



# Milestones

## New Home

A new home is an exciting time. As one moves in, they claim the space for themselves: decorate it with a personal touch, add things that express themselves, put up family pictures, etc. A new home is full of possibilities, but can also be a time to grieve what is being left.

This resource contains two parts. A devotion to be shared with those who live in the home and a liturgy for blessing the new home. Together they give you an opportunity to share and reflect on this moment.

## New Home Milestone Devotion

Milestones devotions center around four key faith practices: Caring Conversations, Devotions, Service, and Rituals & Traditions. The goal in this particular milestone for the caring conversation to provide a place to name both the joys of a new place and the sorrows of leaving an old one. The Devotion helps reflect on what we have learned and treasure. The time of service can help make you more aware of the community into which you have moved. The Ritual & Tradition helps you to claim your new home and acknowledge God's presence in it. Because the ritual in this particular is milestone can be a corporate act, it may be done separate from this devotion.

We would also like to recognize the milestone of your new home during worship by presenting you with a special milestone that can be used during the blessing and for future blessings. Please talk to pastor about arranging this.

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## Gathering

Begin by **announcing it is time for devotions**. Ask everyone to silence their phones and collect them in a basket. Set the basket said, out of reach and out of view. Explain that "today, we will be reflecting on our new home"



As you gather together, begin by sharing a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your lives and then use the outline below to talk about faith and God's presence in this moment.



## Caring Conversations

Begin a conversation with the following:

- Talk about a memory from the home you lived in before this home that makes you smile or laugh.
- What is something that you are most excited about in your new home?
- What is something that you are sad to leave about your old home?
- What is it about settling into your new home that will bring you the most joy or pleasure?

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## Devotions

Read the following:

*By wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established; by knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches.* Proverbs 24:3-4 (NRSV)

After reading, complete the following sentences:

- A piece of wisdom I learned in my own home as a child is...
- A treasure I carry with me from my previous home to my first home is...

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## Service

Plan an opportunity to get to know your community

- Take a plate of cookies to a neighbor.
- Walk along your street and say a silent prayer for each home as you pass by.
- Look up the various agencies that help people in your community and consider volunteering.

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## Rituals and Traditions

Plan a time to do the home blessing included with this devotion. Take time to discuss if you would like to invite others to be a part of this time. If you are going to serve snacks after the blessing, talk about the menu.

Consider a way to receive family and friends into your first home and/ or send them back out into the world. It may be as simple as saying, "Peace be with you," or "Peace to all who enter here," or "May the Lord watch over you as you go out and as you come in now and forever. Amen."

You may also want to hang a cross over your entrance door to bless all who enter and depart.

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## Closing

Close your time together with this prayer:

Dear God, we ask you to bless this home and all who enter here with the wisdom that knows and receives your ever present love. For (name those who live in the home) and for all who visit. May this place be filled with an awareness of your presence to keep us in faith, hope, and love all the days of our lives. We pray in Christ's name. **Amen.**

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## Additional Thoughts

You may wish to use this milestone devotion periodically to check in with household members about how their feeling about their new home. You may also use it on each anniversary. Set out the special home blessing milestone token and invite people to share share the following:

- One think I've learned living here since we talked last.
- Something exciting for me that has happened in the place.
- Something I'm concerned about when I think of my home.

# Home Blessing

The provided liturgy can be used as you move in to a new home, after something tragic has happened (I.E. a break-in or robbery), or anytime you want. You may adapt it to fit your needs. Use the parts that you find helpful.

A home is anywhere you make it. It may have one room or it may have several. Therefore the liturgy speaks of “spaces” rather than rooms because in many homes one room may have many “spaces” in it. The liturgy provides a scripture and a prayer for each space in the home. If multiple spaces are in one room it might be useful to use an object to represent the nature of the space (I.E. an exercise space may be where walking shoes or a bicycle are kept). The liturgy is most meaningful when you move from space to space. If the space is represented by an object, lift up or point to the object.

## **Some things you might want to consider:**

- The liturgy can be done by the residents of the new home, but it can also be a time to “show” of your new home by inviting friends and family to join in. You may also want to invite your pastor to lead the liturgy.
- Arranging ahead of time for a cross to be mounted on a wall can be an enduring reminder that the house is blessed and Christ is present. You may want to mount it over the main door so that it is seen as you go out and come in. The cross may be one that your family has moved from your old home, given by extended family, or something you picked out.
- If you have unique spaces in your house (a barn, “man cave”, “she shed”, etc.), plan ahead to include them. Follow the same format for the other rooms but add in your own prayer and scripture. Ask pastor if you need help.
- Traditionally, homes are blessed each year on Epiphany. While this liturgy can be used for that purpose, there is a special liturgy on our website, search for “epiphany home blessing”.

## **You will need the following items:**

- Copies of this liturgy. Ideally everyone participating has a copy, but if not, one copy can be passed around.
- Participants. It can add a nice touch if you divide up the readings & prayers among those present so everyone has something to do.
- Special Milestone. It is not necessary, but if you have received the special milestone from our congregation, invite different household members to hold it as you move from space to space. Who ever is holding the milestone is invited to share something special about the current space that might include.
  - Why are they excited about this space
  - Why this space is important to them
  - What they hope this space will allow them to do.

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## Outside

Friends in Christ: Today we bless God and we seek God's blessing as we gather to give thanks for this home and those who live here. May Peace to this home and to all who enter here.

*By wisdom a house is built, and through understanding it is established; through knowledge its rooms are filled with rare and beautiful treasures. (Proverbs 24:3-4)*

*A candle may be lighted*

*The Lord opened Lydia's heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. When she and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my house." And she prevailed upon us. (Acts 16:14-15)*

O God, you set apart time for rest and enjoyment of the world you made. Bless those who gather here for fellowship and recreation, that they may be renewed and refreshed. In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

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## Entrance door

*The Lord will watch over your going out and your coming in, from this time forth and forevermore. (Psalm 121:8)*

O God, watch over *names of residents* in all their going out and their coming in; keep all evil away from their door; and let them share the hospitality of this home with all who visit, that those who enter here may know your love and peace. **Amen.**

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## Living space (where the TV is, people relax)

*If one person lives in the home:*

*The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. (Psalm 23:1)*

*If more than one person lives in the home:*

*How very good and pleasant it is, when kindred live together in unity. (Psalm 133:1)*

Grant your blessing, dear Lord, that all who use this room may find peace in your company and be drawn together in love and harmony. **Amen.**

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## Space(s) for sleeping (bedrooms or where one sleeps)

*For spaces occupied by children*

*In peace, I will lie down and sleep; for you alone, O Lord, make me rest secure. (Psalm 4:8)*

Guide us waking, O Lord, and guard us sleeping, that awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep we may rest in peace. Bless *name* as they lie down and strength as they rise. **Amen.**

*For spaces occupied by teens*

*It is in vain to rise so early and go to bed so late. You, Lord, give sleep to your beloved. (Psalm 127:2)*

Let us pray. O God, may name find here rest and respite, privacy and connection, challenge and enjoyment. And in all these things, may she/he hear you calling her/him by name. **Amen.**

*For spaces occupied by couples*

*Above all, clothe yourselves in love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. (Colossians 3:14-15)*

Let us pray. O God, bless *name* and *name* in their waking and in their sleeping, and let them find in one another comfort, respect, and delight. **Amen.**

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## Bathroom

*You yourself created my inmost parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I will thank you because I am marvelously made; your works are wonderful, and I know it well. (Psalm 139:13-14)*

Let us pray. O God, through the waters of baptism you raise us up and make us alive together with Christ. Let the waters of this room refresh and renew all who use them/ *name* in each new day. **Amen.**

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## Kitchen

*A reading from Joel: I am sending you grain, wine, and oil, and you will be satisfied. Be glad and rejoice in the Lord your God. (Joel 2:19, 23)*

O God, you fill the hungry with good things. Send your blessing on those who prepare food here, and make us all ever thankful for daily bread. **Amen.**

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## Dining area / Table

*The eyes of all wait upon you, O Lord, and you give them their food in due season. You open wide your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing. (Psalm 145:15-16)*

Blessed are you, Creator of heaven and earth, for you give us food and drink to sustain our lives and make our hearts glad. Make us grateful for all your mercies, and mindful of the needs of others. **Amen.**

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## Workstation / Home office

*Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. (Genesis 2:1-2)*

O God, you set the example for diligent work. Bless the work that takes place here and may it glorify you. And when the workday draws to an end, enable us to set it aside for the sake of others. **Amen.**

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## Workshop / Sewing room / Place of creativity

*May the graciousness of the Lord our God be upon us; prosper the work of our hands; prosper our handiwork. (Psalm 90:17)*

O God, you are the source of our creativity. You fashioned our minds to imagine and our hands to shape new things. Prosper the work that is done in this place. **Amen.**

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## Exercise Space

*Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own. (1 Corinthians 6:19)*

O God, you revealed yourself in human flesh, making holy what is ordinary and earthly. Bless us as we care for our ordinary, marvelous bodies. **Amen.**

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## Place of Prayer

*Jesus said to them, "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while." (Mark 6:31)*

Lord Jesus, just as you called your apostles to a quiet place, remind us of the need for quiet and prayer that our hearts may be tuned to you. **Amen.**

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## Conclusion

God of grace and love, you are present in all places and at all times. May this home be a place of blessing and reveal your grace to all who come here. **Amen.**

Go in peace, serve the Lord.

**Thanks Be to God.**