just to get good marks, but also to be the best minister you can be)! As with everything that you choose to do for God's honour and glory, there will be temptations and obstacles. So, guard against wasting your time. Make sure to plan your study and revision time carefully. Sleep well before your exams, and do some light exercise to keep your mind sharp and active.

May God bless you richly as you prepare, and write, your examinations!

Rev Dr Dion Forster  
Dean, John Wesley College, Pretoria  
(<http://www.spirituality.org.za>)

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<sup>1</sup> These prayers were originally prepared by Roger Prentice and Virginia Cookman, Chaplains of Acadia University, Canada (<http://admin.acadiau.ca/chaplain/prayer.htm>). They were edited by Dion Forster and reprinted with kind permission from the authors.



## *Prayer for Preparation to Study*

Grant me peace, O God, as I open my books and notes. Open my mind to Your will, and may I dedicate these hours to Your Son, Jesus Christ.

Offer me insight, O Lord, that I might understand these things, and see them as a part of Your Kingdom.

May I offer You my best in reading and learning that it may be a part of my discipleship.

O Jesus Christ, may this be a worthy time that is faithful to You and bring me closer to the goals I have in order to serve You. I offer this time and prayer in Your holy Name. Amen.

## *Prayer Before an Exam*

O wise God, I pray that my mind might be rested, my body energized, and my spirit inspired for the exam I must write.

Grant me peace and assurance so that I might do the best I am able, regardless of what that might be.

Be with my fellow students and may I be a good example to them, offering reassurance and confidence regardless of how I feel.

May I be honest and insightful, and able to give a true record of what I have learned. In the end, may any disappointment be born with grace, and any joy accompanied with humility.

I write this exam with You, O Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.



## *Prayer For Peace of Mind*

In this time of anxiety, O loving God, grant me peace of mind. Quiet any distress and allow me to see clearly my mission and discipleship.

I pray for my examiners as well as for myself, so that they might be wise in their questioning so that it will allow for a true accounting of my learning and understanding.

May the memory of my family and friends remind me of their support, regardless of outcome, united with them in the spirit of love.

May I be wise enough to gain enough rest so that all might be ready, my thoughts organized, and my life dedicated to serve You whatever the cost, through the love of Jesus Christ, my Saviour. Amen.

## *Prayer in a Time of Anxiety*

When I am truly anxious, O God, remind me of my love of Your Son, Jesus Christ. May I realize that I will not be abandoned, but am accompanied always by Him.

Dispel any sense of self-concern, and remind me that others are feeling the same tensions, which is only natural in times of stress.

Grant me insight, God of Wisdom, to see the things that have been taught, to understand them in the unfolding story of Your Creation, and our place within it.

May I lay my head down to rest confident that You are always with us, through the love and affection of Your Son, Jesus Christ, my Redeemer and Lord. Amen.



## *Prayer Before Retiring at Night*

God of strength and of comfort, I close the day with thoughts of You.

As I turn myself over to the sleep of the present night, grant that Your benediction may be upon me, and all whom I love. We depend upon Your care, and pray that we may awake reassured of Your presence.

No matter how late it might be, nor how early I might have to arise, may this time of sleep help to restore my calmness and perceptiveness, so that when I open my eyes next, I shall be ready to continue my study and service of You.

In the last moments of consciousness, I resign my life and purpose to You, and to Your Son, Jesus Christ, in whose Name I pray. Amen.

## *Prayer When I Awake*

May my first thoughts be of You, O Light of Life, and may I dedicate all that I do these coming hours to Your glory.

If my task be to study, may I do it without hesitation. If I face an examination, may I meet it with determination and goodwill.

As I cast off the hours of sleep, and prepare for my responsibilities for the day, may I always remember that You are with me in the person of Your Son, Jesus Christ.

As I awaken, quicken my mind, enlarge my heart, and grant me wisdom to do my best in all I do this day.

May I be a true steward of the time I have this day, and dedicate all that I do to the love and care of my Lord and Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Amen.



## *The Lord's Prayer (in English)*

Our Father,  
who art in heaven,  
hallowed be Your Name.  
Your Kingdom come,  
Your will be done in earth,  
as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive them that trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For Yours is the Kingdom,  
the power and the glory,  
for ever and ever.  
Amen.

## *The Lord's Prayer (in Xhosa)*

BAWO wethu osezulwini!  
Ma liphathwe ngobungcwele igama lakho.  
Ubukumkani bakho ma bufike.  
Intando yakho ma yenziwe emhlabeni,  
Nje ngokuba isenziwa ezulwini.  
Ma usiphe namhla nje isonka sethu semihla ngemihla.  
Usixolele izoono zethu,  
Nje ngokuba nathi sixolela aabo basonayo thina.  
Ungasingenisi ekuhendweni;  
Sisindise enkohlakalweni;  
Ngokuba ubukumkani bubobakho,  
Namandla engawakho,  
Nobungcwalisa bubobakho,  
Kude kube ngunaphakade.  
Amen.

# *Prayers for Students During Exams*

## *1st Day of Exams*

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and they who live by it grow in understanding. Praise will be His for ever."  
Psalm 111: 10 (REB)

O wise God, I pray that my mind might be rested, my body energized, and my spirit inspired for the exam I must write.

Grant me peace and assurance so that I might do the best I am able, regardless of what that might be.

Be with my fellow students that I might be a good example to them of faithfulness, offering reassurance and confidence regardless of how I feel.

May I be honest and insightful, able to give a true record of what I have learned this past term. In the end, may any disappointment be born with grace and any joy accompanied with humility.

I write this examination with You, O God. Amen.

## *2nd Day of Exams*

"Wisdom has built her house; she has hewn her seven pillars. ... The first step to wisdom is the fear of the Lord, and knowledge of the Most Holy One is understanding." Proverbs 9: 1,10 (REB)

Whether I have an exam or not, incline my ear to Your word, and open my eyes to Your presence. It is so easy to forget that You are with us.

Direct my energy to the accomplishment of Your will for me, allowing my spirit to detect the direction in which I might best be Your disciple.

Today I find myself immersed in words, sentences, and symbols – whatever language my subject uses. May they speak clearly and with distinction.

May my desk be an altar where I may lay down my life through my efforts, and dedicate it all to You by quickening my knowledge for Your will to be done. Amen.

### *3<sup>rd</sup> Day of Exams*

"When I look up at your heavens, the work of your fingers, at the moon and the stars you have set in place, what is a frail mortal, that you should be mindful of him, a human being, that you should take notice of him?" Psalm 8: 3,4 (REB)

Wondrous God, we look at Creation when we study, and see so much. We see the works of Your fingers in the majesty of science and the arts, telling us that these are the implements by which we build Your Kingdom.

We are in awe of the infinity of Your universe, and seek to know as much as we are able. May the combination of all our minds open to us an understanding of the meaning of it all.

Armed with this vision, may we explore the knowledge we have and use it wisely. In our examinations, may we display our knowledge with reverence and duty,

"Lord our Sovereign, how glorious is your Name throughout the world!" (Psalm 8: 9 (REB)) Amen.



## *4<sup>th</sup> Day of Exams*

"Let us now praise famous people, the parents of our people in their generations; to them the Lord assigned great glory, his majestic greatness from of old." Ecclesiasticus 44: 1,2 (REB)

God of history and civilization, we know that human life together is complex and wondrous. May our exams take this into account so that we might display in our writing of them our humility and yet our joy of being a part of what we study.

We give thanks for people who have gone before us, who have taught us either indirectly or directly. May we build on the basis which they have given us, so that we may more nearly approach Your Kingdom.

May we be encouraged by that fact that others have done what we are attempting now, and have been successful. May we follow in the footsteps of John Wesley, Tiyo Soga, Bishop Tutu, Bishop Mogoba, Bishop Malinga, and all the others who have led the way in serving You. Amen.

## *5<sup>th</sup> Day of Exams*

"What shall I bring when I come before the Lord, when I bow before God on high?" Micah 6: 6a (REB)

What do I bring, O Lord, as I approach the exams I write? May it be honest effort, uncontaminated by my personal envy or pride. May I open my life to You as I write my answers to the questions.

May I not bring wasted hours and frivolous attempts and try to make them look serious and worthy to the examiner. Permit my time to have been used well, and in a sense of purpose and love.

"The Lord has told you what is good, and what is that the Lord requires of you: only to act justly, to love loyalty, to walk humbly with your God." (Micah 6: 8 (REB)) Amen.

## *6<sup>th</sup> Day of Exams*

"Job answered the Lord: I know that you can do all things and that no purpose is beyond you." Job 42: 1,2 (REB)

We look to You, O Lord God, and wonder how small we are, and how we can know anything useful. Now we understand that our abilities come from Your hands. As we study and write, may our display of knowledge and wisdom have no purpose beyond You.

There have been difficult days this term when we have been discouraged, angry, disappointed, confused. When we have seen our way clear of these things, it has been Your Spirit that has resurrected our hope and determination.

We are grateful for those around us who have shared Your Spirit with us, who have encouraged us, perhaps have corrected us, but in the end, allowed us to return to You with deeper understanding.

"I knew of you then only by report, but now I see you with my own eyes. Therefore I yield, repenting in dust and ashes." (Job 42: 5,6 (REB)) Amen.

## *7<sup>th</sup> Day of Exams*

"Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him there until daybreak." Genesis 32: 24 (REB)

Often we have wrestled with our consciences, our goals, our studies, and tried to discover who we are and why we study these things. Sometimes it has been a difficult struggle and we almost lost.

We give thanks that we have come this far, and know that there is a purpose in the studies we do. May they open our minds to Your call and direction given to our life so that we may respond with a clear decision.

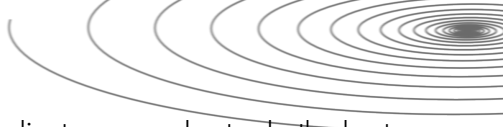
If we are still unsure, may we have confidence that our studies will lead us to some intelligence about Your will, and have faith strong enough to seek You in the fog of confusion, knowing that there is light ahead. Amen.

"Jacob said, 'Tell me your name, I pray.' He replied, 'Why do you ask my name?' but gave him his blessing there. Jacob called the place Peniel, 'because,' he said, 'I have seen God face to face yet my life is spared.'" Genesis 32: 29, 30 (REB)

## *8<sup>th</sup> Day of Exams*

"Come see what the Lord has done, the astounding deeds he has wrought on earth..." Psalm 46: 8 (REB)

There are times, O God, when I am overwhelmed by the evidence of Your presence. It can be seen in the work that I study, the conversations during the day, the scenes of nature about us on this campus and area.



Let these build my faith, and rededicate my resolve to do the best possible revision of my work for these exams. They are important both to me and to You.

As I read the books I find Your presence with people in every Age. As I examine the microscope, I see the minute beauty and excellence of Your creation. As I enter the library I find others studying so they too might bring hope to our world.

"Come see what the Lord has done, the astounding deeds he has wrought on earth." Psalm 46: 8 (REB)

"The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress." Psalm 46: 11 (REB)



## *9th Day of Exams*

"I heard the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?' I said, 'Here am I! Send me.'" Isaiah 6: 8. 9a (REB)

Let me not forget, O God, that I am called to Your service.

May I hear Your voice through the Scriptures which will give me knowledge of Your presence in life.

May I hear Your voice through the lips of the faithful who speak with Your Spirit.

May I hear Your voice in the experiences I have in study and recreation that it all might come together for me.

God of life and light, may each opportunity to reveal what I know on an exam be an avenue of understanding of whom I am and what I should be dedicating my life to become. May I not be self-centred and foolish, but open to Your eternal Kingdom.



## 10<sup>th</sup> Day of Exams

"Jonah offered this prayer to the Lord his God: 'I thought I was banished from your sight and should never again look towards your holy temple.'" Jonah 2: 4 (REB)

There have been plenty of times, O God, when I thought I was banished from Your sight, that I would never be able to worship you again. The wondrous thing is that I have not been abandoned by Your Spirit.

Your Spirit can speak through the works I study. Your Spirit can reveal Your love through others. Your Spirit can encourage by the calling I have received.

May I never neglect again the chance to study. May I never take other people for granted. May I never fail to hear Your call.

I devote all that I have to You, and pray that I may be more diligent and worthy of Your purposes. We cannot be on this earth for nothing – may I seek and find the right door to open. May my exams point me in the right direction. Amen.

## 11<sup>th</sup> Day of Exams

"Fear God and obey his commandments; this sums up the duty of humanity. For God will bring everything we do to judgment, every secret, whether good or bad." Ecclesiastes 12: 13, 14 (REB)

It is judgment that I fear: the only thing I have a right to ask is that it be fair and just. If I do not know my work, may I accept the assessment. If I do know my work, may I relate it successfully so the examiner may know.

May this symbol of our larger life be true, as well. When we fail, may we gracefully receive correction; when we succeed may we gracefully accept the praise.

○ God, even when tired, frustrated, and busy, may I have the patience to speak to You, be kind to those I meet, and offer a prayer to You for strength, insight, and love.

I pray for those who return home afraid, frightened of the results, and the possible chastisement it might bring. I pray for those who have been successful, so they may be wise in their continuing of study. Amen.

## *12<sup>th</sup> Day of Exams*

"For a child has been born to us, a son is given to us; he will bear the symbol of dominion on his shoulder, and his title will be: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty Hero, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9: 6 (REB)

This is the last day of exams, ○ God. As I finish my obligations here, may I look to worthy celebration of the Birth, Death, and Resurrection of Your Son, not only 2,000 years ago, but in my life now.

I offer all the success I have had to Him. Where I have failed, I ask His forgiveness and grace. May I follow in the steps of the Wise Men from the East and recognize His preeminence in all of life's direction.

When I leave this Seminary, I pray that I may be true to Your love with my family and friends, treat them with understanding and grace, and prepare myself for the coming challenges of Your call to me. Amen.

A large, elegant, light gray decorative flourish that starts with a large loop on the left and extends to the right, ending in a smaller loop.

*Benediction*

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the love of God,  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit  
be with us all.

A light gray decorative flourish consisting of a small loop on the left and three long, sweeping, upward-curving lines that extend towards the right side of the page.

Amen.