



## YMCA PRAYER GUIDE

#SpiritMindMonth #PrayInMay #PrayAsYouExercise

May is Spirit-Mind month at the YMCA. This month we recognize both the National Day of Prayer and Mental Health Awareness Month. Prayer and Mental Health may be more connected than we realize.

*One large population study, led by Harvard Professor Tyler VanderWeele, found that young adults who prayed daily tended to have fewer depressive symptoms, and higher levels of life satisfaction, self-esteem, and positive affect, in comparison to those who never prayed. —Dr. Rob Whitley, "Prayer and Mental Health" (Psychology Today)*

Prayer not only helps our mental health but it plays an important part of the Y's history. The very first YMCA started in 1844 with a group of 11 friends gathering for prayer. This prayer group was unique because in addition to meeting together, they also went into their community to meet the needs of their neighbors.

Today you are invited to pray to the God of your understanding, in the way that Jesus invited all of us to pray. Using the Lord's Prayer found in Matthew 6, this guide is designed around the acronym ACTS as a reminder that prayer should prompt us toward action—in our world, our neighborhoods, our families and our individual lives. Join the Y as we pray in May together!

### START YOUR PRAYER HERE

#### A – ADORATION

*Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.*  
—Matthew 6:9

Begin with a prayer of praise, thanking God for who God is to you. This can look like:

- God, thank you for being...
- God, you are...
- God, help me to see you as...



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## C – CONFESSION

*And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.*  
—Matthew 6:12

Then continue with a prayer of honesty, openly admitting where you fall short of being the person God created you to be. This can look like:

- God, I admit to you...
- God, please forgive me for...
- God, I am powerless over...

## T – THANKSGIVING

*For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.*  
—Matthew 6:13b

Now turn to a prayer of gratitude, thanking God for what God has done in your life. This can look like:

- God, thank you for giving me...
- God, you have provided...
- God, today may I be grateful for...

## S – SUPPLICATION

*Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread...Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.* —Matthew 6:10-11, 13a

Close with prayers of request, asking God to help you do what you cannot do alone. This prayer can look like:

- God, please help...
- God, use me to help...
- God, guide me today as I...

## END YOUR PRAYER HERE

Consider ending with Reinhold Neibuhr's 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.*

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