



# DOING THE WORKS OF JESUS

## CELEBRATING AND EMPOWERING WOMEN

## Week 15 | Celebrating and Empowering Women Exercises

### Exercise 1 - A Prayer to Honor Women

Pray the following prayer and consider the ways you have seen God work through women specifically, both in Scripture and in your own life.

Lord, help us to walk in the company of the women who have gone before,  
Mothers of the faith both named and unnamed,  
Testifying with ferocity and faith to the Spirit of Wisdom and Healing.

They are the judges, the prophets, the martyrs, the warriors, poets, lovers, and saints  
Who are near to us in the shadow of awareness, in the crevices of memory, in the landscape of  
our dreams.

Help us to walk in the company of Deborah,  
who judged the Israelites with authority and strength.

Help us to walk in the company of Esther,  
who used her position as Queen to ensure the welfare of her people.

Help us walk in the company of the woman with the flow of blood,  
who audaciously sought her healing and release.

Help us to walk in the company of Mary Magdalene,  
who wept at the empty tomb until the risen Christ appeared.

Help us to walk in the company of Phoebe,  
who led an early church in the empire of Rome.

Help us to walk in the company of those whose names have been lost and silenced,  
who kept and cradled the wisdom of the ages.

Help us to walk in the company of all mothers of the faith,  
who teach us to resist evil with boldness, to lead with wisdom, and to heal.  
Amen.\*

\* Adapted from *Common Prayer*, eds. Shane Claiborne, Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, Enuma Okoro

## **Exercise 2 - Esther**

Read the following passage slowly and prayerfully.

*Hathach went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king's gate, and Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the exact sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king's treasuries for the destruction of the Jews. Mordecai also gave him a copy of the written decree issued in Susa for their destruction, that he might show it to Esther and explain it to her and command her to go to the king to beg his favor and plead with him on behalf of her people. And Hathach went and told Esther what Mordecai had said. Then Esther spoke to Hathach and commanded him to go to Mordecai and say, "All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that if any man or woman goes to the king inside the inner court without being called, there is but one law—to be put to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter so that he may live. But as for me, I have not been called to come in to the king these thirty days." And they told Mordecai what Esther had said. Then Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, "Do not think to yourself*



*that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai, "Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my young women will also fast as you do. Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish." Mordecai then went away and did everything as Esther had ordered him. - Esther 4:6-17*

**What character traits does Esther display in this passage?**

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**Who do you know (yourself, women, men) that shares these same traits?**

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**How can you encourage them to grow in their God given gifts and callings?**

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**From this passage, what can we learn about Esther's faith in prayer?**

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**How does her faith encourage you today?**

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### **Exercise 3 - Mary Magdalene**



Read the following passage slowly and prayerfully.

*Early on Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance...*

*Mary was standing outside the tomb crying, and as she wept, she stooped and looked in. She saw two white-robed angels, one sitting at the head and the other at the foot of the place where the body of Jesus had been lying. "Dear woman, why are you crying?" the angels asked her. "Because they have taken away my Lord," she replied, "and I don't know where they have put him."*

*She turned to leave and saw someone standing there. It was Jesus, but she didn't recognize him. "Dear woman, why are you crying?" Jesus asked her. "Who are you looking for?" She thought he was the gardener. "Sir," she said, "if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get him." "Mary!" Jesus said. She turned to him and cried out, "Rabboni!" (which is Hebrew for "Teacher"). "Don't cling to me," Jesus said, "for I haven't yet ascended to the Father. But go find my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene found the disciples and told them, "I have seen the Lord!" Then she gave them his message. - John 20:1, 11-18 (NLT)*

**What character traits does Mary Magdalene display in this passage?**

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**Who do you know (yourself, women, men) that shares these same traits?**

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**How can you encourage them to grow in their God given gifts and callings?**

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**How does she point to Jesus?**

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**How does her faith encourage you today?**

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