



21 DAYS OF
PRAYER



PERDIDO BAY
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

21 Days of Prayer

Welcome to 21 Days of Prayer with Perdido Bay United Methodist Church. It is our hope that this season of focused prayer will completely transform the life of your family, your church, and your community. Things happen when we pray that do not happen when we do not pray. Scripture says that God's house will be a "house of prayer." The disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray. Paul beckoned others to pray for the gospel to go forward. Prayer is undoubtedly vital to spiritual growth. So, we invite you to join in with the life change that God is about to bring to our community. Help us pray to know God in deeper ways and to see lives changed for the transformation of the world.

SOAP Bible Study Method

For this devotional, we will be introducing the **SOAP Bible Study Method**. This is a form of study and journaling that helps dive deeper into each day's Scripture passage. Here's how it works:

SOAP is a simple method for reading and applying God's word to our lives. SOAP stands for Scripture, Observation, Application and Prayer and involves four simple steps:

- **Scripture** – Read a short Bible passage out loud and/or write it out.
- **Observation** – What do you notice about the verses? What do you think the main message is? What verses, words or ideas jump out to you?
- **Application** – Ask God how he wants you to apply the verse to your own life.
- **Prayer** – Pray for yourself and/or for others.

Don't worry about getting too complicated. Just use this simple tool to reflect and go deeper with God. You can keep short meaningful thoughts in the journal that is provided in the booklet. You may be impacted by a phrase from scripture or an observation. God may reveal a way for you to apply these reflections to your own life. There is also a place to write out a prayer for God to help you apply these findings to your life. We encourage you to use the journal to share some key thoughts with your discipleship group for prayer and support.

Day 1 - October 10, 2022 - Our Father who art in Heaven (Matthew 6:9)

Romans 8:14-17- ¹⁴For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. ¹⁵The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship^l And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." ¹⁶The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. ¹⁷Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

This sounds obvious, but when talking with someone it's important to know who you are speaking with. Have you ever started a conversation with someone at the grocery store, thinking that you knew them, only to realize it was a perfect stranger? Have you ever spoken with someone on the phone, thinking it was one person, only to find out it was someone else entirely?

A peculiar study on the benefits of gratitude had one confusing issue. It gave no clear benefactor to give thanks to. Imagine trying to be thankful to no one in particular! That's like writing a thank you card, putting a stamp on it, and then dropping the card in the mailbox without an address!

When we pray, we are talking to the eternal God, the Father of all. He's the Creator and Sustainer of the whole universe. When we pray, we are speaking to the all-powerful One who has broken down the barriers of sin and shame. He loves us so much that He allowed the punishment we deserve to be placed on His son Jesus. This sacrifice has opened the door for friendship with God. It sounds too good to be true, but that is what our God has done for us.

Today's Meditation: As you pray today, remember that you speak to the Father-God who loves you and is interested in every detail of your life. Make a list of the top 5 ways that God has taken care of you. What has He provided for you? Who has He brought into your life? Realize that when you pray you are speaking to the one and only God who cares deeply for you.

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Day 2- October 11, 2022 - Hallowed be Thy name... (Matthew 6:9)

Isaiah 29:22-24-²²Therefore this is what the LORD, who redeemed Abraham, says to the descendants of Jacob: "No longer will Jacob be ashamed; no longer will their faces grow pale."²³ When they see among them their children, the work of my hands they will keep my name holy; they will acknowledge the holiness of the Holy One of Jacob, and will stand in awe of the God of Israel. ²⁴ Those who are wayward in spirit will gain understanding; those who complain will accept instruction."

Do you have a nickname? As a child, many of us acquired some sort of nickname based on our disposition, or maybe how we have responded in a situation. Some popular nicknames of the past are Ace, Motormouth, and Einstein. When you hear a nickname, it always brings a certain characteristic to mind.

The ancient peoples were given names much like we are given nicknames today. They were named based on how they were experienced by others. Some names were given as a reminder of something they had done. Some names were based on the hopes and dreams that the parents had for the child. Jacob, during his birth, grabbed the heel of his twin brother, Esau. Thus, he was given the name which means 'deceiver.' While Rachel was dying during childbirth, she named the child Ben-oni, which means 'son of my trouble.' The child's father, knowing the name would be hard to live with, quickly changed his name to Benjamin, which means 'son of my right hand.' Imagine the significance the name change had for that young man.

In the Bible, God has been given many names by his earthly children. These names are based on their experiences with God. Over the centuries, God has been called the Provider, the One who sees all, the Shepherd, the God who is with us, the Healer, and Creator, just to name a few.

Today's Meditation: When you say, "Hallowed be Thy name," what attributes do you associate with God's name? In what ways have you experienced Him? As an act of faith, what names could you give God based on how you would like to see Him operate in your life? It is a good thing to begin your prayer times by worshiping Him for the many wonderful characteristics that you have found in Him.

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Day 3- October 12, 2022 - Thy kingdom come Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven
(Matthew 6:10)

Luke 11:5-13-⁵ Then Jesus said to them, "Suppose you have a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; ⁶ a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have no food to offer him.' ⁷ And suppose the one inside answers, 'Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children and I are in bed. I can't get up and give you anything.' ⁸ I tell you, even though he will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, yet because of your shameless audacity^[a] he will surely get up and give you as much as you need.

⁹ "So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

¹¹ "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? ¹² Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? ¹³ If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

What would it look like if the statement "Thy kingdom come" unfolded before our very eyes? What would it look like for God's Kingdom to come to earth and for His will be done on earth as it is in heaven? The Bible describes heaven as a place of perfection and beauty. Can this really be imagined by the human mind? Streets of gold, a crystal sea, the full glory of God made known...and these are just a few points of consideration.

When Ezekiel wanted to express the heavenly vision he saw, he struggled to do so with human language. In Ezekiel chapter 1, he says things such as "...the fire looked like glowing metal," and in the fire was "what looked like four living creatures." Ezekiel says, "he looked like glowing metal, as if full of fire."

Their faces looked like this or that. Their appearance was like coals of fire or like torches...Ezekiel does the best he can with his descriptions, but he cannot fully paint the picture because God's glory is so great. He must do the best he can when confronted with the glory of God's Kingdom.

The beautiful creation known as earth seems bland when compared with heavenly visions. But God is bringing His kingdom to earth through our prayers. We must understand our part in helping establish God's kingdom here on earth. Our prayers and our actions are powerful in Christ Jesus. They bring God's kingdom to earth each and every day.

Today's Meditation: As you pray today, imagine heaven, the angels, and the streets of Gold. Now try to imagine what Kingdom characteristics would God like to see on earth. Ask God to bring heaven to earth in these ways today.

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Day 4- October 13, 2022 - Give us this day our daily bread (Matthew 6:11)

Matthew 6:28-34 ²⁸ “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. ²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³⁰ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? ³¹ So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Daily bread might be something that we could easily take for granted. We have the privilege of living in a nation that is capable of feeding so many. As a mother bird brings food to the nest, so God has feeds us daily. That doesn't take away the need to pray for daily bread. Sometimes God answers the prayer with a job that allows us to create the means with which we can meet our daily needs. Sometimes He provides by the way of a miracle.

Could daily bread be more than food, shelter, and daily needs? Can the term go deeper than just food and shelter? In the Bible bread can also be symbolic for spiritual, relational, and emotional needs. The Gentile woman in Mark 7 equated the healing of her daughter with crumbs of bread.

Bread was an important element in ancient society. In the Bible, the word “bread” is often used metaphorically to convey a variety of symbolic meanings. Just as there are many types of bread (wheat, white, sourdough, pumpernickel, pita, focaccia just to name a few), Jesus can provide for us in many ways. Daily bread can be provision. It can also symbolize closeness of relationship. It can mean spiritual nourishment.

It is interesting that Jesus calls Himself the ‘Bread of heaven?’ It is no accident that Jesus chose to use bread and wine to symbolize communion. Communion signifies closeness, unity, and relationship. Jesus, the Bread of Heaven, doesn't just drop groceries on the doorstep and quietly walk away. No, He remains with us. He never leaves us. He never forsakes us. He walks alongside of us as He meets our daily needs.

Today's Meditation: What is a way that God has provided for you in the past?
What is a way that you need God to provide for you today. As you pray about that need, remember that He is right here with you this very moment. He is the Bread of heaven.

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Day 5- October 14, 2022 - Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us (Matthew 6:12)

Luke 15:3-4-So watch yourselves. "If your brother or sister^[a] sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them. ⁴ Even if they sin against you seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive them."

Forgiveness...we use the word a lot but what does it really mean? By definition, forgiveness is the release of an offending party from obligation or punishment. The one who forgives exercises a compassion and a desire to free the one who has offended. When forgiving, the removal of the offense does not condone the behavior or suggest approval for the offense, but it does free the offender.

It's impossible to imagine our Christian faith without forgiveness. Who doesn't need forgiveness? Jesus teaches a lot on the subject. In one place He even says if you are at the altar giving an offering and remember there is a problem in your relationship with someone, put your gift down and go be reconciled to that person. Then come back and give your offering. It might make for an unusual church service if someone left abruptly during the offering time like that. But the result would be tremendous. That action would be in line with Jesus' teaching on forgiveness.

Have you ever considered the part of the Lord's Prayer that says, 'Forgive our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us?' The tiny word 'as' carries a lot of weight in this prayer. It shows that Jesus values forgiveness deeply. Who doesn't want to experience forgiveness? But we must also value the forgiving of others as well. Our faith, when it has grown up, has learned to thrive and even rejoice while extending forgiveness to others.

Our relationships are both horizontal and vertical. This means is that our relationship with God is fundamentally connected to our relationships with others. God desires to forgive, and He also desires that His children forgive one another.

Today's Meditation-Is there any unforgiveness in your life that needs to be dealt with? Is there someone that you should forgive in order to experience deeper freedom in Christ? Let this be the focus of your prayer today.

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Day 6- October 15, 2022 - October 10, 2022, Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil (Matthew 6:13)

James 4:7-10- ⁷ Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸ Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹ Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

What is the most beautiful sight you've ever seen? Some will answer this question with mountains tall and majestic or the ocean deep and mysterious. Others might say the stars on a crisp and clear night. Still others would say the most wonderful sight is that of the desert flowers bringing beauty to a parched and thirsty place.

Although unspeakable beauty surrounds us on this earth, this place is also filled with indescribable evil. When Adam and Eve gave into temptation, I don't think they had any idea what they were setting in motion. Have you ever been angry with the first couple for giving into temptation? By sinning they unwittingly infected all humans with the devastating sin nature that we struggle with even to this day. It's easy to be angry with them sometimes. Maybe they didn't realize that sin would be multiplied to the generations to follow. I think it's important to realize that our own sin has the same multiplicity effect as theirs. Sin never affects just one person. It always multiplies and touches others. Sin degrades us so that we are not the people that we should be. And that can impact future generations just as the initial sin has affected us.

Resisting sin and evil is a key part of our spiritual life, but aren't you glad that's not our only line of defense. The good news is that Jesus is our remedy. He gives us grace and power in the prayer that He taught us to pray. The Lord's Prayer is more than a beautiful, poetic body of literature. It is full of strength and authority. You can pray 'lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,' with confidence. Our Lord is close by and ready to help.

Today's Meditation: Have you ever felt the hopelessness of being trapped in sin? How do you describe what you felt when you realized that there is complete freedom in Christ? As you pray today thank God for His strength to deliver us.

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Day 7- October 17, 2022 - For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen. (Matthew 6:13)

Revelation 7:9-11-⁹ After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people, and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. ¹⁰ And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

¹¹ All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God,

When God spoke, the universe came into being. Light, oceans, mountains, and creatures appear at His word. Sciences and mathematics were set into motion by His great understanding. There is no one like our God!

Contrast God's great glory with the glory of man. Sports championships are great, but they don't hold a candle to God's glory. Fortunes gained through wisdom and hard work are commendable, but they pale in comparison to the One who holds the stars in His hand. Music produced by man can be amazing and celebratory...But we know the One who has created music itself! What unexplainable power and glory!

And yet this wonderful Savior, who is full of power and glory, wants to have relationship with you and with me! What unfathomable blessing that we have come upon. Glory to His name!

Today's Meditation: As you take time today to consider God's awesome power, give Him praise. As you consider the One who can call each one of us by name, worship Him. As you envision the heavenly kingdom where we will one day reside, honor Him. He has made a way for us to enter His glorious presence.

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Day 8- October 18, 2022 - A Prayer of David-The 23rd Psalm

Psalm 23- ¹The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. ²He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. ³He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. ⁴Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. ⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. ⁶Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell^[1] in the house of the LORD forever.

The 23rd Psalm is probably one of the most well-known and beloved of the Psalms. The Lord is revealed as our Shepherd, and we are seen as his sheep. When we look at sheep more closely, we may begin to understand a little more about ourselves and our Shepherd, Jesus Christ.

Sheep are helpless without their shepherd. They are always getting themselves into trouble. If a sheep turns over on its back it will get stuck there. Without the shepherd to rescue that sheep, it will die. Sheep have gotten trapped in fences. They've gotten stuck in holes in the ground. One sheep even got his head stuck in a bale of hay! There was a recent video of a sheep that had gotten himself stuck in a tire swing...He was just running back and forth, swinging like a child. It looked like it was having a good time, but eventually it would need the intervention of a loving shepherd to get himself free.

Where would we be without the Great Shepherd intervening in our situations? Our Lord Jesus, cares for us like a shepherd cares for his flock. When we are in trouble, He helps us. When we are lost, He guides us back to the fold. When we are weary, He gives us rest. Under the care of the Jesus, we are fed, protected, and encouraged. What an amazing God we serve.

Today's Meditation: Realize the many ways that Jesus, the Good Shepherd, takes care of you. In what way do you need Him to care for you today? In what way can He care for your family and friends? Spend some quality time talking to the Shepherd about this today.

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Day 9- October 19, 2022 - John Wesley's Covenant Prayer

Ephesians 1:15-20-¹⁵ For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, ¹⁶I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. ¹⁷I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit^[a] of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. ¹⁸I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, ¹⁹and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength ²⁰he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms

John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist Church, was a man of God's Word, a man of convictions, and a man of prayer. Consider this quote of Wesley: "I continue to dream and pray about a revival of holiness in our day that moves forth in mission and creates authentic community in which each person can be unleashed through the empowerment of the Spirit to fulfill God's creational intentions."

Now Wesley's dream is God sized dream! It was Wesley's dream, but when we think about it more, isn't it our dream too? Imagine all the lives that would be changed if this dream came true in our day. Imagine if a revival hit our area and began to spread throughout the darkened world. How would this impact our families and friends? How would it impact our neighborhoods, our schools, and our workplaces? Our area could not contain such a dream. It would have to spread. The prayer that follows was born from a heart that desired to see the world revived with God's Spirit, and during Wesley's day there was a Great Awakening. Don't you think we could dream for a Great Awakening too? Let's take Wesley's dream and Covenant prayer as our own, and let's begin to look for an awakening to come.

I am no longer my own, but yours. Put me to what you will, place me with whom you will. Put me to doing, put me to suffering. Let me be put to work for you or set aside for you, praised for you or criticized for you. Let me be full, let me be empty. Let me have all things, let me have nothing. I freely and fully surrender all things to your glory and service. And now, O wonderful and holy God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer, you are mine, and I am yours. So be it. And the covenant which I have made on earth, let it also be made in heaven. Amen. (John Wesley's Covenant Prayer)

Today's Meditation: Spend some time today reflecting deeply on this prayer. How does it resonate with you. Is it possible that a prayer like this could spark a great revival in your heart and in our community? What part of this prayer moves you the most?

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Day 10- October 20, 2022 - The Prayer of St. Francis

2 Corinthians 1:3-7-³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort,⁴ who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.⁵ For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ.⁶ If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer.⁷ And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.

Born in Italy around 1181, Saint Francis of Assisi was known for wild living in his youth. After fighting in a battle between Assisi and Perugia, Francis was captured and spent almost a year in prison. It was here that he began receiving visions from God. After his release, Francis heard the voice of God tell him to restore the Christian Church. Consequently, he abandoned his life of luxury and became a disciple of the faith. St. Francis' life has been an encouragement and an example to multitudes over the centuries.

The prayer of St. Francis is a prayer of transformation. Personal change always brings change to others. The one who chooses to pray this prayer becomes like a farmer planting seeds that bring about God's will in the world. As we follow God, we will soon view the world like God does. We will begin to love those who need to experience God's love and grace. Our hopes, prayers, and actions will focus on making a lasting difference. Consider what will happen in your life and your world as you pray the prayer of St. Francis.

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace: where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Today's Meditation: As you consider the prayer of St. Francis look deep inside yourself. What does your life look like as an instrument of peace? Secondly, what does your world look like as you help plant and cultivate the in the lives of the others.

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Day 11- October 21, 2022 - The Prayer of St. Richard of Chichester

Colossians 1:9-14-⁹ For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives,¹⁰ so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God,¹¹ being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience,¹² and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light.¹³ For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves,¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Who was St. Richard? Richard of Chichester lived in the 1200's. As a young boy he lost his parents, who were heavily in debt at the time of their death. His older brother was imprisoned by English authorities until the money owed by his parents was paid off. Richard successfully farmed his brother's property and was offered all those lands and an excellent marriage upon his older brother's release from prison. However, Richard felt a calling from God and chose the priesthood instead. Richard had a strong feeling of devotion for the care of the poor, and he took a solid stance against corruption within the church. St. Richard gave everything he had to care for the sick and poverty-stricken. Richard gave his all for Christ. He died while preaching in 1253. The following is known as the Prayer of St. Richard:

*Thanks be to thee, my Lord Jesus Christ,
for all the benefits thou hast given me,
for all the pains and insults thou hast borne for me.
O most merciful redeemer, friend, and brother,
may I know thee more clearly,
love thee more dearly,
and follow thee more nearly, day by day.
Amen.*

Today's Meditation: As you spend time in God's presence today try to discern an answer for the following questions. In what ways can you know God more clearly? How can you love Jesus more dearly? How can you follow Him more nearly?

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Day 12- October 22, 2022 - The Prayer of St. Teresa of Avila

Psalm 21:1-6- ¹The LORD is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid? ²When the wicked advance against me to devour me, it is my enemies and my foes who will stumble and fall. ³Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then I will be confident.

⁴One thing I ask from the LORD, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple. ⁵For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent and set me high upon a rock. ⁶Then my head will be exalted above the enemies who surround me; at his sacred tent I will sacrifice with shouts of joy; I will sing and make music to the LORD.

Teresa of Avila (1515-82) was a Spanish noblewoman who felt called to the monastic life of a Carmelite nun. She was a theologian of contemplative prayer and meditation. She once spent 5 years in prayerful seclusion. That may seem impossible in today's world, but one thing we can learn from Teresa a deep friendship with God.

A wonderful quote that Teresa left for us says, "You pay God a compliment by asking great things of Him."

Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body. Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

Today's Meditation: In what ways can you grow in friendship with God? Be encouraged to act upon these acts of friendship. What prayer seems too big to pray? Pay God a great compliment of love and trust by beginning to lift that prayer up to Him during this season.

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Day 13- October 24, 2022 - Intercessory Prayer

Romans 8:31-39-¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?³² He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?³³ Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.³⁴ Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?³⁶ As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers,³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

An interesting form of prayer is called ‘intercession.’ There are lots of words with the prefix ‘inter.’ Interrelated, international, interstellar, and intervene are just few words using this prefix. This prefix means ‘between’ or ‘among.’ Looking at a couple of examples from the world of sports can help better describe intercessory prayer. One of the most exciting plays in football is called the interception. The quarterback lets the ball sail through the air towards one of his teammates. But then something quite unexpected happens. As the ball is flying through the air, someone from the other team somehow intervenes and catches the ball. Now the other team has the ball and has a chance to score. The opposing team and fans go into celebration mode. Great interceptions are replayed on highlight reels time and time again for years to come.

When we intercede in prayer for others, we are doing the same thing spiritually. We see that someone has a need in their life. We may not even know the specific details, but we sense an urgency to pray for them. We pray for God to intervene and to turn their situation around. This is intercessory prayer.

Here is a wonderful story that helps illustrate intercessory prayer all the more: Jackie Robinson was the first African American to play major league baseball. While breaking the Baseball’s color barrier, he faced heckling crowds everywhere he went. Once while playing in his own home stadium in Brooklyn, he committed an error. His own fans began to ridicule him. He stood at second base paralyzed, humiliated, while the fans booed. At that moment shortstop “Pee Wee” Reese came over and stood next to him. He put his arm around Jackie Robinson and faced the crowd with him. The fans grew quiet. Robinson later said that arm around his shoulder saved his career.

Today's Meditation: Who is someone that has interceded for you? Who is someone who has 'faced the crowd' with you? Who is someone you know that needs prayer today? In what way can you be a support for them?

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Day 14- October 25, 2022 - Prayer for Revival

2 Chronicles 7:14-¹If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

Throughout world history there have been times of increased spiritual outpouring from God known as a revival or an awakening. These are times when God sends His Spirit to bring healing, refreshing, and a new spiritual focus in the life of the church. The word revival means to bring back to life. There must be something that has died in order to speak of bringing it back to life. As for the word awakening, it supposes that someone is asleep. So, a revival or awakening isn't just a time of excitement, although it is exciting. It is a time of 'waking up' to God and His purposes. It is a time of spiritual fervor. Revival is even a returning back to God just as the prodigal son returned to the father.

What would a widespread spiritual awakening look like in our day? These times of refreshing are marked by an increase of love for God, a greater hunger for His Word, and an intense desire to reach out to those who don't yet know Him. When we humble ourselves and pray God assures us that He will bring the healing that our world so desperately needs.

There's a small group of islands off the western coast of Scotland known as the Hebrides. It is the location of a once mighty revival. Many people came Jesus during this time of awakening. The seeds of the revival have been traced to two elderly sisters, Peggy and Christine Smith. One sister was blind and the other suffered greatly from arthritis. Unable to attend church, they decided they would pray for revival. I wonder if they ever dreamed their prayers would make such a difference. You may wonder if your prayers are powerful. They are. Your prayers could be the seeds to a great revival!

Today's Meditation: How would a great awakening transform our society today? How important is 'behind the scenes' prayer? In your prayer time today pray for a new awakening for our world.

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Day 15- October 26, 2022 - The Ministry of Our Church

Matthew 28:18-20- Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

How does a church decide what to do? When you see a ministry that is effective it is no accident. It is not haphazard. These ministries have been dreamed about, thought about, prayed about, and worked out until they came into existence. The ministry of our church is under constant care and consideration. Where a ministry is strong, we are grateful. Where there are ministries that are still developing, we need encouraging hearts, elbow grease, and continued prayer support to make them more effective for God's Kingdom.

Our church has preaching, discipling, teaching, and praying ministries. It has serving ministries, community building ministries, and relational ministries. We are blessed with Bible studies and discipleship ministries.

Continued prayer support is very important to ministries of the church. Prayer in the church is similar to the gas pedal in a car. As long as the pedal is being pressed down the car moves forward. As long as prayer is taking place, the church moves forward. If you let up on the gas, the car will still coast for a time but sooner or later it will stop. It has been said that the church advances upon its knees. As we pray, we build God's Kingdom. Through prayer God's purposes are established in the earth.

Some outreaches of our church may have over hundred people show up to serve. On the other hand, I've heard of one person who does outreach by keeping packs of crackers in their car. They are always ready when they see a hungry person holding a cardboard sign on the side of the road. Each of these ministries are vital. As you think about the ministries of our church, please help us to continue to pray, serve and encourage. If there is a ministry area that God keeps bringing to your mind, contact the church to find out how you might strengthen this ministry. It makes a difference when we pray and serve God with joy and unity.

Today's Meditation: What ministry has particularly touched your life? Spend time today thanking God for this ministry. Ask God to multiply this ministry to spread faith in the hearts of the people of our community.

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Day 16- October 27, 2022 - Providing welcoming and engaging worship for all people

Psalm 100- Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.² Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.

³ Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.⁴ Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.⁵ For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

Worship is one thing that takes place both now and for all of eternity. The most common expression of worship through music, and Bible contains a whole book of worship known as the Psalms. It's the largest book in the Bible, and this is fitting because God is worthy of all of our praise. Psalms is a very authentic book. In this book God is worshiped in every circumstance and with every emotion imaginable. You find rejoicing. You find sadness and mourning. You find anger and requests for God to defeat the enemies of the writer.

"I can't sing or play an instrument" you may say. That does not discount your worship. The Bible says, "make a joyful noise to the Lord." It doesn't say you must sing with perfect pitch. Joy doesn't indicate a level of skill, but a position of the heart. Joy is not based on happenings or circumstances. Joy is based on the deep love that we have experienced through the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Today's Meditation: When you experience different emotions do you find it a challenge worship God authentically? Do you find it difficult to celebrate authentically? When you are down in the dumps are you able to express your sadness and grief as you worship? As you spend time with God be encouraged to come to Him just as you are.

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Day 17- October 28, 2022 -Strengthening faith in Christ through intentional spiritual development.

Philippians 3:12-16-Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. ¹³ Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.¹⁵ All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. ¹⁶ Only let us live up to what we have already attained.

It has been said that we first form our habits, and then our habits form us. Emerson said, “Sow a thought and you reap an action; sow an action and you reap a habit; sow a habit and you reap a character; sow a character and you reap a destiny.”

As we live life, we create habits. We learn to do certain things without much thought. These habits can be either good or bad. Many, many things are accomplished each day without much thought.

The Bible teaches that we are born into sin, and if left to ourselves who knows what kind of horrors we could set in motion. However, that need not be our story. Because of Jesus paving the way to righteousness, we can now create virtuous habits instead of sinful ones.

Jesus spent much of His time discipling others. If that’s the case, we should be doing the same. Spiritual development must be very valuable to God. With that being the case let’s give it our attention. Let’s grow together. Let’s continue to pray for the disciple-making ministries of our church. Not only that, let’s determine in our hearts to grow together as disciples of Christ.

Today’s Meditation: What are some main elements of discipleship? How can discipleship help you in your life? In what ways can you pray for spiritual development in your family and church?

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Day 18- October 29, 2022 - Creating caring and meaningful relationships through fellowship.

Acts 2:42-47- They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. ⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. ⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

There are many diverse facets of the Christian life. There's prayer, Bible study, serving, giving, sacrifice... One necessary part of the church is fellowship. God has created us as social beings. Even the most introverted of us desires meaningful connection.

So, what exactly is fellowship? It's the relationship of the believers as they experience the life and the common salvation provided by God. It is where the believers share together in a common calling and the blessings given by God. Fellowship is both a benefit and a responsibility. Fellowship is deep connection and friendship.

When we look at vibrant church fellowship, we see all peoples being connected with and cared for. Hospitality marks a church that is strong in fellowship. Hospitality opens the door to deeper, more meaningful relationship that the church

When it's not so vibrant you hear people say "I went to that church three weeks in a row and no one said a single word to me

Fellowship is a responsibility of any church. Fellowship doesn't just happen on its own. If someone doesn't feel welcome at church they will just stop coming, and that makes discipleship impossible for that person. Prayer for strong Christian fellowship is vital for a growing church.

Today's Meditation: Who in your life has provided good Christian fellowship? How did this affect your life as a whole? How can you strengthen the fellowship of our church. Pray for God to reveal those who need fellowship and reach out to them this week.

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Day 19- October 31, 2022 - Embracing passionate community service and outreach grounded in the love of Christ.

1 Peter 2:9-10-But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

As a follower of Christ, do you see yourself as a minister? It may feel uncomfortable to think of yourself this way. God, however, thinks otherwise. He has equipped you to make a difference in this world. He calls His people to reach out to others for the purpose of the gospel.

God actually calls us a 'kingdom of priests.' You read that right. You may not feel like a priest or priestess, but the Bible says you are. How does that feel? You may struggle with this concept. You may feel inadequate. All of us are wounded and imperfect in some way. But God has a way of making our wounds powerful.

What did Jesus do when faced with the biggest outreach that man has ever seen? He prayed, served, and sacrificed. Jesus literally gave His all so that there would be a pathway to the Father. Jesus' wounds heal us. His sacrifice sets us free.

What wounds do you have that could be sanctified for God's purposes. God can take these wounds and use them in powerful ways. Sometimes the story of making it through the storms of life is what greatly helps others. Being authentic in our outreach to others can be used powerfully for the gospel. Yes, we are imperfect. Yes, we have pains. But God can renovate us and use our stories, our prayers, and our serving others to reach out to the lost and hurting world.

Today's Meditation: As a follower of Christ, do you see yourself as a minister? What gifts has God placed in your life that helps you reach out to others? What pains or weaknesses could God use in mighty ways to reach a hurting and dying world?

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Day 20- November 1, 2022 - We are Christ's Ambassadors

2 Corinthians 5:20- We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

What are we doing here? How do we live this life as a Christian? We walk by faith. That means we don't know everything, but we live by trusting God. One thing we do know is that we are to represent Christ in this dark and hurting world. We are Christ's ambassadors to the people we meet.

Christ brought us salvation and power. He has given us His love and forgiveness. He has shown us the way to live this life that is both beautiful and challenging. Now the ball is in our court. With God's help, we are to be the example to others. We are to reveal the way of salvation and righteousness to others. We are to point the lonely and hurting to the gospel of Jesus. God is making an appeal to the earth through you and me. First comes our own relationship with God. Secondly, we are to help reveal God's kingdom on the earth.

Romans 8:34 says Jesus is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. He is praying for us right now. With Jesus as our example, part of our job as a representative or an ambassador is to be praying for others. It's so important to remember that God is the one who changes hearts. So, if Jesus is praying for others, let's join him in a life of prayer and intercession. We will surely grow closer to Him, and we will see Him do mighty things in our world.

Today's Meditation: How does it feel to be an ambassador of Christ? What kind of appeal is God making through you? What does that look like on a practical level? Who can you be interceding for at this time?

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Day 21- November 2, 2022 - Now What? Pray continually...

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24- Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray continually, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. ¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰ Do not treat prophecies with contempt ²¹ but test them all; hold on to what is good, ²² reject every kind of evil. ²³ May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.

Pray Continually? Now that's a tall order. Who can spend all day praying? Don't we have things to do? The Scripture doesn't say we have to sit perfectly still while praying. So sometimes it will be necessary to be working while we pray. There will be times of peaceful, quiet prayer. But sometimes we will be praying on the run! There is prayer to be done and there are responsibilities to be fulfilled. Neither prayer nor action should suffer at the hands of the other. It was Wesley who said, "I have so much to do that I spend several hours in prayer before I do it." Now we are probably not at that level, but can't discount the power of prayer in things that we are trying to accomplish.

When we realize our dependence on God it really puts things in perspective. What are some ways that we can pray continually? With just a little thought (and sticky notes), we can grow in the habit of praying throughout the day. This will help cultivate a life of prayer. Here are a few ideas...Use the Lord's Prayer as a pattern. Look up and pray great prayers of the Bible. Pray for the vision and the mission of the church to come alive in daily in our community and our world. As you continue a life of prayer You will see God working in your life. Things may not always turn out like we think. But do not fear. God has a wonderful plan that we don't always see immediately. There will be things that we don't always understand. Some things may only be revealed when we walk through the gates of heaven. But never doubt that God is with you and for you. Determine in your heart to be a person of prayer!

Today's Meditation: What are some challenges you face when praying? What are some ways to overcome these obstacles? What do you do when you have prayed but haven't seen any results yet? Do you every feel like Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane? What is the greatest prayer you have seen answered?

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Idea Starters for Prayer

- a. Family
- b. Friends
- c. Church-Worship, Community, Discipleship, and Outreach
- d. National Leaders
- e. Local leaders
- f. The homeless
- g. Education
- h. Adult Ministries
- i. Local businesses
- j. Recent contacts in your email inbox.
- k. Recent text message list
- l. Neighbors on each side of you
- m. Souls
- n. News headlines
- o. Co-workers or Classmates
- p. People in line at the grocery store
- q. 1st Responders
- r. Arts and Entertainment
- s. Missionaries
- t. Children ministries
- u. National Disasters
- v. Spiritual Awakening
- w. Local Businesses
- x. Discipleship
- y. Healing
- z. Youth ministries

