

Benedictions in the Bible: Scriptural Blessings to Close a Service

The classic scriptural benedictions pastors use to close a service — from Numbers 6 to 2 Corinthians 13 — with pastoral notes on delivery, tone, and when each one fits.

The Aaronic Blessing

NUMBERS 6:24-26 (ESV)

“The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.”

The most-used benediction in Christian worship for good reason: three parallel lines covering presence, favor, and peace. Delivered with hands raised toward the congregation. Works for every kind of service.

Apostolic Benedictions

2 CORINTHIANS 13:14 (ESV)

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”

The trinitarian benediction — brief, complete, and sends people out with a clear pronouncement of grace. A strong default for a Sunday morning close.

ROMANS 15:13 (ESV)

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.”

The hope benediction. Especially fitting after a heavy or lament-shaped service, or during Advent.

HEBREWS 13:20-21 (ESV)

“Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.”

The longest classic benediction. Fits Easter, ordination services, and any Sunday where the sermon has focused on the resurrection or on Christ as shepherd.

JUDE 24-25 (ESV)

“Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.”

The keeping benediction — reassures a congregation that God's power, not their strength, holds them. Especially good after a service on perseverance or spiritual warfare.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:23-24 (ESV)

“Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.”

A benediction that ends on God's faithfulness — good after a service where the congregation has been called to something difficult.

PHILIPPIANS 4:7 (ESV)

“And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

The peace benediction. Short enough to memorize, and fits almost any service. Especially strong after teaching on anxiety, suffering, or Christ's sufficiency.

EPHESIANS 3:20-21 (ESV)

“Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”

The doxology benediction — sends the people out worshiping. Good closer for a vision-casting or missions-focused service.

Old Testament Blessings

PSALM 121:7-8 (ESV)

“The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life. The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.”

A pilgrim psalm read as a benediction. Fits a sending service, a farewell, or the close of a service on God's protection.

PSALM 20:1-4 (ESV, ADAPTED)

“May the Lord answer you in the day of trouble! May the name of the God of Jacob protect you! May he send you help from the sanctuary and give you support from Zion.”

A blessing spoken over someone facing hardship. Works as a benediction over a congregation entering a difficult week or season.

DEUTERONOMY 33:27 (ESV, ADAPTED FOR CONGREGATION)

“The eternal God is your dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms.”

One of the most tender blessing lines in scripture. A single-line benediction that carries enormous weight — especially after a service that has dealt with suffering or loss.

Christ-Centered Benedictions

2 THESSALONIANS 3:16 (ESV)

“Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all.”

Short, warm, and personal. Ends with 'the Lord be with you all' — an ancient Christian benediction line that predates the New Testament writings themselves.

1 PETER 5:10-11 (ESV)

“And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

A benediction that names suffering honestly and then pronounces restoration. For a congregation carrying real weight.

COLOSSIANS 3:15 (ESV)

“And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.”

A benediction that also gives a charge — peace, unity, thanksgiving in a single line.

How to Use These in a Service

Delivery. A benediction is pronounced, not requested. That means eyes open, hands raised toward the congregation, voice steady. The distinction from a closing prayer matters: a closing prayer addresses God on behalf of the people; a benediction addresses the people in God's name. If it helps, physically step forward from the pulpit to signal the shift.

Rotation. Using the same benediction every week can become invisible; using a different one every week can feel scattered. A workable pattern is to keep one anchor benediction (often Numbers 6:24-26 or 2 Corinthians 13:14) for most weeks and rotate a second one in for special seasons — Romans 15:13 for Advent, Hebrews 13:20-21 for Easter season, Jude 24-25 for services on perseverance.

Fit to the service. The benediction should feel like a landing, not a departure. If the sermon has focused on hope, close with Romans 15:13. If it has focused on peace or anxiety, close with Philippians 4:7. If it has focused on God's keeping power, close with Jude 24-25 or Psalm 121. The people should hear the sermon's central promise pronounced over them one more time as they leave.

Length and pace. Benedictions are almost always shorter than pastors think they should be. Read slowly, let the words breathe, and stop. A long, extemporized benediction dilutes

the pronouncement. If the benediction is scriptural, don't add commentary to it — the text is doing the work.

Frequently Asked

What is a benediction in the Bible?

A benediction is a spoken blessing — literally a 'good word' — pronounced over the people. In the Bible, benedictions are typically given at the close of a gathering by a priest, apostle, or leader, invoking God's presence, favor, and peace on the hearers. The two most-used examples are Numbers 6:24–26 (the Aaronic blessing) and 2 Corinthians 13:14 (the apostolic benediction).

What is the most common benediction used in church?

The Aaronic blessing from Numbers 6:24–26 — 'The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.' It has been the most commonly used benediction in Christian worship for centuries because it is short, memorable, and covers presence, protection, favor, and peace in three lines.

Is a benediction the same as a prayer?

Not quite. A prayer is addressed to God; a benediction is addressed to the congregation, in God's name. A benediction pronounces something over people rather than asking God for something in front of them. In practice this means the pastor typically speaks the benediction with hands raised toward the congregation, not folded or lifted upward.

What is a good closing benediction prayer?

For most Sunday services, 2 Corinthians 13:14 works well: 'May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.' It is trinitarian, brief, and sends people out with a clear pronouncement of grace.

Can I write my own benediction?

Yes, and pastors often do — but the strongest original benedictions borrow the shape and cadence of scriptural ones, and are grounded in specific promises rather than general well-wishes. The pattern to follow: invoke God (Father, Son, Spirit, or one specifically), pronounce a specific gift (peace, grace, presence, hope), and address it directly to the people.

Should a benediction come before or after the closing song?

Traditionally after — the benediction is the last spoken word in the service, sending the people out. Some traditions place it before the closing song so the congregation sings on the way out, which also works if the song functions as a response to the blessing rather than an addition to the service.

How long should a benediction be?

Short. Most scriptural benedictions are one to three sentences. A long benediction stops feeling like a pronouncement and starts feeling like a second sermon. The strength of the Aaronic blessing is that it fits in a single breath.

Building this Sunday's service?

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