A NIGHT
of LAMENT
for RACIAL
JUSTICE

PRAYER COMPANION BOOKLET
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Hello friends,

Like you, I have been grieved in recent weeks by the ongoing effects of racial injustice in our nation. As part of The Gospel Coalition family, I have been praying and planning with other leaders about how we can support you and your church during this trying time.

So, in keeping with TGC’s theological vision for ministry—especially our commitments to counter-cultural community and doing justice and mercy—we’re inviting you to pray with us and other believers from around the world. There are many ways Christians can respond to injustice, but one response we should never neglect or minimize is prayer.

In light of recent events, we’ve planned this “Night of Lament for Racial Justice” on Saturday, June 20. This guide can help direct your times of prayer through the day leading up to the evening event.

In this prayer guide you will find three parts:

First, a morning prayer. We would like to encourage you to spend the morning in personal prayer, based on Psalm 10.

Second, a midday prayer. We hope you will spend this time praying with others in your community, whether it’s your family around the kitchen table, or maybe your church small group or friends on a video call.

Last, an evening prayer. On Saturday evening at 7 p.m. EDT, we will gather online with believers from across the world. During this time, various brothers and sisters, pastors and other ministry leaders, as well as musicians, will help guide this one-hour time of prayer. Join us on thegospelcoalition.org, YouTube Live, Facebook Live, Instagram Live, and Periscope.

We want to pray to the Lord in faith, trusting what it says in Psalm 10:17,

17 O LORD, you hear the desire of the afflicted; you will strengthen their heart; you will incline your ear.

Thank you.

Julius Kim
President, The Gospel Coalition
This prayer guide is to help you pray this morning. Start your prayer time by reading Psalm 10, and then spend some time praying about the various topics. As you lament today, perhaps pick one or two of the verses and meditate on those throughout the day.

Psalm 10:1-18

1 Why, O LORD, do you stand far away? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?
2 In arrogance the wicked hotly pursue the poor; let them be caught in the schemes that they have devised.
3 For the wicked boasts of the desires of his soul, and the one greedy for gain curses and renounces the LORD.
4 In the pride of his face the wicked does not seek him; all his thoughts are, “There is no God.”
5 His ways prosper at all times; your judgments are on high, out of his sight; as for all his foes, he puffs at them.
6 He says in his heart, “I shall not be moved; throughout all generations I shall not meet adversity.”
7 His mouth is filled with cursing and deceit and oppression; under his tongue are mischief and iniquity.
8 He sits in ambush in the villages; in hiding places he murders the innocent. His eyes stealthily watch for the helpless;
9 he lurks in ambush like a lion in his thicket; he lurks that he may seize the poor; he seizes the poor when he draws him into his net.
10 The helpless are crushed, sink down, and fall by his might.
11 He says in his heart, “God has forgotten, he has hidden his face, he will never see it.”
12 Arise, O LORD; O God, lift up your hand; forget not the afflicted.
13 Why does the wicked renounce God and say in his heart, “You will not call to account”?
14 But you do see, for you note mischief and vexation, that you may take it into your hands;
to you the helpless commits himself;
you have been the helper of the fatherless.
15 Break the arm of the wicked and evildoer;
call his wickedness to account till you find none.
16 The LORD is king forever and ever;
the nations perish from his land.
17 O LORD, you hear the desire of the afflicted;
you will strengthen their heart; you will incline your ear
18 to do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed,
so that man who is of the earth may strike terror no more.

TURN

I. Turn to the Lord.
In times of sorrow and suffering, we may wonder why justice is delayed. While we know that
nothing can separate us from the love of God (Rom. 8:35–39), our grief can make God feel
far off and the joy of his presence a distant memory. Begin your prayer time this morning
calling out honestly to the Lord in your distress.

Psalm 10:1
1 Why, O LORD, do you stand far away?
Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?

COMPLAIN

II. Lament the wicked actions in our world.
Prayerfully consider sinful actions and oppressive systems in our world, particularly those
that create racial injustice. Lament the brokenness of our world and the wickedness that we
witness around us, even within the church.

Psalm 10:2
2 In arrogance the wicked hotly pursue the poor;
let them be caught in the schemes that they have devised.

Psalm 10:8–9
8 He sits in ambush in the villages;
in hiding places he murders the innocent.
His eyes stealthily watch for the helpless;
9 he lurks in ambush like a lion in his thicket;
he lurks that he may seize the poor;
he seizes the poor when he draws him into his net.

III. Lament the wicked words in our world.
Proverbs tells us, “Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing” (Prov. 12:18, NIV84). Lament words that cause harm and painfully pierce others.
Psalm 10:3
3 For the wicked boasts of the desires of his soul, and the one greedy for gain curses and renounces the LORD.

Psalm 10:7
7 His mouth is filled with cursing and deceit and oppression; under his tongue are mischief and iniquity.

IV. Lament the wicked thoughts in our world.
Words and actions flow from the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Lament the reality of hearts that deny God’s justice and deny the beautiful image of God in every person.

Psalm 10:4-6
4 In the pride of his face the wicked does not seek him; all his thoughts are, “There is no God.”
5 His ways prosper at all times; your judgments are on high, out of his sight; as for all his foes, he puffs at them.
6 He says in his heart, “I shall not be moved; throughout all generations I shall not meet adversity.”

Psalm 10:11
11 He says in his heart, “God has forgotten, he has hidden his face, he will never see it.”

V. Lament the suffering of the poor and vulnerable in our world.
Wicked thoughts, words, and actions can oppress and disproportionately affect the poor and the vulnerable. Lament the crushing weight of injustice in our world. As you consider your own thoughts, words, and actions (or a passive indifference), confess and repent for any harm you have caused others.

Psalm 10:8-9
8 He sits in ambush in the villages; in hiding places he murders the innocent. His eyes stealthily watch for the helpless; 
9 he lurks in ambush like a lion in his thicket; he lurks that he may seize the poor; he seizes the poor when he draws him into his net.

ASK
VI. Cry to the Lord for help.
In our helplessness, the Lord is a sure refuge. Present your requests to him, ask him for help, seek him, and remember his promises. Ask God to do justice and to give you a heart like his—one that seeks to correct oppression and care for the vulnerable.
Psalm 10:12-15

12 Arise, O LORD; O God, lift up your hand; forget not the afflicted.
13 Why does the wicked renounce God and say in his heart, “You will not call to account”? 
14 But you do see, for you note mischief and vexation, that you may take it into your hands; to you the helpless commits himself; you have been the helper of the fatherless.
15 Break the arm of the wicked and evildoer; call his wickedness to account till you find none.

Spend some time meditating on what you’ve been learning through this trial. What is God’s Word teaching you? What truths about God are comforting your soul? How is this experience changing you to be more like Christ?

TRUST

VII. Trust in the character of God.

In our helplessness, the Lord is a sure refuge. Present your requests to him, ask him for help, seek him, and remember his promises. Ask God to do justice and to give you a heart like his—one that seeks to correct oppression and care for the vulnerable.

Psalm 10:16-18

16 The LORD is king forever and ever; the nations perish from his land.
17 O LORD, you hear the desire of the afflicted; you will strengthen their heart; you will incline your ear
18 to do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed, so that man who is of the earth may strike terror no more.
We encourage you to join with others in prayer. You could pray with a friend on the phone, connect with your small group, or pray with your family at home. Use this midday prayer time as an opportunity to gather with fellow Christians to pray together. Depending on the size of your group, consider asking a different person to lead each section.

**TURN**

*Turn to God, thanking him that he welcomes and hears our prayers.*

Psalm 10:17

> 17 O LORD, you hear the desire of the afflicted; you will strengthen their heart; you will incline your ear

Psalm 50:15

> 15 Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.

**COMPLAIN**

*Set your troubles before the Lord. Acknowledge the presence of sin (particularly racial injustice) in our society, the pain of its brokenness, and its harmful effect on our world.*

Jeremiah 12:1

> 1 Righteous are you, O LORD, when I complain to you; yet I would plead my case before you. Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why do all who are treacherous thrive?

Psalm 55:1-3

> 1 Give ear to my prayer, O God, and hide not yourself from my plea for mercy!
> 2 Attend to me, and answer me;
I am restless in my complaint and I moan, 
because of the noise of the enemy, 
because of the oppression of the wicked. 
For they drop trouble upon me, 
and in anger they bear a grudge against me.

Psalm 55:16-19

16 But I call to God, 
and the LORD will save me. 
17 Evening and morning and at noon 
I utter my complaint and moan, 
and he hears my voice. 
18 He redeems my soul in safety 
from the battle that I wage, 
for many are arrayed against me. 
19 God will give ear and humble them, 
he who is enthroned from of old, Selah 
because they do not change and do not fear God.

ASK

Boldly ask for God to bring change that maintains the right of the afflicted (particularly for black, brown, and indigenous people of color in our society). Ask him for wisdom and understanding to know your part in doing justice for those oppressed in our society. Pray for his light to shine forth in the midst of darkness.

Psalm 82:1-4

1 God has taken his place in the divine council; 
in the midst of the gods he holds judgment: 
2 “How long will you judge unjustly 
and show partiality to the wicked? Selah 
3 Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; 
maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute. 
4 Rescue the weak and the needy; 
deliver them from the hand of the wicked:”

Psalm 18:1-3

1 I love you, O LORD, my strength. 
2 The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, 
my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, 
my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. 
3 I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, 
and I am saved from my enemies.

Psalm 18:6
6 In my distress I called upon the LORD; to my God I cried for help. From his temple he heard my voice, and my cry to him reached his ears.

Psalm 55:22
22 Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved.

Isaiah 58:10-11
10 If you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday. 11 And the LORD will guide you continually and satisfy your desire in scorched places and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.

TRUST
Remember and reflect upon the character of God. Trust in him, praising him for his righteousness and justice in all things.

Psalm 20:7-8
7 Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God. 8 They collapse and fall, but we rise and stand upright.

Psalm 28:6-7
6 Blessed be the LORD! For he has heard the voice of my pleas for mercy. 7 The LORD is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts, and I am helped; my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him.

Psalm 37:1-6
1 Fret not yourself because of evildoers; be not envious of wrongdoing! 2 For they will soon fade like the grass and wither like the green herb. 3 Trust in the LORD, and do good; dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness. 4 Delight yourself in the LORD,
and he will give you the desires of your heart.
5 Commit your way to the LORD;
trust in him, and he will act.
6 He will bring forth your righteousness as the light,
and your justice as the noonday.

Proverbs 3:5-8
5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
and do not lean on your own understanding.
6 In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make straight your paths.
7 Be not wise in your own eyes;
fear the LORD, and turn away from evil.
8 It will be healing to your flesh
and refreshment to your bones.
Evening Prayer

Online Prayer and Worship
During this one-hour prayer time various brothers and sisters, pastors and ministry leaders, as well as special musicians, will help guide us through a unifying moment of corporate prayer and worship.

When Will It Take Place?
Saturday, June 20. The evening prayer time will be broadcast on thegospelcoalition.org, YouTube Live, Facebook Live, Instagram Live, and Periscope from 7 to 8 p.m. EDT (4–5 p.m. PDT).

Who Will Be Involved?
We hope Christians from all over the world join us for this day of prayer and lament. The topics of prayer and confirmed participants for the evening prayer time online include:

- **TURN TO GOD** — Trillia Newbell, Mark Vroegop, Shai Linne
- **COMPLAIN** — Irwyn Ince, David Platt, Darryl Williamson
- **ASK** — Vermon Pierre, Mary Wilson, Juan Sánchez
- **TRUST** — Stephen Um, Dennae Pierre, K. Edward Copeland

Musicians who will lead us in singing:

- Shiloh Church
- Antoine Bradford
- Austin Stone Worship