

# Exploring Hope Today



Devotional thoughts from the director, Dr Peggy Banks

*“The art of rest is about learning how to rest with Jesus, not from Jesus.” – Adam Mabry in The Art*

## “Take my yoke ...”

Can we have too much of God? What a question to ponder in our hearts today. Would it be so bad to be so close—even attached—to Jesus that our every movement was in step with the direction and heart of God?

The dictionary definition for the word yoke is “a bar or frame of wood by which two oxen are joined at the heads or necks for working together.” So, what does it mean for Jesus to say, “Take my yoke”? I think it’s a picture, an image of hope, for what it means to be joined, so close to Jesus, that we are not working alone but together with him in ministry and in life.

### My Yoke

For many years as a young girl, I was searching for truth. I looked for a place and people who were safe. I was afraid to be myself and speak up for what I believed was right. This led me to be more of a follower in fear than a leader in truth.

I was yoked to many things, and I allowed those things to control my thoughts, choices and future. I was yoked to my past pain and mistakes. I was yoked to the opinions of others. I was yoked to drugs and relationships. In those things I found my identity, safety, security and direction for life.

For many years, being yoked to the wrong people led me down destructive paths. I made choices that were not healthy for my physical, emotional or spiritual life. It was my work, health, business, reputation and boyfriends that were the idols I lived for every day.

One morning, I was up very early getting ready to go have breakfast with one of the men I was still emotionally and physically yoked to. It was a destructive relationship, and as I was leaving to meet him before work, I heard God speak to my heart. “Are you willing to meet me this early before work for a spiritual breakfast?” he asked me.

### His Yoke

When we attach our lives to Jesus, and rest in the guidance and wisdom of his Word and plan, we live in freedom and truth (John 8:31–32). The relationship yoke that Jesus offers us isn’t heavy, because he does all the leading and guiding. Moreover, he promises to accompany us to the place he has prepared for us (Job 42:2). Ever since that day when I heard God speak to my heart, I try to make my first appointment of the day one that is yoked to Jesus, learning from his Word, resting in his power and committed to following his lead.

### Your Yoke

What is it that you are yoked to today? Is it something that is driving your life in a direction far from Jesus?

Decide whom you will serve and take the yoke of Christ upon you. Open your heart and allow it to be yoked to Christ alone. Imagine you and your Lord working and resting together.

God is there for you, so take a step of faith and get free from the yoke that binds you to this world and keeps you from him. Take his yoke, learn from him and find his rest (Matt. 11:28–30; Rom. 10:9).

Fear Quote

**What then are we afraid of? Can we have too much of God? Is it a misfortune to be freed from the heavy yoke of the world, and to bear the light burden of Jesus Christ? Do we fear to be too happy, too much deliver from ourselves, from the caprices of pride, the violence of our passions, and the tyranny of this deceitful world?**

—François Fénelon

**May 2020**

**Focus on the need to  
Grow in Prayer**

1. Thank you, Lord, for encouraging persecuted believers in Central Asia through the testimony and prayers of those who have persevered through hard times, guiding them even in desperate situations.
2. Thank you, God, that as women gather in Paraguay to intercede and bear each other's burdens, you are knitting hearts together and creating communities of support.
3. Lord, please enable Dr Peggy Banks to daily yield her thoughts, burdens and life to God so that she can lead others to find their hope in Jesus.
4. We pray that in Korea and every nation, believers would develop compassionate hearts to pray for women and girls and join the TWR Women of Hope prayer movement.
5. We pray that believers in Ukraine would be devoted to God, put their hope in him and continually pray to him.
6. Father, we as the body of Christ respond to your call to repent of our sin. Would you pour out your Spirit of revival and committed prayer on your church worldwide? (Eph. 6:12)
7. May Uruguay's newly elected leaders have genuine faith in God and govern with godly wisdom and justice.
8. We pray that women in Poland will seek intimacy with God daily, imitate his character and heart, and pray unceasingly for the lost and hurting.
9. God, we pray for everyone who uses the prayer calendar in Albania to pray faithfully for all the requests understanding that you hear and value every prayer.
10. God you call us to battle on our knees. We fervently pray for those who have not heard the gospel – break down barriers, send workers, provide protection and bring people to salvation!
11. We praise you, Father, for Nepalese Christians who use their radios at home and businesses to broadcast TWR and Women of Hope programs, which communicate the gospel message to all who listen.
12. Thank you, Lord, for our African sisters who are role models of how to pray aloud freely. Give courage to those women from cultures who find it difficult to pray aloud, pray openly and pray with emotion in a group setting.
13. Lord, may we not be anxious about anything, but always thankfully pray to you. We are grateful that your peace will guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 4:6-7)
14. Lord, give Christians in Central Europe who live in a wealthy environment the compassion to pray for impoverished people, resulting in godly action and charity.
15. Father, we know that you want to encourage women in Romania to pursue a rich life of prayer. Raise up women there and around the world to model prayer and godly womanhood for the next generation.
16. Help us, Father, to use our prayer lives as women, wives and mothers to influence our homes, marriages, workplaces and nations.
17. We pray for French government officials to address the reasons for strikes and protests. Lord, give them godly wisdom for just rulings, and may peace come to this nation.
18. Lord, lead those in Finland, so many of whom are tired of hectic and stressful lives, to the deep truths in your Word and to the silence of prayer.
19. Father, give women in Canada the desire to pray together for one another and for TWR Women of Hope.
20. God, may we be joyful in hope, patient in affliction and faithful in prayer. (Rom. 12:12)
21. We pray that Christians in Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands would prioritize prayer, making time for it personally and corporately.
22. Thank you, Lord, that churches and individuals support the Croatian ministry in prayer. May these prayer warriors also serve women in their circles of influence in practical ways.
23. Lord, we pray for peaceful elections in Ethiopia, for a strong economy, and for peace and protection of the Oromo people who suffer violence there.
24. Teach us, Jesus, how to pray like you in complete dependence on the Father.
25. God, we praise you that India distributes the prayer calendar in 11 languages. Would you draw Indian women to intercede in prayer for other women and for the protection and development of their nation?
26. Father, strengthen Chinese Christian women as many remain single because there are not enough Christian men to marry. "For your Maker is your husband" (Isa. 54:5). Encourage the hearts of Christian women whose husbands are not yet believers.
27. You have called us, God, to pray for the leaders of our nations. Be Lord over all spheres of government in South Africa and expose ungodly corruption.
28. May believers in Serbia understand the importance of prayer and invest the time necessary to hear God's voice and recognize God's will for their country. God alone brings strength, peace and joy.
29. May Latin American Christians desire, know and walk in your will. Give them a passion to come to you in prayer.
30. Lord, we obediently offer petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving for all people and for those in authority over us. (1 Tim. 2:1-2)
31. Thank you, Father, for the International Day for the Unreached, for TWR's founding partnership in the alliance that sponsors it and for the alliance's vision, which urges every Christian to help make Christ known to unreached people groups.

