



prayer & fasting guide | February 19 - March 19

Introduction

There are times, as the people of God, when the most important thing we can do is pray. This seems to be one of those seasons. We are surrounded by need, brokenness, division, and hatred. And it seems that more than ever, we need God to move. But we are not the first to be in such a place of need. So we turn our hearts toward Heaven. We have an anchor for our souls in turbulent times, and we have an open door to enter and call out to our God.

“Consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly. Gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land to the house of the LORD your God, and cry out to the LORD.” (Joel 1:14 ESV)

Prayer is the fuel of everything we do. Charles Spurgeon was a great leader and pastor, sometimes called, “The Prince of Preachers.” But Spurgeon never took credit for the success of his ministry. Instead, he always pointed to the hundreds of people who came before services and prayed for God’s blessing. He said any success he had come from God in answer to their prayers. Spurgeon was often fond of calling these prayer gatherings the church’s “boiler room.”

In Spurgeon’s time, steam was the power source of the day. Boiler rooms were the powerhouses, the driving forces of everything from vast machines in factories to household heating systems. Boiler rooms, however, were not pleasant places to visit. They were functional, dirty, and hot; often tucked away in the basement. Likewise, Spurgeon saw the prayers of his people as the spiritual power behind his preaching and ministry.

This is why he told his fellow pastors, “Brethren, we shall never see much change for the better in our churches in general till the prayer meeting occupies a higher place in the esteem of Christians.”

“The Church is looking for better methods. God is looking for better men.” - E.M. Bounds

During the next *four* weeks, we want to call our church to fast and pray — not just say prayers, but in humility cry out to God. We’ll spend the next four weeks in focused prayer together. Each week, we will follow a theme and pray around that theme. You can use the Scriptures and prayer points in this guide to help direct your praying. In addition to following this guide, we want you to consider fasting each Tuesday during the month. Fasting highlights our need for God. It has a way of showing us how driven we are by the desires of the flesh. Nobody has to tell us we need to eat and drink. So why aren’t we as “in tune” with our need to pray and seek the face of God? Fasting helps us focus on the real source of our life and strength. There will be other opportunities for you to join with others to pray, so stay tuned for more information. You might consider how you can invite others with you on this journey. Feel free to use this material to engage with neighbors, co-workers, etc. Pray with your life group and your family. Pray without ceasing. Our greatest desire is to see God use this season to increase our dependence on and confidence in him.

Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced are in the ESV or NIV.

Prayer

When we trust in Christ through faith we enter into an intimate relationship with a personal God who has chosen to reveal himself through creation, Jesus, and the Bible. Our understanding of God and our faith in him are cultivated not only through reading the Bible, but also through prayer. Praying is a way to experience and express intimacy with God.

Developing a consistent and vibrant prayer life is vital to our growth as a disciple of Christ. Start by committing 15 minutes each day to prayer. **The ACTS model** (below) is a simple way to structure your time and is a great way to respond to what God reveals to you as you read His Word - whether through our Church Reading Plan and/or another Reading Plan you have chosen.

- ❖ Adoration: As you read the Scripture, reflect on the character of God revealed in his Word. Let your meditation lead you to worship and adore your God. Who IS He? What IS His character?
- ❖ Confess: The Word of God will do its work of exposing and uncovering sin. Respond to that conviction by agreeing with God that what he says about your sin is right. We all have blind spots. We all struggle with pride. Pray for the desire and willingness to follow Christ in full obedience and surrender.
- ❖ Thanksgiving: Where do you see God working? Where does his Word remind you of his deeds? Spend time thanking God for his faithfulness in your life and in the lives of others. Remember that because God was faithful yesterday, He will be faithful today.
- ❖ Supplication: God's Word helps us understand his purposes and his plans and it reminds us of all that he has promised to do and will do immeasurably more than we could ask or imagine! Ask God to give you the desires of his heart as you pray for your needs and the needs of others. This can include prayer for friends, family, church, missionaries, government leaders, and the movement of the gospel around the world.

Tuesdays - Fast and Pray

During the 28 Days of Prayer, we have set aside the four Tuesdays as days to fast and pray. Each week, we will post a prayer guide for that Tuesday to help give focus and direction to your prayers. You can use this guide throughout the day or during an extended time of prayer at mealtime. You may want to add other Scriptures and prayer points as the Holy Spirit leads you. Feel free to share this material with others and invite them to pray with you. The discipline of fasting is the practice of refraining from eating for a set period of time in order to give focused attention to prayer and seeking God. How long you fast is not nearly as important as the heart behind the fast. This is not something we do to prove our devotion, as if God would be motivated to hear our prayers and answer because we fasted. Fasting is really more for our benefit than for God's benefit. It is a discipline that helps bring into focus our dependence on God. The presence and power of God are as necessary to us as food and drink. But sadly, we are often more in touch with and responsive to physical hunger than we are to spiritual hunger. Fasting gives us an opportunity to focus on that hunger and thirst and then seek after the presence of God that sustains and satisfies us.

NOTE: If it is not possible for you to fast from eating because of medical or other reasons, you might consider finding other ways to devote a significant amount of time to prayer on this day. Throughout the day, look for ways to come away and sit in the presence of your Father who loves you.

Week One: Fixing Our Hope on God | Read Ecclesiastes 1-6

Too often, our sense of hope is dependent on our circumstances. In seasons of turmoil, we begin to think and act as if our future rests in the hands of men or circumstances. But for the children of God, that is never to be the case. Our hope is in our great and merciful God. He alone is our Shield and our Deliverer. Salvation belongs to him and to him alone. “We put our hope in the LORD. He is our help and our shield. In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name. Let your unfailing love surround us, LORD, for our hope is in you alone” (Psalm 33:20-22 NLT).

This week, use your prayer time to center your hope in God. Recall his faithfulness. Remember his mighty works. The same Jesus who has resurrected, has put His power in YOU! Let your praise and adoration fill you with hope and faith as you pray.

“In you, LORD my God, I put my trust. I trust in you; do not let me be put to shame, nor let my enemies triumph over me. No one who hopes in you will ever be put to shame, but shame will come on those who are treacherous without cause.” (Psalm 25:1-3)

Week 1, Day 1

“Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.” (Psalm 20:7)

Supplemental Reading: Colossians 1

Week 1, Day 2

“One 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.” (Psalm 27:4, NIV)

Pray that we would approach the remainder of the year— with confidence that our God is on his throne and seeking Him is the most important thing we could do. Pray that the truth of God’s sovereignty would make us hopeful and fearless, even in the midst of a confusing time. Pray that we would see nothing clearly if we’re seeing Him clearly.

Week 1, Day 3

“The LORD foils the plans of the nations; he thwarts the purposes of the peoples. But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.” (Psalm 33:10-11)

Pray that we would model what it means to follow God and his plans, that we would chart our course based on his mission, not our own, and that we would love the world as he does, not as our society does. Pray that we would seek His Kingdom and not our own. Pray we would seek His will and not our own.

Supplemental Reading: Matthew 6

PRAYER and FAST | Tuesday, February 21

Today is our first day of prayer and fasting as we journey together through the 28 Days of Prayer. We encourage you to set aside a block of time today when you would normally be eating and use the time to pray. You can also use the hunger you experience to prompt you to pray throughout the day. Remember that we are not trying to impress or coerce God by our fasting. We are remembering our complete dependence on him.

Adoration

Spend some time setting your heart on the beauty and wonder of who God is. Use the verses of this psalm to express your delight in him. He truly is our one good thing.

“Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge. I say to the Lord, ‘You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you.’ As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight. The sorrows of those who run after another god shall multiply; their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out or take their names on my lips. The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot. The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance. I bless the Lord who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me. I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure. For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption. You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.” (Psalm 16:1-11 ESV)

Confession

Invite the Holy Spirit to search your heart and mind, to reveal those places where you have turned away and sought your own way. Ask God to uncover any idols and lead you to repentance. Use these verses to acknowledge your own sinfulness and ask for forgiveness and cleansing.

“The Lord looks down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one.” (Psalm 14:2-3)

“But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned — every one — to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” (Isaiah 53:5-6)

Thanksgiving

It is the goodness and faithfulness of God that gives joy to our hearts and stirs up hope in us. Consider the faithfulness of God in your own life. Make a list of the ways you have seen his faithfulness and love demonstrated in your family, your small group, and our church. Let gratitude pour out of your heart because of the steadfast love of God made manifest in your life.

“But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. ‘The Lord is my portion,’ says my soul, ‘therefore I will hope in him.’ The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him.” (Lamentations 3:21-25)

Supplication

With your heart set on the love of God, ask him to work and move in your life and in the life of our church. Use these verses to voice your own prayer for strength and faith and confidence in God's love.

“For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith — that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”
(Ephesians 3:14-19)

Pray that we (all believers) would be faithful and bold in our confession. Pray that we would not be afraid to share the gospel. And ask God to help us as we encourage and stir one another to faithful obedience.

“Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”
(Hebrews 10:19-25)

Pray that we would see many come to salvation in Jesus. Pray specifically for people you know who are not followers of Jesus. Ask God to turn their hearts toward him. Ask God to make you good at sharing your own story and calling people to faith in Jesus.

“And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:47b)

End your time of prayer by rejoicing in the promise of God. He is willing to do more than you have asked. Let that fill you with hope and joy.

“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.” (Ephesians 3:20-21)

Week 1, Day 4

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.” (Jeremiah 29:11-13)

Pray that we would continue to be people that seek God in desperation. Of all the things we may want, desire, or dream of, ask God to make himself the supreme thing above all. Pray that we would all be filled with hope because of the future that Christ has secured for us.

Week 1, Day 5

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.” (Romans 8:28-29)

The things we deem as wrong in this world may seem large, but it's merely a small piece of God's big picture of redemption. God promised to redeem ALL THINGS! Pray that we in the Church would see God's big picture, that we would become so overwhelmed with the fact that God has saved us and intends to perfect us that everything else would pale in comparison.

Supplemental Reading: Luke 15

Week 1, Day 6

“Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, ‘He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.’” (Psalm 91:1-2)

In Christ, there is nothing we can do that could make God love us more and nothing we have done that could make God love us less. Pray that we would be motivated to live out of this gospel truth and that the love of God would be our refuge, fortress, and trust.

Week 1, Day 7

“When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, ‘It is finished,’ and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.” (John 19:30 ESV)

As those who trust in Jesus Christ — dead and raised again — we engage our society fighting from victory, not for victory. The battle is won. Jesus finished everything at the cross, and our entire lives should be a continual response to that great redemption. Pray that in all our labors, we would remember the cross and rejoice in the finished work of Jesus.

Week Two: Praying for the Church | Read Ecclesiastes 7-12

We are sons and daughters of God. We are the Bride of Christ. We are the Church! Our identity is in the One who has reconciled and redeemed us. Our future is full of promise. The Church has endured persecution, being fed to lions, and migration. And it continues to thrive because Jesus promised to build His Church. Pray that we could continue to stand firm!

“As you come to him, the living Stone — rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him — you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.” (1 Peter 2:4-5, 9-10)

Jesus loves his Church. He’s promised to build his Church. And he prayed for his Church. This week we want to focus our prayers on the Church. We will pray for unity, faithfulness, and great effectiveness. Remember to praise the One who called us out of darkness as you pray for him to fulfill all of his promises for those he loves.

Week 2, Day 1

“Yet God my King is from of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth.” (Psalm 74:12)

Pray that God would show us our idolatry — those areas in which we have trusted in leaders or material objects to provide happiness and do what only God can do. Pray that we, the people of God, would humble ourselves before God, allowing him to show us where we have sinned and need correction. If we are to see change in our society, it must begin with the people of God opening their hearts and hands to say to him, “Mold me.” Ask God to do that in you today.

Supplemental Reading: Ephesians 2

Week 2, Day 2

“See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called ‘Today,’ so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness. We have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original conviction firmly to the very end.” (Hebrews 3:12-14)

One of the many ways in which sin deceives us is by making us believe that secondary matters are of first importance. When it comes to cultural opinions or political ideologies, it’s easy to rally behind those who agree with us and make others “the enemy.” Pray that we in the Church would have a unity that transcends our opinions on secondary matters and that we would not be hardened against those who see matters differently than us. We cannot reach harmony with those we are at war with.

Week 2, Day 3

“Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” (Hebrews 10:23-25)

The Church is meant to be a body that enriches and encourages each other “toward love and good deeds.” Pray that God would help us to actively pursue that together in our community of faith. Pray that we would think of everywhere we step as a way of loving each other and loving our neighbors. Ask God to give us insight into those we can encourage. Pray for the many hurts and burdens in our local congregation. Call or text someone from church and let them know why you appreciate and love them and how they build you up in the faith.

Supplemental Reading: Acts 1-2

PRAYER and FAST | Tuesday, February 28

This is our second day of prayer and fasting as we journey together through the 28 Days of Prayer. Today, we encourage you to set aside a block of time when you would normally be eating and use the time to pray. You can also use the hunger you experience today to prompt you to pray throughout the day. Remember that we are not trying to impress or coerce God by our fasting. We are remembering our complete dependence on him.

Adoration

God has revealed himself to us in creation by his Word and through his Son, Jesus. Take some time to gaze on his beauty and worship him. Use these verses and others you know to help you express your awe and wonder to God. Worship the one who has loved you and reconciled you by Christ’s sacrifice.

“The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation — if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.” (Colossians 1:15-23 NIV)

Confession

Invite the Holy Spirit to search your heart and mind, to reveal those places where you have turned away and sought your own way. Ask God to uncover any idols and lead you to repentance. Use these verses to acknowledge your own sinfulness and ask for forgiveness and cleansing.

“Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge

“Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise.” (Psalm 51:1-4, 10-12, 16-17)

Thanksgiving

James 1 reminds us that every good and perfect gift comes to us from God our Father. Take some time to consider the ways God has blessed you through the Church. Consider the great work he has done in your life and in the lives of those around you. List these out, and let gratitude pour out of your heart as you call to mind the mercies of God in your life.

“I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 1:3-6)

“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.” (1 Peter 2:9-10)

Supplication

Jesus told us to ask and he would respond. John 14:12-14 says, “Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.” This week we want to follow Jesus’ prayer in John 17 and use that as a guide for our supplication.

“Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.” (John 17:1)

Begin by praying for yourself for the sake of the gospel and the advance of God’s Kingdom. Ask God to give you favor with people in your circle so that you might influence them for the gospel. Pray that God would turn the hearts of your children toward you so that you can lead them to Christ. Ask God to bless you and prosper you so that you can be a blessing to others.

“My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.” (John 17:15-17)

Jesus prayed for his disciples, those closest to him. We want to pray for those people God has placed in our lives — our family, closest friends, and small group. Pray that God would protect them from the enemy’s schemes to “steal, kill, and destroy.” Pray that they would grow in godliness and holiness. Ask God to draw them to spend time in his Word, to have their hearts and lives shaped by the truth of Scripture and not the influences of the world. Pray that they would hide God’s Word in their heart and would faithfully use Scripture to combat the lies of the enemy.

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one — I in them and you in me — so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.” (John 17:20-23)

Pray for the spiritual vitality of believers in the world. Ask God to send us into the harvest and to plant believers in places of influence for the sake of the gospel. Pray that the Church would be healthy, bold, and focused on and clear about the gospel. Pray that we would love Jesus the way God loves Jesus and that we would love others like Jesus loves us. Ask God to give us a unity in Jesus that is stronger than anything that could divide us. End your time of prayer by rejoicing in the promises of God. He is willing to do more than you have asked. Let that fill you with hope and joy.

“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.” (Ephesians 3:20-21 ESV)

Week 2, Day 4

“He raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.” (Ephesians 1:20b-23)

Pray that we would rest in this confidence: Jesus is reigning over all things. Pray that we in the Church would approach every realm with the combination of boldness and humility — boldness because we know that God is in control and is far above every authority, power, and dominion, and humility because it is his Kingdom that will endure, not our own. Be reminded that the Gospel produces both boldness and humility in the believer.

Week 2, Day 5

“Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured.” (Colossians 4:12)

Pray for the members of your life group and your close friends that they would stand firm in the will of God, mature and fully assured. Pray that we would all grow in faithfulness and obedience. Pray that God would raise up those in our congregation who would wrestle in prayer for others and focus on disciple making.

Supplemental Reading: Philippians 1

Week 2, Day 6

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

Pray that as a church we would draw near to God. Pray for humility and integrity among our leaders in the church. Ask God to humble your heart so that you would be submitted to him and his will above all. Pray that this submission would also be reflected in the ways we approach our brothers and sisters in Christ, families, co-workers, neighbors, government officials, police officers, etc.

Week 2, Day 7

“Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.” (Jeremiah 29:7)

God has placed us in our society to bless it. Pray that our church would make such an impact on our city that they would grieve to see us go. Pray for our city and our nation to prosper and be at peace, even if the Church seems to be “in exile” and increasingly uncomfortable here.

Week Three: Praying for Spiritual Awakening & Gospel Advancement | Read James 1-5

God’s heart is full of compassion. His desire is for repentance. He came to serve and save sinners. With confidence in his longing to save, we can cry out for spiritual awakening and the purposes of the Gospel to be advanced. This is often God’s divine purpose in difficulty. In kindness He is leading us to repentance.

“Even now,” declares the LORD, ‘return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.’ Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity. Who knows? He may turn and relent and leave behind a blessing — grain offerings and drink offerings for the LORD your God.” (Joel 2:12-14)

As you pray this week, continue to express your hope and trust in God. Pray that the Church would be a bright light in darkness and like salt, adding flavor where we live, work, and play.. Pray fervently that spiritual awakening might come for those who are lost that God may have put in our path. And pray that those who walk in darkness would see and run to the light of Jesus.

Week 3, Day 1

“LORD, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, LORD. Repeat them in our day, in our time make them known; in wrath remember mercy.” (Habakkuk 3:2)

Pray that this season would provide a time for non-believers to despair of their trust in earthly solutions and to look to God for true deliverance. Ask God to send a great awakening to our region by awakening the hearts of those in the local church.

Supplemental Reading: John 15

Week 3, Day 2

“How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!’ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, ‘Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?’ So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.” (Romans 10:14-17 ESV)

Pray that we in the Church would be faithful to reach out to our non-believing neighbors and use both current events and everyday activities to launch into spiritual discussions and that we would share the good news in the midst of a society desperately looking for some good news. Ask God to give faith to those with whom we share the good news of the gospel. Pray for soft hearts and thick skin as God may begin to move us out of our comfort zones.

Week 3, Day 3

“He told them, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.’” (Luke 10:2)

Pray that God would send us out in every sphere of life, that we would be sent into our workplaces, sent into our families, sent into our communities, and sent to other cities and nations. Pray that God would send his laborers, and pray that we would be obedient to go when he calls. Ask God to make us effective at reaching those who are lost. Pray for missionaries. Ask yourself how you can be more aware of what God is doing in the world!

Supplemental Reading: Acts 4

PRAYER AND FAST | Tuesday, March 7

This is our third day of prayer and fasting as we journey together through the 28 Days of Prayer. Today, we encourage you to set aside a block of time when you would normally be eating and use the time to pray. You can also use the hunger you experience today to prompt you to pray throughout the day. Remember that we are not trying to impress or coerce God by our fasting. We are remembering our complete dependence on him.

Adoration

God has given us both the Scriptures and his Son, Jesus, as a means by which we can know him. Use these verses to voice your praise to God. Let the wonder of your Savior fill you with awe. Express your love and adoration to him.

“In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.” (Hebrews 1:1-3 NIV)

Confession

Invite the Holy Spirit to search your heart and mind, to reveal those places where you have turned away and sought your own way. Ask God to uncover any idols and lead you to repentance. Use these verses to acknowledge your sinfulness and ask for forgiveness and cleansing.

“Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear. For your hands are stained with blood, your fingers with guilt. Your lips have spoken falsely, and your tongue mutters wicked things.” (Isaiah 59:1-3)

“If you, LORD, kept a record of sins, LORD, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness, so that we can, with reverence, serve you.” (Psalm 130:3-4)

Thanksgiving

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. Let his mercy and grace fill you with gratitude for his good purposes and plans to redeem and restore.

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.”
(Ephesians 1:3-10)

Supplication

God’s Word instructs us to call on him in the day of trouble. As we consider the current condition of our culture and the needs of our world, let’s call out to God. Use the Scriptures below to ask God to move in our neighborhood and nations. Pray for yourself, your life group, and churches across the country. Ask God to grow our relationship with him, giving us confidence in his love and his power.

“I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I 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, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms.” (Ephesians 1:17-20)

Pray that God would open the eyes of the blind and reveal himself to those who do not yet know him as Savior and Lord. Pray that the church would be faithful to lift Jesus up and boldly declare the truth of the gospel.

“Simon Peter answered, ‘You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.’ Jesus replied, ‘Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven.” (Matthew 16:16-17)

“For, ‘Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’ How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!’” (Romans 10:13-15)

“He told them, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.’” (Luke 10:2)

Pray for an outpouring of God’s Holy Spirit, for renewal and awakening in our land.

“I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.” (Ezekiel 36:25-27)

End your time of prayer by rejoicing in the promise of God. He is willing to do more than you have asked. Let that fill you with hope and joy! “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” (Ephesians 3:20-21).

Week 3, Day 4

“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.” (Romans 5:1-5)

Pray that we, as God’s people, would see the future with hope. Our immediate circumstances may not be improving, but God promises to use even our sufferings and difficulties to shape us to know him. Pray that we would be open to that and that we could endure difficult times with this gospel-shaped hope. Ask God to cause the Church to flourish and grow strong. As you pray, be reminded that the early church grew through persecution and suffering.

Week 3, Day 5

“I will give them a heart to know that I am the LORD, and they shall be my people and I will be their God, for they shall return to me with their whole heart.” (Jeremiah 24:7 ESV)

Pray that the people of God would return to a desperate reliance on God so that we would be able to offer a true gospel to our neighbors. Pray that the Church in America would turn from idolatry and materialism and seek God with all its heart. Pray that we would not be anxious or take control, but allow Him to consume our thoughts and hearts.

Supplemental Reading: Isaiah 40

Week 3, Day 6

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14)

Pray that our engagement in culture would be marked by both grace and truth. Grace without truth is sentimentalism. But truth without grace is fundamentalism. Failing to have both puts us out of step with Jesus.

Week 3, Day 7

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. 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, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:42-47)

Pray that as the people of God we would be devoted to these things: “the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.” Ask God to make us a generous people, and pray that he would add to our number “daily those who [are] being saved.” Call someone in the next week to invite to lunch or coffee and ask how you can pray for them.

Week Four: Praying for Local Officials and Leaders | Read Jonah and 1 John

Every single human being is an image bearer, created by God and loved by him. He longs for all people to come to him. He wants every one of them, regardless of political affiliation, to bow down and worship him. And though you and I may have a hard time imagining it, God is able to bring all to repentance. *“When Jonah’s warning reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust...”*

This is the proclamation he issued in Nineveh: *‘By the decree of the king and his nobles: Do not let people or animals, herds or flocks, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. But let people and animals be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish.’ When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened”* (Jonah 3:6-10). Can you imagine what that kind of repentance would look like in our schools, universities, local and national government offices? But God is able. This week we are going to pray for those in positions of authority and leadership. Continue to express your trust in God, and pray for the Church. Ask God to be merciful to us.

Week 4, Day 1

“Brothers and sisters, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved.” (Romans 10:1)

Many of the people in our political and school and social systems are not believers. But God’s arm is not shortened so that it cannot save, and he can save them. Pray that God would move in the hearts of our government so that God would do something miraculous and draw them to him.

Supplemental Reading: Romans 12

Week 4, Day 2

“For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God’s glory displayed in the face of Christ.” (2 Corinthians 4:6)

Pray that we would engage in society with wisdom so that our actions and our decisions would be marked by wisdom and light. Ask God to show us which policies will bless our neighbors and which will not, which will promote life and which will not, which will protect the weak and which will not. And ask him to give us the courage to follow these convictions.

Week 4, Day 3

“The king’s heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will.” (Proverbs 21:1 ESV)

God guides kings and rulers, whether those kings and rulers acknowledge him or not (see the story of Cyrus in 2 Chronicles). Pray that God would guide our local and national leaders to wise policies, even if our leaders themselves do not intend to honor God.

Supplemental Reading: 1 Peter 2

Prayer and Fast | Tuesday, March 14

Adoration

God remains faithful as we are so often found unfaithful and faithless. And yet God is still more anxious to forgive us than we are to ask for forgiveness. Spend some time reflecting on the many ways He has been merciful to you. Allow these verses to guide you in prayer.

“Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy.” (Micah 7:18)

“I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33 ESV)

“And those twelve stones, which they took out of the Jordan, Joshua set up at Gilgal. And he said to the people of Israel, “When your children ask their fathers in times to come, ‘What do these stones mean?’ then you shall let your children know, ‘Israel passed over this Jordan on dry ground.’ For the LORD your God dried up the waters of the Jordan for you until you passed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red Sea, which he dried up for us until we passed over, so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the LORD is mighty, that you may fear the LORD your God forever.” (Joshua 4:20-24 ESV)

Confession

Invite the Holy Spirit to search your heart and mind, to reveal those places where you have turned away and sought your own way. Ask God to uncover any idols and lead you to repentance. Use these verses to acknowledge your own sinfulness and ask for forgiveness and cleansing. Consider how you can humble yourself in the example of Jesus.

“So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2:1-11 ESV)

“A Maskil of David. Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. Selah I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,’ and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah” (Psalm 32:1-11)

Thanksgiving

We have often taught our church to memorize a critical aspect of the Gospel in four words: Jesus in my place. Prepare your heart to offer up thanksgiving for Jesus absorbing God's wrath that was meant for us. We cannot achieve it. We cannot earn it. It is all by His grace!

"There is now therefore, no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus." (Romans 8:1)

"Yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified." (Galatians 2:16 ESV)

"He was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed." He was pierced. We transgressed. He was crushed. Glory! Glory! (Isaiah 53:5 ESV)

Supplication

I believe God wants to do more in our life than we are allowing. Most of us don't need more information about God. We need to be reminded of and apply what we already know and let that begin to transform our hearts and minds. What in your life are you struggling to surrender to Him? What is it that keeps you from feeling separated from Him? Ask Him today to move you out of your comfort zone and allow yourself to be bare and vulnerable because He has already clothed you and accepted you in love. May we remember anything lost for the sake of the Gospel is a gain! Use these Scriptures to help guide you to a radical obedience brought forth by His grace!

"And a ruler asked him, 'Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' And Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery, Do not murder, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother.' And he said, 'All these I have kept from my youth.' When Jesus heard this, he said to him, 'One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.' But when he heard these things, he became very sad, for he was extremely rich. Jesus, seeing that he had become sad, said, 'How difficult it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.' Those who heard it said, 'Then who can be saved?' But he said, 'What is impossible with man is possible with God.' And Peter said, 'See, we have left our homes and followed you.' And he said to them, 'Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not receive many times more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life.'" (Luke 18:18-30 ESV)

"And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. And he called his disciples to him and said to them, 'Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.'" (Mark 12:41-44 ESV)

"And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, 'If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?'" (Mark 8:34-36 ESV)

"But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ." (Philippians 3:7 ESV)

Week 4, Day 4

“Who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?” (Esther 4:14b)

Pray that many Christians would see our local and national leaders as servants and that they would pursue God with integrity and intensity. And for those Christians already involved in these structures, pray that God would protect them and their families, guide them, and give them favor. Ask God to grant them boldness to lead in a way that is good and right and just.

Week 4, Day 5

“No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day.” (John 6:44)

It is easy to see local and national leaders in light of how their decisions affect us. But they are image-bearers who are loved by God. Pray that God would draw national, state, and local leaders to himself. Pray that, for their own sake and for the sake of the Kingdom of God, they would be saved by the power of the gospel.

Supplemental Reading: Psalm 139

Week 4, Day 6

“I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people — for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.” (1 Timothy 2:1-4)

Pray that our leaders would govern in a way that promotes justice and peace. Pray that we would have peace in our society — not so that our lives may be easy but so that we might share the love of Christ with others. Ask God to give us the courage to share that love, whether our society helps toward that end or not.

Week 4, Day 7

“No king is saved by the size of his army; no warrior escapes by his great strength. A horse is a vain hope for deliverance; despite all its great strength it cannot save. But the eyes of the LORD are on those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unfailing love, to deliver them from death and keep them alive in famine. We wait in hope for the LORD; he is our help and our shield. In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name. May your unfailing love be with us, LORD, even as we put our hope in you.” (Psalm 33:16-22)

Pray that the unfailing love of the Lord would be your hope for deliverance. Pray that God would destroy any other idol that stands in the way of this hope, whether it's a political leader, the religious leaders of this church, or the promise of future security or wealth. Ask God to smash every idol in your life so that you would trust him and him alone.