

The Prayer Mile

The Water's Edge Prayer Path is a quarter mile in length. The Prayer Mile is a four-lap journey designed to bring participants closer to God and improve their self-awareness.

Walk at a pace that works for you. Some prefer brisk walks, while others go more slowly. Feel free to sit on a bench, chair, or rock and spend additional time praying. Do what works for you. This is your time with God.

If mobility is an issue for you or you prefer to sit while praying, you can do the prayer mile while seated on the first bench on the right-hand side as the prayer path begins, on one of the chairs on the patio around the globe-shaped firepit, or anywhere else. Follow the guide. Your prayer will consist of four parts.

The Abbreviated Version

Lap 1 Appreciation (Gratitude)

Lap 2 Apology (Confession)

Lap 3 Applause (Worship)

Lap 4 Assistance (Request)

A More In-Depth Version

Lap 1 - Appreciation

Always be joyful. Never stop praying. Give thanks no matter what happens. God wants you to thank him because you believe in Christ Jesus. -1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

God has blessed you. It's easy to dwell on problems or challenges. Spend this lap dwelling on God's goodness and the many blessings in your life. It will change your day. It will change your days, too.

Thank God for your big blessings and your small blessings. As you approach and walk past the eight chairs on the patio, thank God for specific people in your life—people from your past and people from your present. Tell God why you are grateful for these people.

As you continue the winding journey to the cross, consider offering God gratitude in some of the following areas: health, food, shelter, the beauty of the world, hobbies, laughter, and a place in Christ's church.

As you go through the tunnel of cedar trees, offer God gratitude for the dark times in your life that you have emerged from. Thank God for His presence during the difficult days. Thank God for the lessons learned. Thank God for the healing and recovery you have experienced.

As you go down the hill from the cross to the world and conclude the first lap, notice how God, through gratitude, begins freeing us from the chains of entitlement and envy. If one lap doesn't seem like enough time, rest on one of the many sitting areas and offer God thanks for a more extended period.

When ready, continue past the patio area on the concrete trail back to the pergola to begin lap 2.

Lap 2 – Apology

If we confess our sins, he will forgive our sins, because we can trust God to do what is right. He will cleanse us from all the wrongs we have done. -1 John 1:9

Confession is not telling God something God doesn't already know. Sin creates distance between us and God. When we confess our sins, a bridge is created between us and God.

Be authentic with God on this lap. Confession isn't meant to beat us up or force us to relive past hurts. Confession lets us keep discovering who we are and who we can become. It also helps us discover Whose we are. Confession opens doors to God's grace that is greater than our sin.

Consider taking a break on the bench between the cross at the top of the hill and the grapes below it. Sit facing the grapes first. The grapes represent forgiveness.

On the night before Jesus died, he took a cup, gave thanks, served the wine, and said, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of your sins." -Matthew 26:27-28

When you are ready, turn and face the cross.

The next day, Jesus took the wine. Then he said, 'It is finished.' And he bowed his head and died on the cross. -John 19:30 Paul writes, Jesus obeyed God our Father and gave himself as a sacrifice for our sins to rescue us from this evil world. -Galatians 1:4

On the way down from the cross to the world, reflect on what your life would look like if you released the guilt and shame you are carrying and live in the future as forgiven and free.

Lap 3 – Applause

But the time is coming—indeed it's here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way. -John 4:23

This lap is about worship. Here are some ideas to help you experience God.

- Seek to eliminate all distractions and be fully present with God.
- Acknowledge attributes of God: generous, merciful, great, holy, loving, compassionate, and powerful.
- Reflect on God's goodness and faithfulness in your life.
- Enjoy the beauty of the creation that surrounds you.

Lap 4 – Assistance (Request)

Don't worry about anything, but pray about everything. With thankful hearts offer up your prayers and requests to God. -Philippians 4:6

Begin this lap by letting go of your worries and fears. Stop near the globe fire pit and sit for a moment if you need additional time to do some letting go.

As you travel from the globe to the cross, remember that Jesus gave his life for you. He didn't die so that you could be troubled or mediocre. He died so that you could live a life of abundance. Pray for yourself—God's beloved child.

Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. - Matthew 7:7-8

- Keep asking for what you need most from God.

- Keep seeking more of God's wisdom in your life so that you can follow God more closely.
- Keep knocking on the door to God's heart so that you can relate to God more and resemble God more.

After you walk through the tunnel of cedar trees and pass by the cross, you will see the globe. Begin to pray for the world. Pray on behalf of loved ones. Pray for the hungry, thirsty, and those without clothing and shelter. Pray for the lonely, the sick, and those who aren't free. If you need additional time to pray for a specific person or situation—sit on one of the benches, rocks, or chairs and keep praying.

Next Steps

Write down a few of the ways you encountered God. Use the following prompts for your reflection:

- Reflect on how you felt before you started and after you finished: physically, emotionally, relationally, and spiritually.
- Which lap was the most meaningful?
- Which lap was the most challenging?
- What is a specific learning you gained?
- How did you experience God?

The Prayer Mile is not designed to be a one-time event. It is meant to be a regular part of your life. The formula of appreciation, apology, applause, and assistance can be used wherever you are.