



Mill Hill

Instilling values, inspiring minds

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Mill Hill School

A Selection Of Prayers,
Reflections And Bible Readings

To be read slowly, thoughtfully and meditatively.



Prayers

The School Prayer

O Lord, our heavenly Father, by whose Spirit mankind is taught knowledge,
who givest wisdom to all them that ask thee,
we beseech thee to prosper all colleges and schools of sound learning;
and especially to bless all who serve thee here, whether as teachers or learners.
Help us to labour diligently and faithfully,
not with eye-service but in singleness of heart,
remembering that without thee we can do nothing
and that in thy fear is the beginning of wisdom.
Open our eyes to know thy marvellous works,
and enlighten our minds that
we may understand the wondrous things of thy law.
Enable us ever to set thy holy will before us, so that our fellows,
now and in the days to come, may be the better for our studies here.
Finally, we pray for all those who have gone forth from this School,
that they may be so guided and strengthened by thy Spirit,
that being true disciples of Jesus Christ,
they may live blameless and faithful lives to the glory of thy holy name.
Amen.

Published in the 'Devotional Services and Hymn Book' 1895, compiled by Sir John David McClure, under whose Headship the Chapel was built.

The Choristers' Prayer

Bless, O Lord, us thy servants who minister in thy temple.
Grant that what we sing with our lips we may believe in our hearts,
and what we believe in our hearts we may show forth in our lives;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The Royal College of Church Music



The Prayer for the Combined Cadet Force

O God our Father, who has brought us together
as members of the Mill Hill School Combined Cadet Force,
help us to do our duty at all times and be loyal to each other.
May all that is good and true prosper among us;
strengthen us to defend the right,
and bless our work that it may be acceptable to thee;
for Jesus Christ's sake.
Amen.

The Serenity Prayer

God grant me the serenity:
to accept the things I cannot change;
courage to change the things I can;
and wisdom to know the difference.
Amen.
Reinhold Niebuhr

A Prayer for Love

O God of love, we pray thee to give us love:
love in our thinking, love in our speaking,
love in our doing, and love in the hidden places of our souls;
love of our neighbours near and far;
love of our friends, old and new;
love of those with whom we find it hard to bear,
and love of those who find it hard to bear with us;
love of those with whom we work,
and love of those with whom we take our ease;
love in joy, love in sorrow;
love in life and love in death;
that so at length we may be worthy to dwell with thee,
who art eternal love.
Amen.
Archbishop William Temple



A Prayer for Vision and Courage

Disturb us, Lord, when we are too pleased with ourselves,
when our dreams have come true
because we dreamed too little,
because we sailed too close to the shore.

Disturb us, Lord, to dare more boldly,
to venture on wilder seas
where losing sight of land,
we shall find the stars.

Help us to push back
the horizons of our hopes,
and so travel into the future
in strength, courage and love.

Amen.

Based on a prayer by Sir Francis Drake

A Prayer to Instil Right Values.

O Father, give us the humility which
realises its ignorance,
admits its mistakes,
recognises its need,
welcomes advice,
and accepts rebuke.

Help us always
to praise rather than to criticise,
to sympathise rather than to condemn,
to encourage rather than to discourage,
to build rather than to destroy,
and to think of people at their best
rather than at their worst.

This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

William Barclay



A Prayer of Personal Devotion

O Holy Spirit of God, come into my heart and fill me;
I open the windows of my soul to let thee in.
I surrender my whole life to thee;
come and possess me, fill me with light and truth.
I offer to thee the one thing I really possess,
my capacity for being filled by thee.
Of myself I am an empty vessel.
Fill me so that I may live the life of the Spirit,
the life of truth and goodness,
the life of beauty and love,
the life of wisdom and strength.
And guide me today in all things;
guide me to the people I should meet or help,
to the circumstances in which I can best serve thee
whether by my actions or my sufferings.
But above all, make Christ to be formed in me
that I may de-throne self in my heart
and make him King, so that he is in me, and I in him,
today and forever.

Amen.

Bishop of Bloemfontein

A Prayer for Those in Need

O God of love,
whose Son Jesus Christ reached out
to heal the sick and sorrowful,
hear us as we remember those
whose lives are shadowed by suffering,
especially those known to us
whom we name in the silence of our hearts.
We pray for all in distress:
the mentally afflicted and the physically sick,
the hungry and thirsty,
the housebound and homeless,
the frail and lonely,
the dying and the bereaved.
May we, who offer these prayers,
take the sufferings of others upon ourselves,
and so become the agents of transforming love
in our needy world.
Amen.



A Prayer of Thanksgiving for the Natural World

O God we thank you for this earth, our home;
for the wide sky and the blessed sun,
for the salt sea and running waters,
for the everlasting hills and the never-resting winds,
the trees and the common grass underfoot.
We thank you for our senses by which we
hear the songs of birds,
see the splendour of the summer fields,
taste of the autumn fruits,
rejoice in the touch of the snow,
and smell the breath of the spring.
Grant us a heart wide open to all this beauty;
and save our souls from being so blind that we pass unseeing
when even the common thorn bush is aflame with your glory.
Amen.

Walter Rauschenbusch

A Prayer for Seeking Truth

From the cowardice that dare not face new truth;
from the laziness that is contented with half-truth;
from the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth;
good Lord, deliver me.
Amen.

Kenyan prayer



A Prayer for Our Families

O God of love,
whose Son Jesus Christ belonged to a human family,
we give thanks for our homes and families;
our parents and grandparents,
brothers and sisters,
and all who are dear to us.
Surround us with your love,
and bring peace to any who are troubled.
May we be thankful for the blessings of family life;
for love and kindness,
for encouragement and security,
for acceptance and forgiveness.
Keep us mindful of those for whom home has no meaning
and let us remember that, as many hands build a house,
so many hearts make a home.
Amen.

A Prayer for Our Friends

O God of love, we give thanks for our friends,
whom we name in the silence of our hearts;
those who share our joys and sorrows,
our hopes and fears,
who know and love us as we are,
without passing judgement.
May we keep our friendships in good repair,
and always count them as among the richest blessings of life.
Make us generous-hearted and ready to reach out
to those who need a friend.
We pray this in the spirit of Jesus Christ,
who called his disciples his friends.
Amen.



A Prayer of Confession

Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, who died for us,
forgive us all that is past,
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name.
Amen.

Common Worship

A Prayer for Peace

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.
O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love;
for it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
it is in dying to self that we are born to eternal life.
Amen.

St Francis of Assisi



A Prayer for Protection

Guard my eyes, O Lord,
so that seeing other people's wealth will not make me covetous.
Guard my ears,
so that they will not listen to foolish and malicious gossip.
Guard my heart,
so that I shall not take pleasure in the temptations of the world.
Guard my hands,
so that they will not be used for violence or for exploiting others.
Guard my feet upon the gentle earth,
so that in the bustle of life I shall not forget the value of rest.
Amen.

Traditional Irish prayer

A Prayer of Forgiveness

O Lord, remember not only the men and women of good will, but also those of ill will. But, do not remember all of the suffering they have inflicted upon us, instead remember the fruits we have borne because of this suffering: our fellowship, our loyalty to one another, our humility, our courage, our generosity, the greatness of heart that has grown from this trouble. When our persecutors come to be judged by you, let all of these fruits that we have borne be their forgiveness.
Amen.

This anonymous prayer was found in the clothing of a child's body at Ravensbrück concentration camp.



The Anyway Prayer

People are often unreasonable, illogical, and self-centred;
forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives;
be kind anyway.

If you are successful, you will win some false friends and some true enemies;
succeed anyway.

If you are honest and frank, people may cheat you;
be honest and frank anyway.

What you spend years building, some could destroy overnight;
build anyway.

If you find serenity and happiness, they may be jealous;
be happy anyway.

The good you do today, people will often forget tomorrow;
do good anyway.

Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough;
give the world the best you have got anyway.

You see, in the final analysis, it is between you and God;
it was never between you and them anyway.

Amen.

Mother Teresa and Dr Kent Keith

A Prayer for Those Who Have Died in War

Let us remember before God, and commend to his sure keeping:
those who have died for their country in war;

those whom we knew, and whose memory we treasure;
and all who have lived and died in the service of others.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.

At the going down of the sun and in the morning,
we will remember them.

Amen.

Based on the poem 'For the Fallen' by Lawrence Binyon



A Celtic Blessing

May the road rise up to meet you;
may the wind be always at your back;
may the sun shine warm upon your face,
the rains fall soft upon your fields;
and until we meet again,
may God hold you in the palm of his hand.
Amen.

The Blessing

Go forth into the world in peace;
be of good courage;
hold fast that which is good;
render to no one evil for evil;
strengthen the fainthearted;
support the weak;
help the afflicted;
honour everyone;
love and serve the Lord,
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit;
and the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.
Amen.

The Book of Common Prayer (1928)



Reflections

Singing and Prayer

To sing is to pray twice.

St Augustine

Prayer and the Kingfisher

Prayer is like watching for the kingfisher. All you can do is be there where he is like to appear, and wait.

Often nothing much happens; there is space, silence and expectancy.

No visible signs, only the knowledge that he's been there and may come again.

Seeing or not seeing cease to matter, you have been prepared.

But when you have almost stopped expecting it, a flash of brightness gives encouragement.

Ann Lewin

The Importance of Prayer

Our prayers lay the track down on which God's power can come.

Like a mighty locomotive, his power is irresistible, but it cannot reach us without rails.

Watchman Nee, Chinese Church leader



The Blessing of Unanswered Prayers

I asked for strength that I might achieve;
I was made weak that I might learn humbly to obey.
I asked for health that I might do greater things;
I was given infirmity that I might do better things.
I asked for riches that I might be happy;
I was given poverty that I might be wise.
I asked for power that I might have the praise of men;
I was given weakness that I might feel the need of God.
I asked for all things that I might enjoy life;
I was given life that I might enjoy all things.
I got nothing that I had asked for,
but everything that I had hoped for.
Almost despite myself my unspoken prayers were answered;
I am, among all people, most richly blessed.
Unknown Confederate soldier

The Golden Rule in Six World Religions

Buddhism: Hurt not others with that which pains yourself.
Christianity: Do to others as you would have them do to you.
Hinduism: This is the sum of all true righteousness:
treat others, as you would yourself be treated. Do nothing to your neighbour,
which hereafter you would not have your neighbour do to you.
Islam: Do unto all as you would they should to you,
and reject for others what you would reject for yourself.
Judaism: What is hurtful to yourself do not to your fellow man.
That is the whole of The Torah and the remainder is but commentary.
Sikhism: Treat others as you would be treated yourself.

A Rule for Life

Do all the good you can,
by all the means you can,
in all the ways you can,
in all the places you can,
at all the times you can,
to all the people you can,
as long as ever you can.
John Wesley, Founder of Methodism



The Chain Reaction

Watch your thoughts; for they become your words.
Watch your words; for they become your actions.
Watch your actions; for they become your habits.
Watch your habits; for they become your character.
Watch your character; for it will become your destiny.

Chinese Wisdom

Desiderata

Go placidly amid the noise and the haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence. As far as possible, without surrender, be on good terms with all persons.

Speak your truth quietly and clearly; and listen to others, even to the dull and the ignorant; they too have their story. Avoid loud and aggressive persons; they are vexatious to the spirit. If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain or bitter, for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself.

Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans. Keep interested in your own career, however humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time.

Exercise caution in your business affairs, for the world is full of trickery. But let this not blind you to what virtue there is; many persons strive for high ideals, and everywhere life is full of heroism.

Be yourself. Especially do not feign affection. Neither be cynical about love; for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment, it is as perennial as the grass.

Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth.

Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with dark imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness. Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself.

You are a child of the universe no less than the trees and the stars; you have a right to be here. And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should. Therefore be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be.

And whatever your labours and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life, keep peace with your soul. With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world. Be cheerful. Strive to be happy.

Max Ehrmann



A Smile

A smile costs nothing but bestows much:
it enriches those who receive, without impoverishing those who give;
it takes only a moment, yet the memory of it can last for ever;
it spreads happiness in the home and promotes goodwill at work.
Yet it cannot be bought, begged or stolen,
for it is of no value to anyone until it is given away.
Some people are too world-weary to smile; give them one of yours,
for no one needs a smile as much as those who have none to give.

The Courage to Speak up for Justice

First they came for the Jews. I was silent; I was not a Jew.
Then they came for the Communists. I was silent; I was not a Communist.
Then they came for the Trade Unions. I was silent; I was not a Trade Unionist.
Then they came for me. There was no one left to speak for me.
Martin Niemoller

For the Bereaved

I am standing upon the seashore.
A ship at my side spreads her white
sails to the morning breeze and starts for the blue ocean.
She is an object of beauty and strength.
I stand and watch her until at length
she hangs like a speck of white cloud
just where the sea and sky come
to mingle with each other.
Then, someone at my side says;
"There, she is gone!"
"Gone where?"
Gone from my sight. That is all.
Her diminished size is in me, not in her.
And just at the moment when someone
at my side says, "There, she is gone!"
there are other eyes watching her coming,
and other voices ready to take up the glad shout;
"Here she comes!"
And that is dying.
Henry Van Dyke



Take Time

Take time to pray, it is the greatest power on earth.
Take time to work, it is the price of success.
Take time to be quiet, it is the way to find peace.
Take time to read, it is the foundation of wisdom.
Take time to play, it is the secret of youth.
Take time to be friendly, it is the road to happiness.
Take time to dream, it is what creates the future.
Take time to laugh, it is the music of the soul.
Take time to love and be loved, it is God's greatest gift.

Adapted from an Old English Prayer

You are the Body of Christ

Christ has no body now but yours,
no hands, no feet on earth but yours.
Yours are the eyes with which he looks with compassion on this world.
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good.
Yours are the hands with which he blesses all the world.
You are his Body.

St Teresa of Avila

Poem: In Flanders Fields

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.
We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.
Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

Lt Col John McCrae

The First World War memorial in Chapel is dedicated to Alexander Findlater Todd, an Old Millhillian and England rugby international who died in Flanders in 1915



Farewell: A Poem by a Mill Hill School Leaver, 1894

Is it goodbye? Are our school days done,
Beyond recall and beyond return;
Gone, when they seemed to be just begun:
Gone, and leaving so much to learn?
There are faces behind us we loved to know,
There are old familiar sights and scenes;
They will soon be part of long ago,
And we shall be learning what Memory means.
They were not all sunshine, those loved, lost hours;
There were clouds of quarrelling, storms of hate;
And the fault was sometimes most of it ours –
Part of it always – we found too late.
But the joys were many, the sorrows few:
We'll forget the clouds that lowered and frowned;
May they scatter and melt in the deepening blue
Of the broad bright heaven that wreathed them round.
We think of battles lost and won:
Is it pain or pleasure? Ah! Who shall tell?
Our school-life ended, life's school begun,
We sigh – and we smile, as we say Farewell.

Anonymous

Published in the Mill Hill School Magazine 1894



Bible Readings

Exodus Chapter 20: The Ten Commandments

1. You shall have no other gods before me.
2. You shall not make idols.
3. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
4. Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.
5. Honour your father and your mother.
6. You shall not murder.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.
10. You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbour.

1 Corinthians Chapter 13: The Nature of Love

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians Chapter 12: We are one body with many parts

The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit.

Yes, the body has many different parts, not just one part. If the foot says, 'I am not a part of the body because I am not a hand', that does not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear says, 'I am not part of the body because I am not an eye', would that make it any less a part of the body? If the whole body were an eye, how would you hear? Or if your whole body were an ear, how would you smell anything?

But our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where he wants it. How strange a body would be if it had only one part! Yes, there are many parts, but only one body. The eye can never say to the hand, 'I don't need you'. The head can't say to the feet, 'I don't need you'.

All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it.



Luke Chapter 10: The Parable of the Good Samaritan

Jesus said: 'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half-dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and, when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he travelled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. "Look after him," he said, "and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have".

'Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?' The expert in the law replied 'The one who had mercy on him'. Jesus told him: 'Go and do likewise'.

Luke Chapter 15: The Parable of the Lost Son

Jesus continued: 'There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, "Father, give me my share of the estate". So he divided his property between them.

'Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

'When he came to his senses, he said, "How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants". So he got up and went to his father.

'But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

'The son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son".

'But the father said to his servants, "Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found".'



Matthew Chapter 7: Building our lives on a solid foundation

Jesus said: 'Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it will not collapse because it is built on bedrock. But anyone who hears my teaching and does not obey it is foolish, like a person who builds a house on sand. When the rains and floods come and the winds beat against that house, it will collapse with a mighty crash.'

Romans 12: Living the Christian Life

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honour one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends. On the contrary, if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.



Additional Readings Not In The School Hymnbook

Psalm 23: The Lord is my Shepherd

The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside still waters,
he refreshes my soul.
He guides me along the right paths
for his name's sake.
Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil, for you are with me;
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
Surely your goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Ecclesiastes 3: A Time for Everything

There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under the heavens:
a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build,
a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance,
a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,
a time to search and a time to give up,
a time to keep and a time to throw away,
a time to tear and a time to mend,
a time to be silent and a time to speak,
a time to love and a time to hate,
a time for war and a time for peace.

Instilling values, inspiring minds
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