I wonder what it was that prompted the disciples’ request. Had they watched Jesus praying, as was his custom, in a place apart and then seen him come back somehow changed—more refreshed, more serene, more focused, more disturbed? Had they overheard Jesus praying—the intimate conversation, the wrestling and struggle, the thanksgiving and praise, the intercessions? Had they remembered some admonition or invitation to pray? Did their own spirits feel dry and empty? Did they know some longing deep inside for a closer communion with the one Jesus called Abba? Was there in them some joy or anguish that needed to be offered to God? “Lord, teach us to pray” (Luke 11:1).

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