

Liturgy of Leaving

Introduction: What follows are suggestions to help you reflect upon your time with InterVarsity. I have created a packet of information that consists of four parts. These are:

- Bible Study on Paul's farewell to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:13-38
- Time Line Exercise that will help you to recall people, places and events of your experience.
- Two essays on the process of leaving InterVarsity that include insights from former staff.
- A prayer guide for your time with the Lord.

I recommend that you review the materials before you begin and decide how much time you have and when you want to start. The prayer guide integrates the time line and Bible study. The essays are a stand-alone piece.

Leaving a job and a community of people can be a profound experience in our journey with the Lord. This liturgy is designed to help you to reflect upon lessons you have learned, goals you have accomplished, and hopes and regrets you may have. It invites you to offer up what you are thinking and feeling to the Lord in an act of worship.

I believe that insight and depth will come to you as you take the time to examine this part of your journey. In addition to doing the individual work, I encourage you to find someone you can share your thoughts with. Let me know if I can be of help.

Steve Stuckey

Prayer Guide

Invocation: O Lord, you have been with me before the day I was born and you promise to walk with me beyond the day of my death. Thank you that my journey has allowed me to sojourn with the community of people who call themselves InterVarsity. Help me this hour to review my experience so that I might leave well and be a blessing to those who follow me. Amen

Wait upon the Lord: The Hebrew word for wait implies the idea of gathering or collecting something. Sometimes we are in such a hurry that we get ahead of ourselves emotionally and spiritually. Waiting upon the Lord suggests slowing down enough so that the rest of you can catch up to your body. Find a quiet spot and take a few deep breaths to relax. Where have you been physically and emotionally in the past 48 hours? Did you sense the Lord's presence at any specific point of time during the past two days? Thank him. Were you intentionally absent from him? Say you are sorry.



Leaving, by Malcolm Bennet 2001

Reflecting on the past. Use the time-line guide to help you reflect upon the people, places, and events that have been a part of your journey with the InterVarsity community. Journal your thoughts.

Canticle

Teach us, dear Lord to number our days, that we may apply our hearts to wisdom.
Oh, satisfy us early with Thy mercy that we may rejoice and be glad all of our days.
And the let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us and establish Thou the work of our hands.
And the let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us and establish Thou the work of our hands,
dear Lord.¹

Scripture Reading Acts 20:13-38 records Paul's touching farewell to the Ephesian elders. Use the manuscript and questions to help you reflect upon the passage and it's relevance to you and your current situation.

Creative Expression Moses said to his people, "Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years."² Remembering is an important spiritual discipline that is often enhanced by creative expression. As you come to the end of your time of reflection consider writing a psalm, song, poem, or painting a picture that will aid your recollection of your time spend with InterVarsity. Display your creation in a place that will help you remember in the years ahead.

Making a Plan to Say Goodbye Your time of employment with InterVarsity is coming to an end as are some of your relationships with individuals. (e.g. donors, fellow staff, students, supervisors) What do you want to say to those you will not see frequently again? When and how will you say farewell? (Letter, call, or visit?) Make a plan.

Benediction

O Lord my God, to you and your service I devote myself, body soul and spirit. Fill my memory with the record of your mighty works; enlighten my understanding with the light of your Holy Spirit; and make all the desires of my heart and will center in what you would have me do. Make me an instrument of your salvation for the people entrusted to my care, and let me by my life and speaking set fourth your true and living Word. Be always with me in carrying out the duties of my salvation; in praises heighten my love and gratitude; in speaking of you give me readiness of thought and expression; and grant that, by the clearness and brightness of your holy Word, all the world may be drawn to your blessed kingdom. All this I ask for the sake of your Son my savior Jesus Christ. Amen

From the Divine Hours- Prayers for Wintertime, page 160

¹ From www.northumbriacommunity.org.

² Deuteronomy 8:2