



WARRUWI

PRAYER MATTERS 2017

5-DAY GUIDED PRAYER RESOURCE

A Campaign of



embody



in collaboration with **dhiyaan**

Special thanks to Billy Williams



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This resource seeks to utilise Bible passages; Aboriginal principles and practices; and various prompts to help you pray in a way that may open pathways for you to connect with this country and its custodians, as well as other communities; and, most importantly, the Creator.

WARRUWI is Gamilaraay language for “pathway.” Unless otherwise stated the language words in this resource come from the Gamilaraay people of North-western NSW, the traditional language group of the resource’s author.

The Lord says, “I will guide you along the best pathway for your life....”
Psalm 32:8 (NLT)

About the author of this resource...



Billy JANGALA Williams is a Gamilaraay man connected to the big sky country of North-west NSW. He is the lead shepherd of dhiyaan, a faith community based in Brisbane that is focussed on exploring Aboriginal principles in a reconciled community (dhiyaan means “family”).



DAY 1

winanga-li (win-un-gar-lee) to hear, to listen, to know

Just as I wrote this I heard the breeze. Then I intentionally listened to it... and then I felt it. Prayer cannot be captured as a mere process, but it can help to understand it as an invitation. Through prayer, firstly, we are invited by the Creator. Invited to hear, listen and know Him. In turn, we then have an opportunity to invite Him to do the same.

The original custodians knew what it meant to listen. Silence was seen as an important practice, because how could you know if you didn't listen? All Gamilaraay learning concepts revolved around the ears. To listen is to learn. An ancient method still understood today is to "listen to country." This means to listen to the land, to the creation... because in doing so the opportunity is to know the Creator of all that. Dadirri (dar-deer-ee) is a Ngangikurungkurr language word that means inner, deep listening and quiet, still awareness. It is a 'tuning in' experience with the specific aim to come to a deeper understanding of the beauty of nature. Dadirri recognises the inner spirit that calls us to reflection and contemplation of the wonders of all God's creation.

In our busy lives we often find it hard to stop and listen. This is sad, because how can we learn if we don't listen? Read aloud the passage below so that you can listen carefully to it... then ask the Creator to help you to know/experience His presence in whatever way He chooses to.

1 Kings 19:11 *"Go out and stand before me on the mountain," the Lord told him. And as Elijah stood there, the Lord passed by, and a mighty windstorm hit the mountain. It was such a terrible blast that the rocks were torn loose, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. 12 And after the earthquake there was a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire there was the sound of a gentle whisper.*

Prompt: Maybe act out physically what you read (ie. try to stand somewhere special/significant/symbolic) for your prayer time. Try and make this outside if possible.





DAY 2

ngami-li (narr-mar-lee) to see, to look, to watch

Journeying is a key theme in the Bible. It was also a key aspect of Aboriginal people's lives. In order to travel safely and successfully you have to "keep an eye out." You have to read the terrain (know the country); know where you've come from and where you're going to; look for danger and difficulty... how true this is for our journey of faith!

The modern way of praying is often done with our eyes shut. But, what if we actually needed to pray with (and maybe for!!) our eyes to be open? This may be particularly true when it comes to seeing the first Australians. God determined the places and times for the nations (Acts 17), and therefore placed the potentially 350 different Aboriginal tribes and the various Torres Strait Islander groups as custodians on their various country. Yet even today many Australians cannot even recognise basic information regarding these people groups, let alone begin to tap into the ancient wisdom and deep connectedness they carry.

After you read the passage below, pray that the Creator will help you to see clearly the

First Nations people of Australia. This includes understanding their ways, their history and their current situations. Perhaps this (like the Scripture below) will take stages and time for you to clarify and make things clear.

Mark 8:23 Jesus took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village. Then, spitting on the man's eyes, he laid his hands on him and asked, "Can you see anything now?" 24 The man looked around. "Yes," he said, "I see people, but I can't see them very clearly. They look like trees walking around." 25 Then Jesus placed his hands on the man's eyes again, and his eyes were opened. His sight was completely restored, and he could see everything clearly.

Prompt: Try to access a map of Australia that attempts to represent the boundaries and places of the original custodians.



DAY 3

galuma-li (garl-oo-mar-lee) care for

Two of the key qualities and characteristics of the Creator God are His compassion and His justice. In a sense it shows the spirit of Him. His actions reveal His intent. We have an opportunity through prayer to ask Him to help us listen and look as He does. This is in fact a gift from His Spirit (Proverbs 20:12).

If you have the ears to hear and the eyes to see like Him then you will begin to encounter the historical and contemporary experiences of the first peoples of Australia. As people who know the God of compassion and justice then it becomes important to begin or continue to travel the path of seeking these for our time and space. dhuwi (doo-wee) means "the soul, spirit, heart," and this is where His Spirit does His work. We are brought to a new life, receive a new heart and, therefore, are called to a new way. As these "new people" born of His Spirit, it stands to reason we will not see the world the same. In Australia, perhaps this calls us to re-examine our nation's colonial foundations and activities, and the ongoing consequences.

A person whose hands and heart match is a person of integrity (Latin *integritas*, from *integer* ie. meaning 'intact'). The old wise

people before passing on important teaching or wisdom would ask themselves, "can this person carry this?" What they were asking was, is this a person with integrity (ie. do their heart and hands match)? God, as a God of compassion and justice asks the same thing of us. Can we carry His teaching/wisdom, and do our hearts and hands match His?

Psalm 86:11 Teach me your ways, O Lord, that I may live according to your truth Grant me purity of heart, so that I may honour you.

[The Message version puts this verse as, "Train me, God, to walk straight; then I'll follow your true path. Put me together, one heart and mind then, undivided, I'll worship in joyful fear."]

Prompt: Think about pathways... internally, all the ones leading to your heart as veins. Then imagine all the ones for your life, the choices and opportunities. As you pray, picture the Creator influencing both your internal and external life with His compassion and justice (especially ask Him for this in looking at Indigenous Australians). Perhaps try to walk on a path as you pray.



DAY 4

gulunma-li (gull-arn-mar-lee) give food to

If we don't eat, then we die. Interestingly, the ancient Aboriginal metaphor for getting knowledge and wisdom is eating! You take it in and it keeps you alive... it is essential for life!

The Gamilaraay word for good hunter is dhiidhaan. The best hunting animal in Warlpiri country (Tanami Desert, NT) is the wedge-tail eagle. He is referred to as the "vulnerable hunter"... because he is the quiet, humble hunter (he has to be, look at the size of the ears of the animals he hunts!). The Bible instructs us to be like Christ and empty ourselves (Philippians 2:5-8), that is, to be humble. Understanding First Nations people of Australia will require humility. In order to feed off the wisdom of these people, it will require you to empty yourself. It will greatly challenge your perspective to begin to realise that there may be wisdom and God-gifted knowledge that you need from these custodians. Would you be willing to consider this?

We often struggle with humility because in emptying ourselves it makes us feel very vulnerable. We are control people and to let go is difficult. Acknowledging our need, such as requiring food (and knowledge!), seems weak but it is actually strength (2 Corinthians 12:10).

Isaiah 55:2-3 Why spend your money on food that does not give you strength? Why pay for food that does you no good? Listen to me, and you will eat what is good. You will enjoy the finest food. "Come to me with your ears wide open. Listen, and you will find life..."

Prompt: God wants us to be humble enough to ask Him for the true food we need... His wisdom and His way for our lives. Even the act of prayer centres itself around humility because it is based on our need of Him. Why not pray in a particular position that represents your need for Him (kneeling, lying down, raised hands etc.). When you are finished, eat something physically but visualise the knowledge that He will give you. Specifically ask the Creator to guide you to information and learnings from and around Indigenous Australians.





DAY 5

gabanma-li (gub-arn-mar-lee) to heal, to restore, to make whole

Reconciliation is often seen as a government-driven policy or politically-correct strategy, but it is important to see the God-given nature of it (2 Corinthians 5:18, Romans 5:10, Colossians 1:20). The Creator is striving for real relationships and connections, to Himself and to each other.

Sin and shame go together, and if sin is about separation (Genesis 3:21-24) then the great shame in Australia in the disconnection of the first and following peoples. There is a growing awareness that if revival is about coming back into the true life the Creator has for us, then the historical seeds and current realities for Indigenous Australians becomes a key concern. For healing and restoration in this nation then it has to become "whole." God's people are called to His purpose, and He is the God of putting things back together... of wholeness. The stain on the land of the treatment of the first peoples by those following must be faced up to- named and addressed as God's people recognise this is not the fruit of His Kingdom. This is not so much a personal blame game but a deep desire and understanding that true healing comes to the country when communities cry out to the Creator for connections.

In biblical terms, the Chronicler captures the essence of this in the passage below. Read it carefully. Turn over each word and each phrase and then eventually examine the whole concept presented in the Scriptures. Ask yourself whether you believe this could bring God's Kingdom to Australia if it was prayed by His people.

2 Chronicles 7:14 ... *if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and restore their land.*

Prompt: Grab a piece of dirt/sand/ngurra (Central Australian language for country); kneel down in humility and as you empty it from your hands pray that the Creator would empty you of any wrong actions or attitudes or absences regarding Indigenous Australians and this country; then, drink a cup of water, asking Him to fill you with His compassion and righteousness (remembering that the Spirit is called Living Water!).





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