

The Sarum Prayer Week 1

God be in my head and in my understanding
God be in my eyes and in my looking
God be in my mouth and in my speaking
God be in my heart and in my thinking
God be in my end and in my departing.

Have you ever heard this prayer before? Many people probably have. It is called the Sarum Prayer because it comes from the Sarum Primer. The Sarum Primer is a collection of prayers and worship resources developed in Salisbury, England, during the 13th century. It was used throughout England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland, as well as some parts of continental Europe, until the Reformation. It continues to be valued today because of its beautiful expressions of faith and devotion. Since this prayer was written down in the 13th century, it has been used by countless people. Our congregation will sing this prayer in worship. By using these ancient words, we can gain a sense of the entire Christian community throughout space and time and reflect on the timeless dimensions of the people of God. Consider using this prayer as part of your devotions this week and remember all the saints who have gone before us who also lifted this prayer up to God.

Say this prayer daily this week, read the scriptures below and reflect on what you notice in the readings.

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| MONDAY | <i>Scripture: Exodus 31:1-11</i> | <i>Theme: God Fully Equips His Servants</i> |
| TUESDAY | <i>Scripture: Romans 12:1-2</i> | <i>Theme: A Living Sacrifice</i> |
| WEDNESDAY | <i>Scripture: Ephesians 6:10-20</i> | <i>Theme: Whole Body Armor</i> |
| THURSDAY | <i>Scripture: Proverbs 4:20-27</i> | <i>Theme: Wisdom for the Whole Body</i> |
| FRIDAY | <i>Scripture: Proverbs 2:1-15</i> | <i>Theme: A Prayer for Wisdom</i> |

The Sarum Prayer Week 2

God be in my head and in my understanding

God be in my eyes and in my looking

God be in my mouth and in my speaking

God be in my heart and in my thinking

God be in my end and in my departing.

The world is filled with knowledge but sadly lacking in wisdom or understanding. Today we have available tremendous sources of information unavailable in previous generations. Unfortunately this information comes to us with no guidelines as to its spiritual validity or authority. It just comes. Unless we are gifted with discernment, it is easy to be set on a path that leads anywhere from frustration to disaster. Scripture teaches us the value of wisdom. It is up to us, in humility, to clear of minds of all the things we think we know, so that we might be open to those precious things the Spirit wants to teach us. Let us not be hoodwinked by the wisdom of the world, the lure of power, or the attractiveness of wealth. Let us seek the wisdom of God. Understanding, truth, and wisdom are only to be found in God, the creator and sustainer of all things. As believers we have been given true sources of wisdom in the revealed Word of God, and in the presence of the Holy Spirit who guides us into all understanding. As we say the first part of the Sarum prayer this week let us become aware of the gift we are seeking and receiving. It is the gift of a lifetime, let us not neglect it.

Say this prayer daily this week, focus on the first line; God be in my head and in my understanding. Read the scriptures below and reflect on what you notice in the readings.

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| MONDAY | <i>Scripture: Job 28:13-28</i> | <i>Theme: The Fear of the Lord Begets Wisdom</i> |
| TUESDAY | <i>Scripture: 1 Kings 4:29-34</i> | <i>Theme: Solomon's Wisdom</i> |
| WEDNESDAY | <i>Scripture: Jeremiah 9:23-25</i> | <i>Theme: Boast in God's Wisdom</i> |
| THURSDAY | <i>Scripture: Daniel 10:7-14</i> | <i>Theme: Wisdom in Answer to Prayer</i> |
| FRIDAY | <i>Scripture: John 15:23-27</i> | <i>Theme: A Gift of the Holy Spirit</i> |

The Sarum Prayer Week 3

God be in my head and in my understanding

God be in my eyes and in my looking

God be in my mouth and in my speaking

God be in my heart and in my thinking

God be in my end and in my departing.

Seeing and looking have slightly different emphasis for the use of our eyes. We see lots of things that just happen in front of us. Some of them register and some do not. But looking implies that we have intentionally sought the thing that we are looking at. In other words we have looked for it. The prayer asks that God protect us in our seeing—both physically and spiritually. There are many things that I hope never to have to see—war, perversion, and cruelty for example. There are things I should be seeing with more compassion—the poor, sick, needy. There are things that I should not take for granted—the beauty of the earth, for example. The second part of the prayer ask God to be in our looking. We are tempted to look at all kinds of things that undermine our faith walk. We hear contemporaries talking about a risqué half-time show, the latest adult TV streaming, or the no. 1 book with the hot sex scenes and are tempted to go have a look. Our prayers asks God to restrain our looking to those things that edify, encourage, and heal our souls. Scripture tell us where to look: “Behold to you I lift up my eyes, O you who are enthroned in the heavens” (Psalm 123:1). As you pray this week, become aware of what you see and what you go looking for. Lift your eyes and see the one enthroned!

As you say the prayer this week, focus on the second line; God Be in my eyes and in my looking. Read each scripture and reflect on what you notice in the reading.

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| MONDAY | <i>Scripture: Psalm 123</i> | <i>Theme: Look to the Lord</i> |
| TUESDAY | <i>Scripture: John 3:16-21</i> | <i>Theme: Embracing the Light</i> |
| WEDNESDAY | <i>Scripture: Matthew 13:13-16</i> | <i>Theme: Given Light to Understand the Parables</i> |
| THURSDAY | <i>Scripture: Matthew 6:22-23</i> | <i>Theme: Becoming Light</i> |
| FRIDAY | <i>Scripture: 2 Corinthians 4:1-6; 16-18</i> | <i>Theme: Seeing the Unseen</i> |

The Sarum Prayer Week 4

God be in my head and in my understanding

God be in my eyes and in my looking

God be in my mouth and in my speaking

God be in my heart and in my thinking

God be in my end and in my departing.

The Rule of Benedict is known for its indicators of humility. They claim that the most difficult indicator is one's ability to control one's speech. That is why they require silence. While it is true that forced silence helps, the truth of the matter is that even when we remain silent our thoughts are speaking a mile a minute! The Sarum Prayer invites us to consider not only the spoken words but the words that swirl around in our heads before they are spoken. We all need a control switch. James says that it is a perfect man that can bridle his speech. And that if one can bridle the tongue one can bridle the whole body. Our society is filled with an abundance of speech. In fact it is almost constant. Most of it is background noise that flits in and out of our minds. To be able to speak measuredly and profoundly is a rare gift. It is the purpose of this prayer for us to have the control to use speech for the glory of God. There is an old saying; "Is it true? Is it necessary? Is it kind? All good guidelines. This week consider your words and the thoughts behind them. Ask God to direct those thoughts and bridle the tongue that would let the untruth, unkind, and unnecessary thoughts escape into words that would misdirect, hurt or confuse those around us. "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable, O Lord."

As you say the prayer this week, focus on the third line; God Be in my mouth and in my speaking.
Read each scripture and reflect on what you notice in the reading.

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| MONDAY | <i>Scripture: Psalm 34</i> | <i>Theme: Using our Mouth to Praise</i> |
| TUESDAY | <i>Scripture: Psalm 33:1-3</i> | <i>Theme: Using our Mouth to Sing</i> |
| WEDNESDAY | <i>Scripture: 1 John 1:6-9</i> | <i>Theme: Using our Mouth to Confess</i> |
| THURSDAY | <i>Scripture: Matthew 10:16-25</i> | <i>Theme: Using our Mouth to Bear Witness</i> |
| FRIDAY | <i>Scripture: Romans 10:1-13</i> | <i>Theme: Using our Mouth to Confess that "Jesus is Lord"</i> |