

Liturgy for Seeing and Serving the Socially Isolated

A Guided Time of Reflection and Prayer

Opening Call to Worship

Leader: God, You see every person—those surrounded by community and those hidden in loneliness. Open our eyes. Open our hearts. Open our lives.

1. LOOK UP: Asking God for Awareness

Scripture:

“The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.” — Psalm 34:18

Pray for God to give you an awareness of those who are socially isolated. Studies suggest nearly 1 in 4 adults aged 65 and older are socially isolated¹, and that was before the pandemic! Still, sometimes we all need a new, God-given perspective to actually see them. It's one thing to recognize that social isolation is a growing problem and a completely different thing to see its presence in the lives of those around us.

Prayer

God, You are already near to the isolated. We confess that we often overlook those who feel unseen. Give us Your eyes to notice what we have missed. Give us Your heart to care where we have been indifferent.

Silent Reflection (30 seconds) Bring to mind someone who may be isolated—someone older, grieving, or forgotten.

All: *Lord, teach us to see those You see.*

2. LOOK AROUND: Recognizing Hidden Isolation

Scripture:

“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” — Galatians 6:2

Pray for your neighborhood, your workplace, even your church family. Realize it is difficult to identify people who are isolated. Isolation can't be tracked to a certain part of town or even a particular demographic group. It can...and does...happen anywhere. That means isolated people are often essentially hidden in plain sight, suffering all alone and in silence.

Prayer

Jesus, remind us how isolation often hides in busy neighborhoods, full calendars and even in crowded churches. Lord, help us to move beyond polite smiles and quiet routines. Lord, help us see beyond the surface.

Silent Reflection (20 seconds)

Responsive Reading

Leader: For those living alone...

All: Lord, help us see them.

Leader: For those who feel invisible in crowds...

All: Lord, help us see them.

Leader: For those whose pain is silent...

All: Lord, help us see them.

3. LOOK OUT: Taking the First Step Toward Relationship

Scripture:

“Let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.” — 1 John 3:18

Pray for ways to cultivate relationships with people you become aware are isolated. Spend time with them. Listen to their story. Remember their isolation is not the result of a singular crisis but a cumulative one. Their isolated condition likely stems from years of bad luck (or bad choices!), with emotional trauma that may involve multiple layers. It is often not until these layers "spill out onto their yard" that others like YOU might even become aware there is a problem.

Prayer

Father, remind us how isolation is rarely caused by one moment. It is a slow accumulation of losses, disappointments, and hurts. When we step toward someone, we step into a story. Give us patience, gentleness, and courage.

Silent Reflection (20 seconds)

Leader: Lord, show us one step we can take— a visit, a call, a meal, a conversation.

All: Lord, make us people who always move toward others.

4. LOOK FOR: Connecting People to Community

Scripture:

“We, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.” — Romans 12:5

Pray for others to introduce to those living in relational poverty. Ask for the awareness that no one person can provide all the needs and resources for someone who is socially isolated. Remember you are uniquely positioned to serve as the "connector" for someone else to meet and to make contact with this person.

Prayer

Holy Spirit, remind us how no one person can meet every need. Help us to see how our connection to Jesus through the Church...the Body of Christ...can surround the isolated with hope. Guide us to the right people, the right resources, the right moments. Give us wisdom to ask for help and humility to partner with others.

Silent Reflection (20 seconds)

All: Lord, make us connectors of hope.

5. LOOK AFTER: Continuing Care Beyond the Crisis

Scripture”

“Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.” — Hebrews 10:24

Pray for others even *after* their isolation has been helped. When facing dire circumstances, we all certainly appreciate whatever help we can get. But consider how our outlook is vastly different if we know that someone cares enough to come back, to see how we're doing, to show up regularly, and to stick with us through whatever comes next.

Prayer

God, impress on us how a single act of kindness can open a door, but *ongoing presence* transforms a life. Help us return, follow up, and stay faithful. Shape us into steady friends, patient listeners, and faithful companions to the isolated.

Silent Reflection (20 seconds)

All: Lord, help us love as You love.

Benediction

Leader: Go now with open eyes, open hearts, and open hands. May God lead you to the unseen. May Christ meet you in every encounter. May the Spirit empower you to bring connection, compassion, and hope to the isolated and relationally impoverished you know and meet every day.

All: Amen.