





DAY 3: THE GARDEN

EASTER SUNDAY | MORNING



OVERVIEW

Today we will be doing our third and final practice in two parts and we'll try on the disciplines of celebration and "nature immersion" (the discipline of experiencing God through nature) which will help us explore our part in the ever-expanding Kingdom of God among us.

CONTEXT

God's pre-eminent act of creation in Genesis was literally to breathe His spirit-life (in Hebrew: "ruach") into the first human in the midst of a beautiful garden. It is absolutely no coincidence then that God's first act of new creation was to breathe His spirit-life (in Greek: "pneuma") into the crucified Jesus and raise Him from the grave—in the middle of a garden no less.

In the first garden God gave full responsibility to Adam to be fruitful and multiply and take care of creation but this mandate was quickly lost to the temptation of humanistic pride. Now, in the second garden we have Jesus rising again as Adam 2.0, the literal image of God in human form, and He's inviting all of us to cultivate His new creation. Empow-



ered by the Spirit we are commissioned once again with the words of our Creator echoing in our souls: be fruitful and multiply and fill the Earth with the garden of God's goodness (Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8)!

It is from this place of divine purpose that we re-discover our carefully buried hopes. The seeds we sowed in the grave on Friday will blossom a hundred thousand times more beautifully when they grow up in the eternal soil of the Kingdom of Heaven. What was once finite and destined for decay is now infinite; marked for heaven, stripped of all our brokenness and totally dedicated to God. This is the power of Easter.

PRACTICE PART 1: GARDEN SUNRISE

NATURE - IMMERSION | STILLNESS | PRAYER

HOW TO

This practice is simple. Rise early and find a place (whether near your home or somewhere with an epic view) to watch the sunrise. Below are a few suggestions for this practice:

- Ideally you'll want to be **awake and in location before dawn** (first light).



- Google: “*dawn time*” (not “sunrise”) for your local area. In New Zealand, for example, the sky starts getting light about 30 minutes before the actual sunrise. This amount of time varies from 20-70 minutes depending on where you are located.
- Consider bringing chairs, blankets, hot drinks and even an acoustic guitar or other instrument (dawn worship time!).

Keep the heart of this practice in mind as you reflect on the resurrected King. A posture of silence and stillness really serves this moment best (possibly followed by musical worship for those so inclined). Feel free to read the following if it seems appropriate:

REFLECT: *Today we acknowledge and celebrate the inauguration of God’s new creation. The Kingdom of Heaven—God’s vision for a flourishing world—is expanding among us, growing into a mountain that covers the whole earth (Daniel 2:35). As we experience the sunrise (the Son rise) let’s take a moment to commit afresh to God’s invitation of new beginnings and to becoming the co-creators we were born to be. God has empowered and equipped each of us with unique gifts, purposes and positions to join Him in cultivating a stunning garden that will fill the whole world. Wherever we set our feet and whatever we touch with our hands should begin to look like heaven on Earth—more beautiful, more whole, and more alive than ever before. Today is a unique moment in the year to remind ourselves of this and to come into alignment once again with God’s exquisite plan to restore the world around us.*



A NOTE ABOUT SUNRISES

For some of us, the sun will rise in a clear sky—sharp, striking, and beautiful. For others, the sunrise will be all but invisible, fading up behind cloudy skies and hidden from sight. Whatever your sunrise experience is, consider the ways in which God’s Kingdom is clearly visible to you sometimes and then in other seasons His goodness and new life feels hidden or maybe even non-existent. When it comes to the sun, we have faith that it rises whether we can see its brilliance directly or not. In the same way, hold on to faith that the kingdom of God is rising—illuminating our world with truth and inviting those in darkness to come to His great light (Matthew 4:16,17), even in the times when you can’t see it.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Share a photo of your sunrise moment on Instagram or on the Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/GravesToGardens>

@gravestogardens #gravestogardens



PRACTICE PART 2: BREAKFAST PARTY

CELEBRATION | BREAKING BREAD | COMMUNITY

HOW TO

Part two of this Easter morning might just be the highlight of the weekend. Breakfast. The brief is simple: prepare a breakfast feast, break bread and raise a toast to the risen King and His endless kingdom and then eat together as a household.

While most of the spiritual disciplines tend to be things we find difficult or challenging, celebration can feel like an anomaly as it's something we actually enjoy doing. In this case, the real challenge of celebration is to do it with purpose and intention, to choose to celebrate the things that God values. This morning, we will funnel our focus and intentions into the resurrection of Jesus, the coming of the kingdom and the ways in which we are invited to bring heaven to Earth.

THE STEPS

- 1. Cook:** Prepare the breakfast feast together. Make sure everyone gets to participate in the cooking, baking, chopping, serving, etc. This is a valuable act of co-creation.



- 2. Decorate:** (optional) Set the table and decorate like you would for a party. This is Easter. Let's celebrate.
- 3. Sit:** Invite your household to sit down at the table.
- 4. Drinks:** Pour glasses of whatever you're drinking and prepare to give toasts (yes, the "cheers" kind of toast).
- 5. Toast:** Invite each member to make a toast to the Risen Son.
PROMPT: *What resonates most for you about the Easter story?*
- 6. Pray:** End the toasts with a short prayer and invite your crew to say the *Lord's Prayer* together.
- 7. EAT!**
- 8. Nap!** (Or join an Easter event... and then nap.)

THE END

Thank you for joining us (and thousands of others around the world) for Graves to Gardens this year! We pray that this journey has been deeply meaningful for you and your crew and that God met you with renewed hope, restored joy, and a refreshed sense of your place in our Father's growing Kingdom! Happy Easter!

Love and Blessings,
The Prayer Collective Team, Christchurch New Zealand