



21

DAYS OF
PRAYER

AUGUST 8–28, 2022

WELCOME TO NEWPOINTE COMMUNITY CHURCH'S 21 DAYS OF PRAYER

But if... you seek the Lord your God, you will find him if you seek him with all your heart and with all your soul... For the Lord your God is a merciful God. Deuteronomy 4:29, 31 NIV

Welcome to 21 Days of Prayer, and thank you for being a partner in the work of God's kingdom! Over the next three weeks we desire to seek the Lord, experience His presence, and plead for His mercy; not only in our lives but also in our communities.

Albert Einstein once said, *"There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle."*

Which of these two perspectives are you inclined toward? Whatever camp you fall into will greatly determine how you prioritize prayer and how you are able to see your prayers answered!

After all, prayer is mysterious and even miraculous, is it not? To think that the Almighty and Invisible God would listen to us mere mortals or even take the time to talk back, is a bit inconceivable. Yet, we believe prayer works in ways we do not fully understand or can explain, but God uses our prayers to change both things and to change us.

As mysterious and miraculous as prayer is, it is also, in many ways, quite simple:

1. We can pray anytime and anywhere because God is everywhere, and He is near!
2. We have a God who longs to be communicated to!
3. God prefers concise and to-the-point prayers rather than long-winded attempts to impress Him!
4. When we don't know how to pray or what to pray, we can simply use a passage from God's Word to guide us! (i.e. The Lord's Prayer or anything from Psalms)
5. God wants to answer our prayers! He likes saying yes when we pray according to His will!
6. God also desires to speak to us if only we'll pause to listen!

In the weeks to come, may we seek God and see His mercies with fresh eyes!



Dwight Mason
Lead Pastor

PRAYER

PRAYER IS EXPLAINED MULTIPLE TIMES IN THE BIBLE AS THE WAY HUMANITY COMMUNICATES WITH GOD, AND IT CLEARLY SPELLS OUT THAT HE LISTENS WHEN WE PRAY.

In 2 Chronicles 7:14 NLT, God is speaking directly about what He does when His people pray: *"Then if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and restore their land."*

In Mark 9:29 NKJV, Jesus explains the importance of prayer to His own disciples after they could not perform a miracle by casting out an evil spirit: *So He, [Jesus,] said to them, "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting."*

In Mark 6, Jesus teaches His disciples (and us) how to pray in a way that touches on so many areas of life and relationship with God. Ultimately, it is important that we know just how much God wants communication and communion with us, how He listens and cares about our prayers, and how He has allowed our prayers to be powerful by nature. If we stand on these things and make prayer a faithful discipline and practice, imagine all that could change. God can do more than we imagine, and He invites us to participate with our prayers!

Practically, prayer can happen any time, any place. You can pray on your commute, before that meeting, as you fall asleep at night, or prior to eating. The Bible encourages us to pray constantly.

However, we also know there is something special about setting aside specific time dedicated to prayer. Just like many other disciplines, removing distractions helps us focus better on the task at hand. Adding it to our daily habits reminds us to trust God, to bring our needs to Him, and to set Him as a priority in our busyness. It also encourages us to slow down, listen, and allow God's voice to speak to us. Regular, dedicated times of prayer strengthen our relationship with God, renew our hearts and minds, and bring powerful change to people and places that need it.

FASTING

SO WE FASTED AND PETITIONED OUR GOD ABOUT THIS, AND HE ANSWERED OUR PRAYER. EZRA 8:23 NIV

You may choose to fast during 21 Days of Prayer. The purpose of fasting is to redirect our hunger toward God. It is choosing to abstain from food, drink, or something else for the sake of some special spiritual purpose. It is a way to humble oneself before God and make time for intensified prayer and focus.

SOME SPIRITUAL REASONS AND BENEFITS OF FASTING (WITH SCRIPTURE REFERENCES):

- **To truly humble ourselves before God** (Ezra 8:21; James 4:8-10; 2 Chronicles, 7:14)
- **To learn how to depend on God for strength** (Matthew 17:21; Isaiah 40:31)
- **To ask for supernatural intervention from God** (2 Samuel 12:16; Acts 14:23)
- **To help us hear and respond better to the Spirit of God** (Luke 4:1; Ephesians 6:18-19)
- **To obtain supernatural protection and provision** (Ezra 8:21-23)
- **To prepare for a special task or assignment** (Exodus 24:12-18; Luke 4:1, 14)
- **To make more time for prayer in order to get closer to God** (Matthew 6:16; Mark 2:20)

SO I TURNED MY ATTENTION TO THE LORD GOD TO SEEK HIM BY PRAYER AND PETITIONS, WITH FASTING... DANIEL 9:3 CSB

Fasting helps us yield to the Holy Spirit collectively and individually. It allows God to renew our personal strength and faith, and it transforms prayer into a more personal and powerful experience. On a practical, physical level, fasting can help you focus, detoxify, and re-prioritize. This is helpful to both your body and your spirit.

Examples of other things you could fast from are sugar, coffee, media, alcohol, one meal a day, or a certain time of your day usually dedicated to something else.

***Always seek the advice of a physician or other qualified healthcare provider with any questions prior to beginning fasting.**

WEEK 1

INTRODUCTION

What does it take to reach family, friends, and others for Jesus?

It takes compassion.

It takes persistence.

But most of all, it takes prayer.

In our first week of 21 Days of Prayer, we will strive to intervene for those in our lives who are far from God.

Paul said, *"And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God."* Philippians 1:9-11 NIV

From these verses, we can learn to pray for the people in our lives in four ways:

Pray they will grow in love. *And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight.*

Pray they will make wise choices. *...so that you may be able to discern what is best...*

Pray they will live with integrity. *...may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ...*

Pray they will become like Jesus. *...filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.*

Pray these for yourself and anyone else in your life and watch how God turns around the relationship that seemed hopeless or needed to be revived.

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Dwight Mason
Lead Pastor



Day 1

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost. Luke 19:10 NIV

In August of 2010, 33 miners were trapped in the mine they worked almost a half mile below the surface and over three miles from the entrance to the mine. With limited supplies and no possible escape, the miners were feared to be dead. After 17 days of trying to locate the miners, a drill finally found its way to them, and when it was pulled back out of the earth a note was attached informing the world that all 33 men were still alive. Although the rescuers could now get supplies to the miners, it would not be until day 69 that they would be rescued. (You can watch the story in a movie called "The 33.")

Their rescue was incredibly costly, with a final tab somewhere in the \$20 million range that involved contributions from several mining companies, nations, and even NASA.

Was it worth it? If you ask any of the family members of the miners, their answer would be a resounding YES!

Rescue missions are always worth the investment. There is one rescue mission that spans the history of our world and also came at a price that is beyond what we can comprehend. If you're reading this, there's a good chance you are a beneficiary of that mission. It's THE reason Jesus came to earth. YOU are the reason Jesus died and was raised to life!

A passionate and enthusiastic faith is rooted in our daily experience of this rescue!

Not only have we been rescued, but Jesus also invites us to participate in His mission. As we begin our 21 Days of Prayer, may we remember that Jesus' most important mission is also ours!

Prayer: Father, thank You for rescuing me. Forgive me for the moments I take it for granted. Would you use me to point others to Your Rescue! Who are the people I can share You with today and in the months ahead? May my life be a light to others.

Notes: _____

21

DAYS OF
PRAYER
AUGUST 9

Day 2

The theme throughout Scripture is God's plan of redemption for a sinful world. We see this divine plan unfold from Genesis 3 through the end of Revelation. Man has a sin problem. We rebel against a holy God. We deserve eternal separation from God. Yet God loves us so much that He offers to place our punishment on Jesus and invites us into an everlasting relationship with Him. This invitation is offered to **all** who will believe in Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

No Scripture says it better than 2 Peter 3:9 NIV: *"The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."*

The next time you wonder how a good God could send someone to hell, remember this verse. God is not a vindictive God eagerly waiting to punish us and keep us from heaven. God's will is for **all** to repent and be saved. As Peter writes, God is "not wanting anyone to perish."

If you are like me, there are times when I can give up on another person. Maybe they've let me down one too many times and I am just done with them. God doesn't give up. He is patient. There are days when we might think someone has behaved their way outside of God's grace, but God is **still** not wanting them to perish. There are moments when we may think a friend or loved one could never change, but God's grace **still** offers them repentance.

May we always have a heart like God: praying, hoping, and rooting for others to come to know Him before it is too late.

Prayer: Lord, thank You for Your grace and unending mercy. Give me a heart that believes in repentance and redemption for others. Let me never give up on loved ones. May I always remember that Your salvation is for **all**, and Your grace is for any who believe.

Notes: _____

Day 3

Have you ever found yourself doing the right thing but in the wrong season? Being a football fan I hate watching my team lay it down nearly the whole game. Only to come alive in the last second. When it doesn't make a difference.

The writer of Ecclesiastes 3:1 NIV says, *"There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens."*

Knowing what season you're in will mean the difference between success and failure. Joy and frustration.

Jesus says in Matthew 9:37-38 NLT, *"The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields."*

Jesus reveals two things:

1. The harvest is HERE and it's BIG.
2. There are not enough workers to gather the harvest.

We know the harvest represents the millions of people who have not yet heard of the salvation Jesus is offering. The problem, Jesus says, is not that it's a small harvest. The problem is that we need people who recognize that it's harvest season! There has never been a busier time than the one we're in now. People are busy with urgent, non-urgent, material, and imperative things. But let me ask you, "How much of a priority do you make in your life for making sure you are bringing as many people as possible into the kingdom of God?" It's difficult enough for some people to simply make time for their own relationship with Christ, let alone spread it everywhere they go.

Proverbs 10:5 NLT says, *"A wise youth harvests in the summer, but one who sleeps during harvest is a disgrace."*

Imagine, if you will, driving by an entire crop of soybeans (being in Ohio, it's not too difficult to imagine). It's the end of summer, and no one has gathered anything. You see these items begin to decay, dry up, and eventually rot. You think to yourself, "How could someone let that much of a harvest go to waste?" Maybe later you find out that they simply got busy taking the kids here and there, going on vacation, and even binge-watching Grey's Anatomy. What? Seems like there should've been a priority to at least schedule a time to gather what has come in. Could you not even hire someone to help? But instead, the entire crop of soybeans is ruined and wasted for less important things.

I pray that as we read Jesus' words about what we're all called to do, it would cause us to get up, get help, and gather the harvest. It's not food. It's not a drink. It's not stuff. It is the souls of men and women we're talking about.

Prayer: God, begin with me. If I've been on the sidelines, waiting and pretending that the harvest isn't ready yet, I repent. I want to get up and gather. I pray that You would send more workers. People who see the harvest the same way You do. Lord of the harvest, send me.

Notes: _____



DAYS OF
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AUGUST 11

Day 4

And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. 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. 2 Corinthians 5:15, 20 NIV

Once, we were the home team, now we have become the visiting team, and in our current culture we will continue to be pushed to the fringe of society. That is why the assignment Paul mentions here might be considered the most important assignment.

An ambassador represents a nation or kingdom in communication with other nations. Paul had in mind his apostolic call to represent the kingdom of Christ to the nations of the earth. Ambassadors held positions of great honor in the ancient world because they represented the authority of the kings on whose behalf they spoke. That is our role: to make an appeal on behalf of Christ for the world to be reconciled.

While belief in God today is almost universal, much of the world stumbles over ascribing anything universally significant about Jesus. They may admire His pithy sayings and lament His tragic martyrdom. Yet, the lifeblood of the gospel courses from the central truth that in Christ God became one with the human race, that He died for all, and that His resurrection breaks the stranglehold of death.

You are called to be a representative of God in your life and your community. As God works in your life, perhaps your blessing is NOT for you but for those around you. You can show the Glory of God and be an answer to prayer for someone in your circle of influence.

We live in a culture that is obsessed with self and individualism, and that makes our role as ambassador vital to those who need to hear the Good News of Jesus. The gospel is not "reconcile yourselves." The gospel is "be reconciled," to simply receive reconciliation from God.

Prayer: God, we are thankful for all that You do for us. Thank you for bringing us reconciliation and redemption. Today we pray for those who are far from You and do not yet know You or Your mercies. Please put me in a place and a position to be an ambassador for You. Use me and my life to help someone connect to You and know You and Your power in their life. Thank You for the blessings in my life, and help me to not lose sight that You bless me, not for my benefit but for the benefit of those around me.

Notes: _____

Day 5

2 Kings 7

You've probably heard the term "unlikely hero," right? It's when the person you least expect becomes the star of the story by doing something no one saw coming. In this story, four outcasts steal the main headline of this event. They are unsuspected because their disease found them at the edge of the city gates, away from all contact with people and isolated from the very resources that would bring purpose to their lives. But these lepers took advantage of an opportunity. They thought they would go "behind enemy lines" and take advantage of what was happening with the Aramean army.

Instead, they stumbled onto something even bigger that God was about to do. Imagine that. The "outcasts" of society were the first to see something huge that God had done. God has a way of doing that. Is it because these were also the people who cared the least about how they were perceived and would be the most excited to get the good news out? Think about it, these people would return to a city they were "cast out" of to tell as many people as they could about their exciting news. There was no thought of where they belonged, but the news of this miracle became the most important priority in their lives.

As followers of Jesus, we have been given news that the rest of the world is searching for. John 3:16-17 sums up how God sent His Son Jesus so everyone could be freed from their past, receive forgiveness, and experience life with Him that starts now and lasts forever. It's good news to know that God is not coming after you to "get you" but actually to save you. That news is life giving and transforming and inclusive to everyone, and because of this it cannot be heard without a response required.

If we take this news seriously, it transforms the way we look at our families, friends, and our world. God came to save them; to help them. Does that match their view of who God is, or do they think they have to somehow earn His approval or He will be angry with them? How will they ever know this unless someone tells them?

When we stop and think about it there are several obstacles that keep us from sharing the Good News, and several reasons why we shouldn't. But that's just it, these lepers, the heroes of the story, remind us that none of them are important enough. All that is important is seeing what God is doing in your life and letting others know.

Don't put it off and say "someone else should do this" when God has placed people around you and in your life where you have the influence no one else has. Don't look at the inadequacies of your own life and think that your words, your past, your story isn't enough, or your problems are too big. Start by taking a step, and just let that guy who sits beside you at work or that parent at your kid's ballgame in on what God is doing in your life. Don't overthink this, just go and tell. The news we have is lifechanging.

Notes: _____



Day 6

Family, friends, neighbors, co-workers.

Whom do you do life with? Who is in your tribe? I'm talking about the people you are intentional with, those you are always available for no matter how busy life gets. If you are like me, you have circles of friends who push you toward God, and you have circles of friends who don't yet have a relationship with God.

Our verse for today (1 Cor. 9:23) makes it clear that our goal is simple: We are called to meet people where they are and point them to Jesus.

What are the passions, skill sets, collections, habits, and interests that connect you best to the people in your circle? Who are the people you run into all the time because of your weekly routines?

Who are the parents you sit with at sporting events, co-workers you run into in the break room each day, people you meet at the gas pump next to you?

Our Canton campus staff jokes with me each time I get a haircut because they know that when I sit in the chair, somewhere between all the small talk, I will invite the person cutting my hair to church. I know that the church is about a mile away, and if they are intimidated, I invite them to sit with me at 9 or 11 a.m.

I have to be honest, every time I do this I have to push through the fear of rejection because it is always tempting to sit there in silence or just make small talk instead. But the stakes are too high for me to settle for that because everyone we meet is going to spend forever somewhere. What if the person I'm talking to just had the worst week of their life or what if they have been looking for a church and haven't known where to start? I want to be the person who points them to Jesus in those moments.

Do you know anyone who's looking for hope? For community? For a purpose? A place to belong?

How intentional will you be today? And who are you pointing to Jesus?

I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings. 1 Corinthians 9:23 NIV

Prayer: God help me to be intentional, to see those in my life who need You. Give me the strength to put aside the fear of the unknown and fully step into who You have created me to be. God, I want to share what You have done in my life with everyone around me.

Notes: _____

Submitted by Nate Alderfer, Canton Campus Pastor

Day 7

At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ...
Colossians 4:3 ESV

It was one of those moments I will never forget. Perhaps it was the setting, but I'd argue it was the conversation. I was on a mission trip in the Mathare Valley slum in Nairobi, Kenya. It is one of the largest slums in the world, and if you've never stepped foot into one... it is kind of hard to describe. The living conditions are horrid.

Our daily routine involved visiting homes to cut out and replace a square foot of corrugated tin with a translucent sheet on the roofs of these homes. During the daytime, this small adjustment allowed an amazing amount of light into their homes. We were literally bringing light into darkness.

Our larger objective was to share about "The Light of the World," and we did. We had some amazing conversations, but one stands out above the rest. As we shared the Good News of Jesus with one middle-aged woman, her response left us speechless. After talking with her about God's love, she said to us, "The fact that you have come all this way to see me has shown me that God sees me. He has not forgotten me!"

I've never been so humbled. What an amazing gift to be used by God!

I believe God wants to use you in the same way. Sometimes it happens with people we'd never guess, and sometimes it happens with those we've spent our entire life with. Either way, I believe God desires our intentionality.

Intentionality begins with acknowledging and praying for specific people we want God to open a door for. I would even encourage you to write down the names of those you want to share the mystery of Christ with. It might be in your prayer journal, or a sticky note you can put on your fridge or bathroom mirror. Put those names somewhere you will see regularly as a reminder to pray for and to look for open doors to serve and have spiritual conversations.

Prayer: Father, I pray for an open door with _____. May I see the opportunities to love and serve them, while also having the courage to begin a conversation.

Notes: _____

WEEK 2

INTRODUCTION

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. Colossians 2:6-7 NIV

During week 2 of 21 Days of Prayer, our focus shifts to growing deeper roots in our faith. It is always tempting to make our faith simply about a set of beliefs or even feelings, but as James reminds us in his letters, "faith without works is dead."

God gives us practical expressions of our faith that are intended to become a regular part of our lives. Here at NewPointe, we call these practical expressions—Next Steps.

I don't know if you've ever thought about it, but how do we evaluate if our faith and trust is growing? There is not a simple way to measure our relationship with God, but there are some important indicators that help us along the way.

Throughout this week, we want to invite you to pray that God will give you discernment on how to become more rooted, and to examine how He would want you to engage with each of these Next Steps.

If these spiritual practices are new to you, keep it simple. I would encourage you to find one that is the most important for you to incorporate in this current season of your life, and just observe how God uses that step to change you and others around you.

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Dwight Mason
Lead Pastor

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DAYS OF
PRAYER
AUGUST 15

Day 8

There is power in prayer. I don't know of a more loving thing you could do for someone than to pray for them. If we believe that prayer works and God is all powerful, there really is no limit to what prayer can do for another person. When we pray together with other believers in a church, God can work miracles for His glory.

When I was a child growing up, our local sheriff visited our church where my dad was the pastor. Many people knew this man and were surprised to see him in a church. He would continue to attend occasionally. Our family began praying for Sheriff Green to get saved. As a little boy, every night when I would say my bedtime prayers I would finish by praying for the sheriff and his salvation. I would pray for him almost without even thinking, every time I prayed. This prayer for Sheriff Green went on for probably a year or two.

As I got older, I eventually moved on and Sheriff Green slipped off my prayer list. I forgot about him. Then one day he returned to church, responded to the invitation and accepted Christ. As a young man I realized I may have forgotten about this man, but Jesus never did. God remembered my prayers. He remembered the prayers of our church.

Hebrews 10:23-25 NLT reads, *"Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise. Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near."*

One of the joys of being part of a church is praying with others who are like minded. Keep praying in your small group. Keep exchanging prayer requests with your Bible study friends. God can do more with your prayer than you could ever do without Him. The Lord may move slower than we like. There is not always a 24-hour return on our prayers. But God hears us, and when we pray in His will, He will answer.

Prayer: Jesus, give me patience when praying for those who do not know You. May I value my relationships in and out of the church.

Notes: _____

Day 9

My grandpa once told me a story of when he was in Seattle and sat down for a cup of coffee with a friend. His friend went through a grandiose idea he had of opening up a coffee house that would serve specialty coffee drinks, and he wanted to know if my grandfather wanted to invest. He was torn. He loved investing in new ideas, but he was also a Folgers guy. "There's no need to add something to something that's already working," is what he'd say. He floundered in his indecision.

To this day, he hasn't made up his mind. It might be difficult for two reasons: One, to invest now would probably be more money than it's worth. Because the company was Starbucks. Two, my grandfather passed away over ten years ago, which means it is utterly useless to him now. It would, however, be useful to those who would inherit the profits of this investment (cough-cough, thanks, Grandpa). Now, there's no way for me to tell if he was just telling me a story, or if it was true. But if it was, how incredible were the consequences of not making a decision?!

As people, we often think that indecision carries with it indifferent consequences. We may procrastinate on making a decision because of a false sense of time. Make no mistake about it, no decision is THE worst decision you could make.

Jesus says in Revelation 3:20 NLT, *"Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends."*

It's an invitation that too many people are still sitting on. Maybe you're asking yourself if it's real. That's fair. But what's it going to take to convince you? Even worse, what if it is, and you spent too much time wondering. And now it's too late.

Maybe you know, but you're just waiting for a good time. Maybe when things slow down a bit. If someone you're expecting is standing at the door knocking, but you're not quite done cooking, are you going to wait until you are before you open the door. Listen, Jesus came to deliver the most important thing in life to you: Salvation. When you see this gift for what it is, it will be irresistible. Don't wait.

If Christ is at the door, will you make the decision NOW to let Him in? If you don't know what to do next, you're not alone. That's what we're here for. We want to help.

Here are a couple of next steps you can take immediately:

- Attend Discover NewPointe. This is the best way to determine your next step with your faith. Contact your campus to register, or go to newpointe.org/events.
- Get baptized. Go to newpointe.org/baptism and register.

Prayer: Jesus, whatever You're asking of me, the answer is "yes." Give me the boldness to respond with action when You call me to decide. Use me to help others make the same decision. Thank You.

Notes: _____

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DAYS OF
PRAYER
AUGUST 17

Day 10

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. James 5:16 NIV

There is power in prayer and in community, and that power is even greater when it's combined in a community of prayer. James is very practical in his writing about prayer, and calls us to become "People of Prayer," but that looks different than what most expect. Often, we make plans for ourselves and ask God to bless those plans. A better option is to pray first and make yourself available for God's plan. God's plan often involves more than just one person. The power of praying in a group is that it helps us to not just pray for ourselves, but to pray for each other and for our community.

Perhaps the most distinctive aspect of the practice advocated by James is its mutual character: We are to confess to each other where we fall short, with an expectation that as a loving community we will help each other to become better, and to help our community love each other more. The phrase, "I can do it on my own" is often born in a heart that has been hurt and trust that has been violated. We have always been intended to live in relationship with others, and having a group we can pray with is one of the most powerful relationships we can have.

We often think that we need "the pastor" to pray for us, but we see here that the power to heal is invested in prayer, not the church leader. And while it is appropriate that those charged with the spiritual oversight of the community should be called to intercede for those seriously ill, James makes it clear that all believers have the privilege and responsibility to pray for healing. He makes it clear that prayer is a powerful weapon in the hands even of the humblest believer; it does not require a "super saint" to wield it effectively.

You never know how your fervent prayers helped others make it through a crisis; or how their prayers may have helped you. "What the church needs today is not more machinery or better, not new organizations or more and novel methods, but people whom the Holy Spirit can use—people of prayer, people mighty in prayer. The Holy Spirit does not flow through methods, but through people. He does not come on machinery, but on people. He does not anoint plans, but people—people of prayer."
– E. M. Bounds

Prayer: God, we pray that You help us to live together in community, to have peace with one another, and to trust each other. We lift up those who have been hurt and now wish to "do it myself," and we pray that we can be a loving community and offer a safe place to hear a dangerous message. Today we also pray that everyone at NewPointe can find a group to be involved in, to pray with, to study with, and to serve with, and to be able to do life together.

Notes: _____

Submitted by Aaron Dowell, Coshocton Campus Pastor

Day 11

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.
1 Peter 4:10 NIV

Just as each one has received a gift use it to serve others, as good stewards of the varied grace of God.

I love meeting new people. It seems like the more people I meet, the more creativity I see in how God created us. Just think of the different skills and talents people have: musical talents, hospitably, technical skills, teaching, listening, leading, detail driven, project finishers.

For seven years I served in middle and high school as both a volunteer and a staff member. I spent most of my time recruiting volunteers to serve within the student environment, and I think it's incredible that God created people within our church to thrive in the challenge of walking alongside students in their middle and high school years. If you've served in student ministry or you've been a parent of a student, you know that those seasons are incredibly formative. It takes commitment to invest in the next generation, but most of the leaders I talk to say that they feel like they get just as much out of serving as the kids do.

Maybe students isn't your giftset. Did you know that we have eleven different categories for which you can use your gifts each week? We ask every single person who calls NewPointe home to serve for one reason: To inspire people to follow Jesus.

We need you. The person who is anxious about trying church again needs you. The student who wonders if God sees them needs you. The person who feels overwhelmed by the pressure of life needs you. God has created you to thrive, and wants to use you to make a difference for eternity. Let us help you find the right spot to serve each week.

Here are some things to consider when thinking about serving:

- Do I like working with people or would I rather do a task?
- Do I want to serve on Sunday morning or throughout the week?
- Do I have a heart to invest in the next generation with kids or students?
- Do I love to clean, organize, and restock?
- Do I have a construction background or like to paint?
- Do I have a musical ability or a desire to work with electronics?
- Am I willing to lead an adult small group at my house or at a coffee shop?
- Do I have a specialized skillset from my occupation that I can offer?

Prayer: Father, how can I use the abilities You have given me to serve Your kingdom and invest in others?

Notes: _____

Day 12

Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and generous to those in need, always being ready to share with others. 1 Timothy 6:18 NLT

Do you think of yourself as rich? If you're like me your initial reaction is an emphatic "no." That's because no matter how much money you and I make we judge our wealth status by what we don't have, and let's face it there's always more we could gain. As Paul was writing this letter to his apprentice Timothy, he takes a moment to address those who were considered "rich" in that day (which I am sure we couldn't even live off of with inflation and all), and he reminds them that everything they have is to be used for the good of others. Notice he doesn't just talk about "money," though. Sure, that is the obvious one, but he points out generosity as something that is a lifestyle. It goes beyond writing a check and marking off a to-do list, or a line item on your budget that is forgotten after the transaction. Generosity is an investment of everything I have, and that includes "good works."

Once again that thought resurfaces: "I'm not rich in skills and abilities, so how can I use them for God or the good of others?" That's because like money we only see what we don't have. That's why Paul drives attention to using everything, because it takes us leveraging everything to make an impact. Our mission at NewPointe is to inspire people to follow Jesus, and do you know what best does that? Seeing people model what it means to follow Jesus. People in action inspire people to action.

Look at the life of Jesus and Whom we are following. Paul says later to the Philippians in 2:7 that Jesus "emptied Himself by taking the form of a servant." Serving is more than something I do; it is a lifestyle of using all that I am to give to others something greater than myself, and that something is Jesus and His mission.

So what does it look like to give all of myself? Perhaps the best description I have heard of what it means to do this is by giving of my time, treasure, and talent. Ask yourself these questions to help you think through your next step of giving yourself in these areas:

Time: Who are people in my life whom I spend time with? How could I use my time with them to influence and encourage them?

Treasure: What do I own that I could leverage for something God wants to accomplish in my community and my church?

Talent: What do I find myself doing most naturally or enjoyably that is needed in my church and community?

Don't just do good things or give to good things, be "rich" in the work of something bigger than you. And there's nothing bigger and nothing more worth it, than the mission of inspiring people to follow Jesus.

Prayer: Pray for the courage to take that step today, and make the most of the opportunities all around you.

Notes: _____

Day 13

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Matthew 6:21 NIV

...give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown You and say, "Who is the Lord?" Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God. Proverbs 30:8-9 NIV

There's a reason why Jesus talks about money more than any topic other than the kingdom of God. It's as if He knows something about us. However, I think it is important to state that money is not actually the problem. There is nothing morally wrong with money or having it (even lots of it). The danger it poses for our faith is instead what money can do to us. For some, money gives status, for others it's security, and there's also the stuff it can provide. No matter the specific reason, it all comes down to how much we depend on money to satisfy the deep longings of our hearts.

At the foundation of our faith is dependence. Anything that competes with our dependence on God is a potential pitfall that can limit joy, peace, and purpose in our lives. Perhaps there is no greater pitfall than money. Therefore, how we approach money is a major area of discipleship as we learn to depend on God to meet our deepest needs and longings.

A major purpose of prayer is that it creates a space for us to align our hearts with God. In fact, this is the most important aspect of prayer. It is why Jesus instructed us to pray, "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." The assumption in that prayer is that you are a part of "earth." So another appropriate way to pray this would be "Your will be done in me as it is in heaven."

The question is, "Lord, in what way am I depending on money to meet a longing that allows me to be independent of You?"

There is also a practical side to this discipleship-growth opportunity. That step is to trust God through bringing tithes and offerings to His kingdom work. There are multiple things that happen when we take this step of faith, and here are a couple: First, we learn that God can provide for our needs in ways that stretch our faith. Secondly, it aligns our hearts with the eternal.

Prayer: Father, we are so grateful for how You provide. May I guard my heart so that the gifts You have given do not become more important than You, the giver of all gifts. Teach me to be a good steward of the resources You have entrusted to me.

Notes: _____



Day 14

Jerry Reinsdorf, the former General Manager for the Chicago Bulls, was once asked if he was offended that he wasn't invited to Phil Jackson's wedding. He responded that when someone doesn't invite him to a wedding, he thanks them!

Have you ever been invited to a wedding or a birthday party and you didn't really want to go? Maybe you came up with an excuse to get out of what felt like an unappealing obligation. That is the beauty of an invitation. You can accept or decline.

Sometimes people describe church as more of a duty or an obligation. If we could get out of it we would, but we must keep God happy is the mindset of many religious people. Jesus offers us an invitation to a relationship with Him. It is not an obligation to a religion. It is an invitation to have a relationship with the God who loves and created you.

In Revelation 3:20 NKJV, Jesus says, *"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with me."*

That sounds more like a friend wanting to spend time with me rather than a commitment to a boring, sterile religious activity.

The theme of the Great Commission is that we as a church would extend that same invitation to our circle of influence. We are called not to recruit people to attend our church or join our religion, but to invite people to have a friendship with the same Jesus we know. It is not an obligation. It is an opportunity to experience what we were created for, an eternal relationship with our Savior.

Prayer: God, thank You for inviting me to know You better. May I never take that invitation for granted. Give me a heart to see the world around me and look for those divine appointments to extend this same invitation to others.

Notes: _____

WEEK 3

INTRODUCTION

If you genuinely care about people, you have the potential to change your world. Remember, small actions done consistently lead to big results. You can't change everything, but you can change something.

Jesus said, "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." Matthew 5:13-16 NIV

You will never be what you ought to be until you are doing what you ought to be doing.

Would you pray this dangerous prayer? "Use me, God."

If you do and mean it, your world will never be the same.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dwight Mason". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Dwight" and the last name "Mason" clearly distinguishable.

Dwight Mason
Lead Pastor

Day 15

Then God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground." Genesis 1:28 NLT

I have often thought about the difference between addition and multiplication. I mean when it comes to arithmetic, of course I know the difference. But when God commands Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply, He's not talking about adding more kids. He's saying, "Make sure your kids have kids who have kids who have more kids. The difference between multiplication and addition with people is that addition requires you to add someone. It sounds simple. But multiplication requires you to require the one you added, to add more people who teach the ones they added to teach more people... and... you get the point.

Multiplication requires leadership. Multiplication relies on you, but at some point it shouldn't require you. Most folks in the church tend to think addition. I don't mean looking past the "one person." I actually mean the opposite. We should be committed to modeling what it means to follow Jesus. Leading someone to Christ should be the highest priority in a believer's life. If I don't have this heart, then I might not understand what following Jesus really means.

Unfortunately, many people will stop here. "I've added someone!" That's great, but are you modeling what that looks like now? If you were on a sinking cruise ship and you found a way out through the labyrinth of the different corridors of the ship and onto the Lifeboats reserved for this exact location, would this not be good news? And if you could help others find a way to this "life-saving" news, wouldn't you? And if something happened to you and you couldn't physically go and save more, wouldn't you tell someone how to find the people trapped and how they could get out?

Seeing life this way is not always easy, but it is absolutely necessary. A church caught up in "addition" always looks to its pastor to add more people. A multiplying church is consumed by equipping everyone to know how to show people the Way to Hope.

Paul says in Ephesians 2:8-10 NLT: *"God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can DO the good things he planned for us long ago."*

Did you know that you were created to be a multiplier to those needing to know about God's amazing salvation? That's right. This requires us to pray and grow. It's easy to know the way ourselves. But do we know it well enough to train others, who train others, who train others...

Prayer: God, make me a multiplier. I need more faith to believe You called me to BIG THINGS. Please strengthen my faith and teach me how to pray dangerous prayers. Give me boldness to take this next step.

Notes: _____

Day 16

"Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked. "Come and see," said Philip. John 1:46 NIV

As Jesus followers, we stand in the gap between two worlds: the empire of the world, and the kingdom of God. We all live in the world, but we must continually make a choice about which kingdom or empire we will base our life and worldview on. The question often boils down to this: What is going to be my approach to God? This question has been around a long time, and yet we must always circle back and check how we are answering it.

Most people believe in God, they just don't believe in the local church, and this is because we often do a poor job of showing what it means to live in the kingdom of God. The empire of the world tells us you must keep trying to get God's approval, that you must obey out of duty, that you have to do more. Yet the contrast of the kingdom of God says that God already loves you and you can obey out of delight and Jesus has already done everything for you!

In John's gospel we see an invitation as Jesus starts His earthly ministry. Andrew has brought Simon Peter and perhaps Philip to Jesus, then Philip found Nathanael and witnessed to him. That has been the foundational principle of Christian expansion ever since. New followers of Jesus bear witness of Him to others who in turn become disciples and repeat the process.

The thing we often overlook in this story is that the invitation to come and see is given way before the challenge to come and follow is issued. When asked if this thing that seemed to be too good to be true is real, the answer was simple: Don't just take my word for it, come and see for yourself. Honest inquiry is a powerful opening to come and see the transforming power of Jesus.

"Come and See" is always before "Follow Me."

Prayer: God, I pray for those who are seeking You, and that each one of us can live out of the kingdom of God and not the empire of the world. I pray that those who are far from You will come and see how great You are, and experience the life-changing power of living in Your kingdom.

Notes: _____

Day 17

As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend. Proverbs 27:17 NLT

Of everything this word picture offers from the wise King Solomon, the word that stands out the most to me is the word “sharpens.” Several years ago, my brother-in-law became a partner with a sales movement that was well known at the time for selling cutlery. For a few months, everywhere he went he brought a briefcase that he could open up and showcase a shiny, sharp, collection of knives and cutlery, and he was ready for about a 20-minute presentation to show you the difference they would make in your life. And, like every good salesperson, he had a punchline, and that punchline was showcasing how well you could cut in comparison with your typical household knife. The amazing part about this is that even though by that point in the presentation you knew where he was going and what he was going to ask of you, it was still impressive. Why was this? Because they knew how to tie the product to a common problem, and the product made all other products look pale in comparison because it highlighted what they did best.

We’ve all had a “dull” knife, and my time in food service taught me there are more safety accidents from dull knives than from ones that are too sharp. What might this say about this word picture, and more importantly about the relationships around you and me?

When we look at this verse, it’s easy to think it’s about the significance of having people around you. But as we look deeper, it is more about the kind of people we have around us and what they do for us. Most of us don’t lack people’s influence in our lives. Friends tell us their thoughts and feelings about us and others. Expectations are relayed to us from family members and our supervisors. We listen to media sources through news, podcasts, and sports to gain perspective on our world and we allow these vices to influence our worldview.

You don’t need more people in your life telling you what to do, you need people who make you better and “sharper.” We become sharper when we are challenged and allow people to create tension in our lives. Sparks may fly, the noise may be unsettling, but the process is keeping us from having a busy life full of people but dull and without purpose. These kinds of relationships don’t happen naturally though. They come by being intentional. So where are you making room for people to sharpen you?

That is why we do groups at NewPointe. We believe it’s dangerous to do life alone, or to do life with people around you without being sharpened. Groups work because they are intentional space that you make time for every one to two weeks for intentional conversation and engagement. It means you will meet new people. It means you will have people around you who may have a different personality or opinion than you do, but it means you won’t be dull, and you will see purpose come to the surface in your life.

Take a minute today and jump on newpointe.org/groups and sign up for a group. It takes the right people around you and me to become who He created us to be!

Notes: _____

Day 18

Don't let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity. 1 Timothy 4:12 NLT

I had gone to church my entire life but never really owned my faith. That changed, going into my junior year of high school, when my parents moved to Sugarcreek and we found NewPointe. NewPointe student ministries connected me to leaders who poured into my life and created space for me to explore my faith during some of the most formative years, as I navigated high school and transitioned into young adulthood.

It's because of that experience that God has given me a heart for young adult small groups. Do you remember the decisions you were making in your 20s? If you are like me, you were deciding the direction of your life and what your priorities were when it came to your time, talents, and treasure. These young adults are not forced to go to church. They show up, are interested in growing their relationship with Christ, and want to be in community. This is the end goal of our Next Gen (birth-grade 12) environments, that we would raise up a generation who own their faith as they grow up and become independent.

In today's world, our kids and students are having to grow up faster and are being exposed to more mature content and situations than ever before. How we lead, love, and disciple the next generation will determine what our church looks like in the next 10 to 20 years. Do you have a heart for serving in the kids' or students' environments? Are you willing to pray for our students, their parents, and our schools? Are you willing to be involved and play a part in a student exploring what a relationship with Christ looks like?

Each Sunday, hundreds of kids walk through our Next Gen environments here at NewPointe. Every week, thousands of kids walk through our local schools looking for acceptance, security, and significance. Will you stand in the gap and pray for the next generation?

Prayer: Father, would You use our church to inspire the next generation to follow You? Would You give parents the wisdom to love and lead their kids? Guide our Next Gen directors at all six campuses and all of our weekly small group leaders.

Notes: _____

Day 19

Then Moses said to the whole community of Israel, "This is what the LORD has commanded: Take a sacred offering for the LORD." So the whole community of Israel left Moses and returned to their tents. All whose hearts were stirred and whose spirits were moved came and brought their sacred offerings to the LORD. They brought all the materials needed for the Tabernacle, for the performance of its rituals, and for the sacred garments. Exodus 35:4-5a, 20-21 NLT

The exodus deliverance is to the Old Testament what the death and resurrection of Christ are to the New Testament—the central, definitive act in which God intervenes to save His people. The Old Testament illustrates how God's acts of redemption call for a response from God's people. The remembrance of God's saving acts in the exodus was the central function of Israel's worship. Christian worship focuses on God's saving act in Christ. What God physically did for Israel in the exodus is a preview of what He does for us spiritually in the resurrection of Jesus. Two different actions at different times by God, but one similar response from the people of God.

Throughout history, the church has been the hope of the world, but we need to remember that the church is more than just a building. The idea of going to a specific place to worship was not new; and in the building of the transportable tabernacle, God was giving an object lesson that the specific location was not as important as the heart of worship. The tabernacle was significant for the Israelites' religious system and society and acted as a constant reminder that God was with Israel and lived among them, but the location always moved with the people.

In chapter 35 of Exodus, we see Moses give orders in preparation for the setting up of the tabernacle. Two things were to be done:

1. All who were able must contribute.
2. All who were skillful must work.

Moses made known to them the will of God, and **they went home and immediately put into practice what they had heard.**

The people gave from what they had, and in this they participated in God's work. If God had wanted to, He could have dropped a tabernacle from the sky, but this is not the way He works. He invites us to get involved with what He is doing in the world. In this case God made the plans, but the people did the work. He initiated the tabernacle, but they participated in its construction. They were called to give of their **treasure, talent, and time** (serving). We are being called to do the same today.

You are being invited into the story of the church, to be a part of the "hope of the world." Which way is easiest, and which way are you being challenged to grow?

Prayer: God, I pray that NewPointe will continue with generous hearts, and people investing in the local church. I believe the church is the hope of the world and thank You that I am invited to participate in that hope. I also lift up the leaders of NewPointe as they make wise decisions about leading and stewarding the resources of the church. I pray that they have discernment in wise use of the resources and continue to seek Your will and direction.

Notes: _____

Day 20

Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light." Matthew 11:28-30 NLT

These words from Jesus remind us of His heart behind everything He teaches us. He doesn't just want something from us, He wants something for us. A life that isn't weighed down by cares and consumed with expectations sounds pretty good, doesn't it? Unfortunately, there are so many things that make this life feel unattainable. Every day we face pressures that weigh on our psyche and pull us in different directions. Then we add things into our lives that we feel will fix or relieve the pressure but in reality only bring more stress as we try to maintain them. What Jesus offers us is an invitation. One where we can experience true freedom.

The life Jesus wants for us is about freedom, but in order to experience that freedom we have to "come" to Him. Now I know it's possible that you might be thinking, "Yeah, my problems are bigger than just something I can talk to Jesus about, and they will go away or be fixed." The reason Jesus wants us to come to Him is not to ignore or resolve our issues but to know we have a place of acceptance no matter what we are feeling or carrying.

The key to that rest is knowing what to do with what I can control. So much of our stress and expectations come from things we can't control. Coming to Jesus means bringing our fears and not trying to pretend we have ourselves pulled together. Coming to Jesus means knowing that we can vent our feelings to Him rather than having to solve them or reason with them. When we come to Jesus, we don't have to know what to do next, but we can trust that He will never leave us no matter what. Coming to Jesus means letting go. Letting go doesn't mean that we are avoiding responsibility or conflict. It doesn't mean we are suddenly relieved of all our anxieties and worries. It does mean, that same Jesus who is "humble and gentle in heart" gives us an inner peace that can and will be there no matter what happens around me.

What do you need to bring to Jesus today?

Prayer: In November, we have an event to help strengthen and promote mental health. Would you take a moment and pray for that event, as well as who you might have an opportunity to invite?

Notes: _____



DAYS OF
PRAYER
AUGUST 28

Day 21

And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others. 2 Timothy 2:2 NIV

Do you have a spiritual mentor in your life? Someone who is a little further down the road than you are, and is willing to walk alongside you?

I have a friend named Nick who has poured into my life for the last six-plus years. He is wise, patient, a good listener, and gives me insight to things I need to consider in my life. Nick has allowed me to see every area of his life: the challenges, the successes, and everything in between. I am a stronger person today because of Nick's investment in me. Nick has told me from the start, I am doing this for you, so that you can do this for someone else.

Throughout Scripture we see people stepping up to mentor, coach, and encourage those who are figuring life out. One great and well-known relationship was Paul, who mentored and encouraged Timothy. In today's devo, Paul is writing a letter to Timothy to remind him of his rich heritage and the purpose God has for him.

In a world that tries to tear you down, and reminds you of your flaws and insecurities, we need more people to step up to lead, love, and speak truth.

Who is someone you can come alongside and share your life with?

Is there a small group of people you can lead and pour into for a season?

Do you have a heart for the next generation, to whom you can be present for each week, as you listen and give insight into their lives?

I am asking you to be bold. To push out of your comfort zone, and to step into what God is asking you to do. God is with you, and we are here to help you take this next step in your faith walk.

Prayer: Father, whom do you want me to pour my life into? Would you continue to raise up leaders in our church who can show adults, students, and kids who You are!

Notes: _____

