

# **A Prayer Service based on the Words and Prayers of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**

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## **Moments of Silent Meditation**

### **Opening Prayer to Help Us to Work with Renewed Vigor**

*(This prayer was delivered on September 6, 1953. as part of King's broadcast from Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia.)*

**Prayer Leader 1:** Most gracious and all wise God, before whose face the generations rise and fall; Thou in whom we live, and move, and have our being. We thank thee (for) all of thy good and gracious gifts, for life and for health; for food and for raiment; for the beauties of nature and human nature. We come before thee painfully aware of our inadequacies and shortcomings. We realize that we stand surrounded with the mountains of love and we deliberately dwell in the valley of hate. We stand amid the forces of truth and deliberately lie. We are forever offered the high road and yet we choose to travel the low road. For these sins, O God forgive.

Break the spell of that which blinds our minds. Purify our hearts that we may see thee. O God in these turbulent days when fear and doubt are mounting high give us broad visions, penetrating eyes, and power of endurance. Help us to work with renewed vigor for a warless world, for a better distribution of wealth and for a brotherhood that transcends race or color. In the name and spirit of Jesus we pray.

**All: Amen.**

### **Reading: A Great Nation: The Democratic National Convention**

*(King offered this prayer before giving testimony to the Platform & Resolutions Committee during six days of hearings at the Democratic National Convention, in Chicago, Ill., on Aug. 11, 1956.)*

Oh God our gracious Heavenly Father we thank Thee for the privilege of assembling here. ... We thank Thee for all the opportunities of life, and we stand together today and discuss vital matters confronting our nation and confronting our world, we ask Thy guidance be with us in all our deliberations and help us at all times to seek to do those things which are high, noble and good, and to make our nation a great nation, a nation that follows all of the noble precepts of the Christian Religion and all of the noble precepts of democracy. Grant, O God, that as we move on we will move toward that city which has foundations whose builder and maker is God. Amen.

## **Moments of Silent Meditation**

### **Holy Refusals and Beliefs:**

*[Go around the room (or the Zoom call, or the dinner table), and each individual will pray aloud one of the statements below. Based on the writings of Dr. King and adapted from the United Presbyterian Church Prayer on Martin Luther King, Jr.]*

I refuse to believe that we are unable to influence the events which surround us.

I refuse to believe that we are so bound to racism and war, that peace, brotherhood and sisterhood are not possible.

I believe there is an urgent need for people to overcome oppression and violence, without resorting to violence and oppression.

I believe that we need to discover a way to live together in peace, a way which rejects revenge, aggression and retaliation. The foundation of this way is love.

I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality.

I believe that right temporarily defeated is stronger than evil triumphant.

I believe that peoples everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, equality and freedom for their spirits.

I believe that what self-centered people have torn down, other-centered people can build up.

By the goodness of God at work within people, I believe that brokenness can be healed.

“And the lion and the lamb shall lie down together, and everyone will sit under their own vine and fig tree, and none shall be afraid.”

**ALL: Amen**

### **Closing Prayer to Move Us Forward:**

**Prayer Leader 2:** Loving God, as we venture forth to be women and men of service, go before us as our Guide. Renew us with the spirit of service and sacrificial love exemplified in the life of Dr. King. May we be vessels of hope and justice in a world inundated with countless forms of violence and injustice. May we never stand on the sidelines as we witness injustice done upon our sisters and brothers but walk with eyes open to the needs of our communities, with ears open to the needs of our world, and with hands open in helpful service to our neighbors. Then we will not only be blessed, but be a blessing to our world. This is our prayer.

**ALL: Amen.**