

JANUARY 11 – 31, 2021

21
DAYS
OF PRAYER
& FASTING
2021

 **NewPointe**
COMMUNITY CHURCH

WELCOME TO NEWPOINTE COMMUNITY CHURCH'S 21 DAYS OF PRAYER & FASTING FOR THE YEAR 2021!

God gives power to our words and our prayers, and He works in our time of fasting. We are believing that God is going to do something in our church and in your life as we set aside this time to pray to Him; to lift up our families, our workplaces, our city, and our world.

21 Days of Prayer & Fasting is a time where we intentionally seek God every day for three weeks in prayer as we trust in Him to move in powerful ways. Prayer has the power to affect both our internal and external worlds as well as set our minds and hearts in alignment with God.

The key to our fruitfulness, according to Jesus, is knowing Him, abiding in Him, connecting with Him, relying on Him, and seeking His will in everything we do. True fruitfulness cannot happen without true faithfulness in prayer. This is why prayer is at the heart of all we do in the church and in the world. Prayer is the central avenue God uses to transform us and, in turn, it's the way He uses us to transform the world.

We are excited and expectant as you join us for the next 21 days in praying for God's leading in our lives and in our church. We challenge you to take time to fast, making space to be filled spiritually by God in preparation for this next season. For each of the three weeks, we are focusing on something specific:

WEEK 1

Your Personal Relationship with God

WEEK 2

Your Relationships and Sphere of Influence

WEEK 3

Our Church, City, and World

Take the bold step to pray expectantly that God will display His power and faithfulness to us in this season, and watch as He shifts and moves in our lives.

IN EVERY SITUATION, BY PRAYER AND PETITION, WITH THANKSGIVING, PRESENT YOUR REQUESTS TO GOD. AND THE PEACE OF GOD, WHICH TRANSCENDS ALL UNDERSTANDING, WILL GUARD YOUR HEARTS AND YOUR MINDS IN CHRIST JESUS. PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7

*All Scripture passages are from the New International Version unless otherwise noted.
This guide has been adapted with permission from Echo Church, San Jose, CA.*

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, 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, 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."

Jesus teaches His disciples (and us) how to pray in Matthew 6 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 that there is something special about setting aside specific time dedicated to prayer. Just like many other disciplines, removing other 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

The purpose of fasting is to redirect our hunger toward God. It is choosing to abstain from food, drink, sleep, 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 (Mathew 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

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.

7 BASIC STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL FASTING AND PRAYER

BY BILL BRIGHT

Step 1: Set Your Objective

Why are you fasting? What specific results do you desire to get (personally and for your family and/or community)?

Step 2: Make Your Commitment

What will you fast from? (food, TV, entertainment...). How long will you fast? (one meal, one day, once a week). How much time each day will you devote to prayer and God's Word?

Step 3: Prepare Yourself Spiritually

Repentance is the foundation of fasting. Confess your sins, seek and give forgiveness, ask the Holy Spirit to fill you (Ephesians 5:18).

Step 4: Prepare Yourself Physically

If fasting from food, eat smaller meals before starting a fast. Limit exercise and activity, rest more, drink more, and focus your thoughts. Avoid caffeinated drinks and limit acidic juices (orange, tomato).

Step 5: Put Yourself on a Schedule

Set aside quality time to spend with God for reading Scripture, meditating, singing, inviting Him into different areas of your life...

Step 6: End Your Fast Gradually

When you end a fast from food, begin eating gradually with small, light portions.

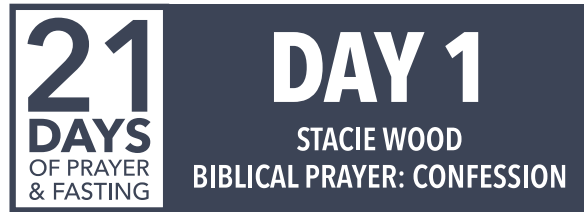
Step 7: Expect Results

Expect God to reward you for your obedience to His Word. You will experience a heightened awareness of His presence, and He will give you fresh, new spiritual insights. Your confidence and faith in God will be strengthened, and you will see answers to your prayers.

WEEK 1

**PRAYER FOCUS:
PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD**





YES, WHAT JOY FOR THOSE WHOSE RECORD THE LORD HAS CLEARED OF GUILT, WHOSE LIVES ARE LIVED IN COMPLETE HONESTY! PSALM 32:2

Welcome to Day 1 of a 21-day journey of prayer and seeking God! I love Day 1, don't you? It's always so full of hope and anticipation. All the motivation is pumping through our veins, and our hearts are fully engaged. Day 1 is great. Day 17 is harder. Because you know, somewhere between Day 1 and Day 17, life happens.

But might I just lovingly say, this is not hard. Finding 10 minutes a day to invest in your soul (the one part of you that will matter 100 years from now) is a worthy investment. The pattern of regularly seeking God could be the most transformative thing you do in 2021.

I'm so happy you've joined us.

Each day we will be considering a different aspect of prayer. And today we are looking at the significance of confession and repentance. Yuck.

I don't like confession because I don't like to admit it when I've done something wrong. As a perfectionist by nature, acknowledging my sin, mistakes, and failures is just shy of volunteering for a root canal. But here's why it's so very important: Sin separates us from God. That's true theologically in that God is holy and cannot commune with that which is unholy, so spiritually, we remain disconnected from Him. That's why Jesus died as a perfect, atoning sacrifice for our sin, to restore connection between God and humanity.

But sin also separates us from God in a practical sense. When I have unconfessed or hidden sin in my life, I avoid God. I don't want to pray or read the Bible or go to church. If God is light, then when I don't bring my sin before Him and expose it to Him, I'm living in darkness. My shame grows, and the distance in my relationship with God grows too. A fog of heaviness, guilt, and even depression can settle over my life.

King David expresses this feeling in Psalm 32:3-4 when he says, *"When I refused to confess my sin, my body wasted away, and I groaned all day long. Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat."*

Ugh. That's a bad feeling. And if you've ever lived with a "secret sin" or a pattern of sinful behavior, you know exactly how that feels.

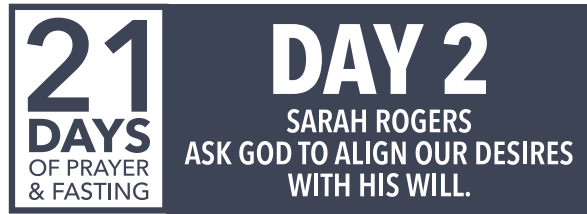
The great news is, we are one prayer away from fully restored fellowship with God. David says in verse 5; *"Friend, forgiveness is yours! Jesus died so that you could experience the grace and forgiveness of God. Experience the JOY of having the Lord clear your guilt. Let's live before Him in complete honesty."*

Take a moment now to sit quietly before God, asking Him to bring to mind anything that might be separating you from Him. Confess it as we begin our time in prayer so that you may walk in the light of His forgiveness and grace.

FINALLY, I CONFESSED ALL MY SINS TO YOU AND STOPPED TRYING TO HIDE MY GUILT. I SAID TO MYSELF, "I WILL CONFESS MY REBELLION TO THE LORD." AND YOU FORGAVE ME! ALL MY GUILT IS GONE. PSALM 32:2

Prayer

Lord, today I confess that I _____, Thank You that in Christ I can experience Your grace, forgiveness, and love.



DON'T COPY THE BEHAVIOR AND CUSTOMS OF THIS WORLD, BUT LET GOD TRANSFORM YOU INTO A NEW PERSON BY CHANGING THE WAY YOU THINK. THEN YOU WILL LEARN TO KNOW GOD'S WILL FOR YOU, WHICH IS GOOD AND PLEASING AND PERFECT. ROMANS 12:2

Besides asking God for what we want (because He cares about those things!), it can be hard some days to know what to pray for. Do I ask God for more money so I can give more, or do I request less money so I'm not greedy? Do I ask Him to remove the things that tempt me, or do I ask Him to give me strength to face temptation? Personally, I wonder if I should pray for my kids to be more self-contained so I can get some work done, or should I pray for patience and energy to put my work aside and be more present? See what I mean?

The Bible says that the human heart is deceitful (Jeremiah 17:9), and though it sounds harsh, I think all of us can understand what it means for our hearts to be confused or leading us in the wrong direction. This is why, when we pray, it is good to begin by asking God to align our hearts, our desires, and our thoughts with His will. He has the power, by His Spirit, to point our hearts in the right direction as well as shift the way we think about things. He is steady when we are not. He is loving to all people when we don't feel it. He has good plans, and He can be trusted.

Therefore, when we ask Him to transform our thoughts as it says in Romans 12, we are asking Him for better perspective, for clearer focus, for thoughts that come from Him. It helps us pray, and it helps us trust. I can still ask God for what I want, but I first acknowledge that His way is better than what I could come up with, and I ask Him to help me see it. He loves to do this for us; to open our hearts and minds to His will so we can trust that this specific prayer will be answered.

Prayer

Dear God, as I set aside time to pray this month, please help my thoughts, wants, and prayers to align with Your will. I trust You and Your heart for me, for my community, and for the world at large.



"WHAT DO YOU MEAN, 'IF I CAN?' JESUS ASKED. "ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE IF A PERSON BELIEVES." THE FATHER INSTANTLY CRIED OUT, "I DO BELIEVE, BUT HELP ME OVERCOME MY UNBELIEF!" WHEN JESUS SAW THAT THE CROWD OF ONLOOKERS WAS GROWING, HE REBUKED THE EVIL SPIRIT. "LISTEN, YOU SPIRIT THAT MAKES THIS BOY UNABLE TO HEAR AND SPEAK, "HE SAID." I COMMAND YOU TO COME OUT OF THIS CHILD AND NEVER ENTER HIM AGAIN!" MARK 9:23-25

In these verses and many others, we see that believing is fundamental in seeing breakthrough in life. Here, I love the father's honest response to Jesus and can identify with his struggle. I know that I should believe without doubting (Mark 11:23) and that faith can move mountains (Matthew 17:20), but I often find myself struggling to come up with the faith I need! The father asked Jesus to help him overcome his unbelief, and we should feel free to ask Him too!

Recently, the same longing in my heart – for an increase in faith – led me to a story in the Bible about a man who needed Jesus to heal his daughter. He told Jesus he knew that all it took was a simple word from Jesus, and she would be healed. The girl's father knew this because he recognized and believed in Jesus' authority. Jesus' response was that this man had the greatest faith in the whole country of Israel (Matthew 8:8-10)! The more we know and experience Jesus, and the more we begin to understand that all authority over heaven and earth has been given to Him (Matthew 28:18) and that through Him we too have power over evil (Luke 10:19), we will begin to pray bold prayers full of faith!

Think of it this way – if you were the president's son or daughter, wouldn't you walk with a certain measure of confidence? We often fail to recognize that through accepting Jesus, we have been adopted into the family of God and that His Son overcame this world so that we could too! He gave us full access, through prayer, to God's throne room (place where a king would reside and receive his people), and He allows us to carry His Spirit within us! Let that sink in today as you pray. Ask Him to help you believe wherever you may doubt, and let new faith sprout in your heart!

Prayer

Almighty God, give me greater faith through the full understanding of Jesus and who I am in Him. Thank You for being able to help me through Your Spirit when I feel doubtful and when I don't have enough faith.



DAY 4
HERMANN KIM
WELCOME GOD'S SPIRIT INTO
OUR PRAYERS.

**SO IF YOU SINFUL PEOPLE KNOW HOW TO GIVE GOOD GIFTS TO YOUR CHILDREN, HOW MUCH MORE WILL YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER GIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT TO THOSE WHO ASK HIM.
MATTHEW 7:11**

When a person receives Jesus into their heart, the Holy Spirit takes residence in their lives (Ephesians 1:13-14, Romans 8:9,16-17). Therefore, if you are a Christian, you already have the Holy Spirit within you!

The Holy Spirit is a guarantee that seals the security that Jesus has saved us. Why then is it that Jesus told the disciples (whom I'm pretty sure were born-again believers) to wait for the Holy Spirit to come (Luke 24:49, Acts 1:8)? In addition, the authors of the New Testament repeatedly encouraged the believers to be "filled with the Holy Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18) and spoke of certain disciples being "filled" or "full of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 4:8,31; 13:4).

This is all because, I believe, despite already having received the Holy Spirit upon accepting Jesus, we need and get to have both an initial and continual welcoming, filling, and dependence on the Holy Spirit.

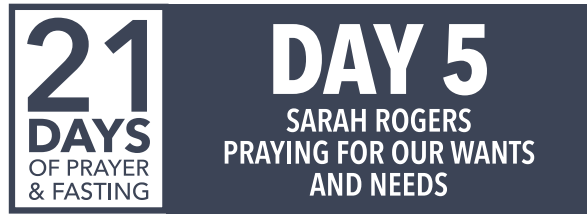
Without the Holy Spirit and the continual filling, we will be left powerless. Even Jesus was dependent on the Holy Spirit (look at His conception, His teachings, and the fact that He didn't even do one miracle until He was baptized with the Spirit). You can also see a difference in power and boldness from the church in the first chapter of Acts to the second, all because they encountered the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said that the Holy Spirit was to be our "Helper" (John 14:16; 14:26), so when we welcome Him and ask for His help, He fills us so that we can take on His nature and power (1 Corinthians 6:11, 2 Corinthians 3:18, Galatians 5:22-23), He directs us (Acts 8:29; 13:4; 16:6-7; 20:23), and He unleashes His gifts (1 Corinthians 12:4-11).

I remember when I first became curious about the Holy Spirit while studying the book Acts. That curiosity grew into a hunger that led to continued seasons of explosive growth and even greater healing in my life. Our heavenly Father is ready to give us the Holy Spirit when we ask, so as we welcome Him and ask for His help in this season of prayer, let it be a non-stop receiving – prayer to prayer, moment to moment, season to season – of being filled!

Prayer

Thank You, God, for the gift of the Holy Spirit. I welcome You during this time and season of prayer. I ask that You would fill me, clothe me with Your power, direct my life and path, activate the gifts of Your Spirit within me, and teach me to pray.



DON'T WORRY ABOUT ANYTHING; INSTEAD, PRAY ABOUT EVERYTHING. TELL GOD WHAT YOU NEED, AND THANK HIM FOR ALL HE HAS DONE. PHILIPPIANS 4:6

It's not uncommon for me to subconsciously rank what I should bring to God in prayer. Parenting issue – important. Underlying anxiety – less important. I don't want to waste His time, and sometimes I have a hard time understanding just how much He cares.

Thank goodness that though we are made in God's image, He is not limited like us. He never runs out of time, and He never gets tired of hearing from us. He is infinitely faithful and loving. He sees all the details of our lives, and Jesus points out to us that God cares specifically for the birds and the flowers – yet I can think that my thoughts and cares are inconsequential.

Not only is that line of thinking untrue, it can keep me from closeness and connectedness with God. Though He already knows everything, when I bring all of my worries and fears and stressors before Him, I am allowing Him access into spaces that need His power and His healing. When I pray personal, detailed prayers, I am choosing to trust that God is a personal, detailed God. The more I trust this, the more solidified this becomes in my heart and mind.

Though God doesn't always do exactly what I think He should do with the prayers I pray, He listens. And He sees. And He is always working. So why would we not trust Him with every single detail?

Jesus told His followers to knock, seek, ask, and repeat. He says that His Father, God, loves to give good gifts to us, His children. So we should keep praying, persistently, about all that is in our heart and mind. A perfect Father loves to hear from His children, even as He always knows what's best, and God is always a perfect Father to us. Perhaps it is a new practice to bring every question or stressor or worry or celebration to God in prayer, but it's worth the effort. He cares for you, every detail. Don't leave anything out.

Prayer

God, remind my heart to pray instead of getting worried, to pray instead of getting angry, to pray instead of distracting myself. Thank You for caring intimately about me. I believe You can be trusted with all the details of my life and that You are working in me and around me as I pray.



A PERSON WITHOUT SELF-CONTROL IS LIKE A CITY WITH BROKEN-DOWN WALLS. PROVERBS 25:28

We are enough days into our prayer (and possible fast) that it might start to feel like it takes a little more work to stay the course. Perhaps it already has.

First, let me say that six days of praying and fasting is nothing to scoff at, so be encouraged. Also, know that with community and the help of God's Spirit empowering you, you can make it to Day 21. There is always opposition when we make a choice of our will to pursue God and prayer, so we should expect it but not allow it to stop us from what we have decided in our hearts for this season.

One major area where opposition can come on strong is our self-control; our self-discipline. We might feel the itch to give a little where we were determined to hold strong, and because God is gracious, we can always pick back up and keep going. Yet we see in all areas of life (which God graciously set up) that without self-control, we accomplish little. The above verse in Proverbs paints a picture of a city without walls, which essentially means that we have less defenses than we need, less boundaries and less guards set up. Without these things, without the discipline in our lives to keep us in check, we are unintentionally open to attacks on our heart, mind, and will. We might end up in a place we didn't mean to be, or in other words, we might not end up where we did want to be. For this time of prayer, you might want to be closer to God or more aware of His voice by the end of it, but these things can't just happen without the self-control it requires to show up every day.

In so many ways, self-control is like a muscle. The more we work it, the stronger it gets. However, our greatest self-control comes as a gift of God's Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). For we can never muster all we need on our own. We eventually run out, but this is no mystery to God. He has more than enough in Himself for us to tap into. He is ready and willing, as we ask Him to equip us with the self-control and self-discipline we need. So don't be disheartened if it feels hard. In these moments, turn your prayers toward God and ask Him for help. He can change hearts and minds, and He can impart strength when we are weak. With Him, we can keep from allowing temptation or discouragement to stop us. We can set our eyes on Him and stay steady, and we can get back on track when we've veered off. The first week is almost under your belt, and God is working.

Prayer

God, I ask for an extra amount of self-control. I pray over the rest of these 21 days, that You would strengthen me to stay the course that I intended when we started. Help me have the self-discipline I need to trust You in this season when opposition comes.



CREATE IN ME A CLEAN HEART, O GOD. RENEW A LOYAL SPIRIT WITHIN ME. DO NOT BANISH ME FROM YOUR PRESENCE, AND DON'T TAKE YOUR HOLY SPIRIT FROM ME. RESTORE TO ME THE JOY OF YOUR SALVATION, AND MAKE ME WILLING TO OBEY YOU. THEN I WILL TEACH YOUR WAYS TO REBELS, AND THEY WILL RETURN TO YOU. PSALM 51:10-13

Often, our prayer time can seem one-sided. We do the majority of the talking while God listens to what we have to say. As important as it is for us to learn to talk to God, it is just as important to cultivate a habit of listening to Him in return. If not, we may be missing out on His response to our prayers.

I've discovered that in the stillness and the silence, God's voice can become the loudest one in the room. Away from all the distractions and notifications it's much easier to decipher what He's trying to say or get me to notice. It just requires some effort on my part. Some days that means waking up before everyone else; other days it's going on a walk outside.

As this first week comes to a close, let's take some time just to hear what God may be saying to you. To get started, read Psalm 51:10-13 three times (that's right, three times). Pause between each reading and sit in silence for a minute. Notice what thoughts come to mind? What images are forming? What feelings are stirring inside your heart?

Write them down and then whisper the simple prayer below.

Prayer

God, thank You for Your generous love and compassion toward me. Thank You for Your eagerness to forgive me and for helping me find my way back to You.

WEEK 2

**PRAYER FOCUS:
RELATIONSHIPS AND SPHERE OF INFLUENCE**





It's possible that you have come across the word "intercession" at some point in your faith journey but have been unfamiliar with what it means for you, and it's possible that it's a new word and concept. Either way, simply put, the prayer of intercession is praying God's heart for His people (with the leading of the Holy Spirit). And today we'll dive just a little deeper to understand this type of prayer.

What is "intercession?"

In the Bible, we are able to see examples of what intercession looks like through Jesus (Matthew 26:36, Romans 8:34) as well as the priests and prophets (Jeremiah 27:18).

As believers, we are all called to intercede in prayer so that we can pray God's will for each other and for the world around us. For those who don't know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, it is possible that the only time their names are brought before the throne room of God is when we pray for them. Have you ever thought of how your coworkers or neighbors may have never had anyone pray for them before? As an intercessor we are compelled to share the love of Christ for them through our prayers.

Who is an "intercessor?"

Intercessors intercede for others, especially when they can't pray for themselves. We know that we are called to pray for our family, friends, and neighbors, bringing them, their needs, and their salvation before God. All of our prayers must be motivated and rooted in God's love for His people and in the way He sees them (Matthew 22:36-40).

How do I "intercede?"

First, begin by praying a prayer of consecration. Pray for a pure heart and pure hands. Be right before God and with man. Is there anyone you need to forgive? Pray cleansing over yourself by claiming the power in the blood of Jesus, and ask for a filling of the Holy Spirit. (Psalm 51:10, James 1:6, James 5:16, Acts 1:8).

As you pray, ask God to open your spiritual eyes and ears. Know that God's Word is your foundation. You can test the things that you sense, hear, or feel as you pray with the Word of God. Be encouraged that as you pray more often and more consistently, you will grow to discern the voice of God (John 10:27).

As you begin to pray for someone else's need and you start to sense the leading of the Holy Spirit, pray what God leads you to pray. Even if it is just one word or phrase, be completely led by the Spirit. It is not about the length of time you pray, but about what God is asking you to pray.

Also, have fun! Trust the Holy Spirit to be your guide, and ask Him to help you access His grace to pray for the people you love (Romans 8:26-28). Prayer is an ultimate act of love because you can't pray without it. Do not fear being wrong. When done through, in, and for love, there should be no fear, because perfect love casts out fear (1 John 4:18).

Prayer

Lord, thank You so much for the gift of prayer. Thank You for giving us a tool in which we can relate to You and express Your love to those around us. Continue to teach me how to pray that I may grow in love for You and Your people.



I TELL YOU, YOU CAN PRAY FOR ANYTHING, AND IF YOU BELIEVE THAT YOU'VE RECEIVED IT, IT WILL BE YOURS. BUT WHEN YOU ARE PRAYING, FIRST FORGIVE ANYONE YOU ARE HOLDING A GRUDGE AGAINST, SO THAT YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN WILL FORGIVE YOUR SINS, TOO. MARK 11:24-25

One of Satan's greatest strategies to keep us in bondage and to make our prayers ineffective is to trap us in unforgiveness. In Ephesians 6 we read that *"our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."* When we understand that our struggle is not against the people or situations that are hurting us, but that we have an enemy of our soul looking for an opportunity to take up space in our thoughts and lives (Ephesians 4:26-27), it helps us see our situations with a new perspective.

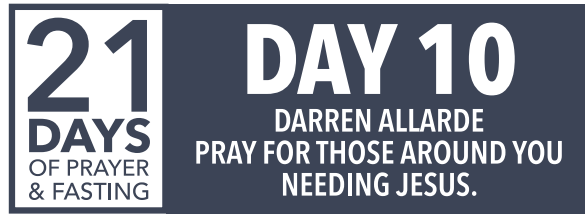
When unforgiveness takes root in our hearts, it gives the enemy an open door to trap us in bitterness, to steal our joy, and even to make us sick. Even worse than that, allowing unforgiveness to remain in our lives hinders our connection and intimacy with God. You see, God Himself saw His own perfect Son be tortured and killed in order for us to receive forgiveness of our sins even before we ever asked for it.

Just as we have received undeserved forgiveness, we should also release it (Ephesians 4:32). When we refuse to forgive, God withholds His forgiveness to us and our prayers are hindered (1 Peter 3:7).

Today as you pray, ask God to search your heart and reveal if there is any unforgiveness that you are holding on to. Then be still for a while to listen. Ask Him for the courage you need to forgive as things come to mind.

Prayer

God, show me if there is any unforgiveness in my heart and help me to release it to You! Thank You for forgiving me of all my sins so I can walk in freedom and intimacy with You!



BE WISE IN THE WAY YOU ACT TOWARD OUTSIDERS; MAKE THE MOST OF EVERY OPPORTUNITY. LET YOUR CONVERSATION BE ALWAYS FULL OF GRACE, SEASONED WITH SALT, SO THAT YOU MAY KNOW HOW TO ANSWER EVERYONE. COLOSSIANS 4:5-6

I used to feel uncomfortable inviting friends and co-workers to come to church with me. I was afraid they'd feel offended or that I wasn't respecting their boundaries and that a simple invitation may be stepping on their beliefs. I thought maybe people would judge me – that the moment I invited someone, people would learn that I am a follower of Jesus, and I'd immediately become anti-fill-in-the-blank in their minds.

These doubts and worries have driven some of my past invitations to fall flat. It was as if one foot wanted to extend an invitation but the other foot of mine was pointing the other direction, ready for the impending rejection.

I've realized that at the core of all of this was my insecurity around how other people may think of me, and it manifested into my invitation. I know that Jesus has transformed my life. I am excited when I think about what wisdom God has in store for me. I am excited to think about the vision He has for my family. I find confidence knowing that God is for me. I genuinely believed all of this, yet my invitation to others to experience what I experienced wasn't flowing through me. Inspiring.

There are people in your life who you know would benefit greatly from a relationship with Jesus. Their career pursuit would have more meaning. Perhaps their parenting or marriage would enter new heights. They could be freed from addictions. The pain or suffering they're dealing with could be lifted through Jesus' strength.

FOR I AM NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL, BECAUSE IT IS THE POWER OF GOD THAT BRINGS SALVATION TO EVERYONE WHO BELIEVES: FIRST TO THE JEW, THEN TO THE GENTILE. ROMANS 1:16

My invitations have a long way to go, and people still tell me no. However, I am no longer afraid of what people will think. I can now communicate with confidence, a sense of excitement, and authenticity that people can appreciate.

Prayer

God, please reveal people in my life who really need a relationship with Jesus. Show me who You are calling me to invite to church or a NewPointe Group. Show me ways to show them the empathy and love that Jesus inspires. I pray that the Holy Spirit helps make their hearts tender to His work. Finally, I pray for the courage and obedience to step into what You are asking me to do for those who don't know Jesus. I trust in You, God, that if I act, You'll take care of the rest.



I WILL GIVE HIM THE KEY TO THE HOUSE OF DAVID—THE HIGHEST POSITION IN THE ROYAL COURT. WHEN HE OPENS DOORS, NO ONE WILL BE ABLE TO CLOSE THEM; WHEN HE CLOSES DOORS, NO ONE WILL BE ABLE TO OPEN THEM. ISAIAH 22:22

FOR THE LORD GOD IS OUR SUN AND OUR SHIELD. HE GIVES US GRACE AND GLORY. THE LORD WILL WITHHOLD NO GOOD THING FROM THOSE WHO DO WHAT IS RIGHT. ISAIAH 84:11

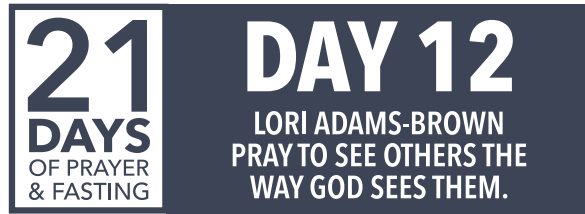
God is looking to use people in their current sphere of influence. He desires that we take our place as ministers of reconciliation to a lost and hurting world. What this means is that we have tremendous opportunities to share the good news of Jesus, pray for the broken, comfort the distressed, and so much more.

Through years of walking intimately with Jesus, I've learned that God's ways are far better and beyond anything we could imagine. There was a time in my life when God led me to an experience that had greater purpose outside of me. I was offered and hired for a new position by another department within the company I was working at. I had no intentions of switching job titles. To my amazement, I couldn't believe how smooth and effortless the whole process was. I would later see that the better opportunity had come my way because God had established a plan to use me as a witness to my new colleagues. If I had not cooperated with the plan that He had set in motion, the people in that department might not have encountered His presence and the love He has for them.

During that time, I was only months into my conversion in the faith. I began integrating a lifestyle of worship, obedience, and learning to walk by faith with Jesus. Inside of me grew a desire to be used by God in whatever manner I could. And as result, God's goodness overflowed into my workplace. This is the fruit of every believer when we wholeheartedly seek God's kingdom and His righteousness. His thoughts toward us are peaceful, with a future and hope. He desires to freely give us (and those around us) good gifts as a father does to his children. Turn your attention to God and ask the Lord to align your spirit to His. Pray that the Holy Spirit will lead you to places and people who need to see the light in you.

Prayer

Lord, teach me to seek You first before all things. Let my life bring honor to Your name. Help to see and trust that You've already prepared for me a pathway to share Your love with others. Please close all the wrong doors and open the right ones. And wherever You lead me, use me to draw others closer to Your love.



GOD CREATED HUMANITY IN GOD'S OWN IMAGE, IN THE DIVINE IMAGE GOD CREATED THEM, MALE AND FEMALE GOD CREATED THEM. GENESIS 1:27

THE LORD ISN'T SLOW TO KEEP HIS PROMISE, AS SOME THINK OF SLOWNESS, BUT HE IS PATIENT TOWARD YOU, NOT WANTING ANYONE TO PERISH BUT ALL TO CHANGE THEIR HEARTS AND LIVES. 2 PETER 3:9

BE TOLERANT WITH EACH OTHER AND, IF SOMEONE HAS A COMPLAINT AGAINST ANYONE, FORGIVE EACH OTHER. AS THE LORD FORGAVE YOU, SO ALSO FORGIVE EACH OTHER. COLOSSIANS 3:13

It can be difficult to see those who are different from us the way God sees them, as people made in His image. We do not naturally want to be tolerant, and we can be much less patient with individuals who are not like us, people we don't really understand. Therefore, when we are recipients of patience and tolerance and being treated equally, we should be reminded that we are all made in God's image, both male and female from all parts of the globe. God made all of humanity in His own image, each and every specific human, and when we really grasp the magnitude of that, it changes how we treat others – whether they are our own spouses, or kids, or especially those outside of our own family, the people that we may easily pass by each day.

Jesus taught us that we should go out of our way to show love to those who are unlike us when He walked on purpose through Samaria, a place that was avoided by pious religious people of His day. John 4 describes how He met a woman at the well there, and although she was probably shunned by both women and men because she had been abandoned by many previous husbands, Jesus talked to her and showed genuine care for her. In Jesus' day, women were considered property, and their worth was often tied to their ability to bear children. This woman was not deemed as worthy by her community, and yet Jesus elevated and called out her worth by speaking to her even though she was very different from Him. Culturally, speaking to her would have brought shame on Him because it would be considered beneath Him to speak to a woman, especially a woman as unloved as she was. Jesus modeled so well how to care much less about shame and much more about showing love to those unloved. Praying to see others the way God sees them is a potentially risky prayer to pray because once we begin to see others in this loving way, we may find ourselves stepping into the spaces of others' shame in order to communicate how much God loves them. Uncomfortable? Maybe. Worth it? Always.

Prayer

Jesus, teach me to love as You showed love to the Samaritan woman, and give me the courage You had that day to not care what others thought of You. Help me to care more about pleasing You and loving others than I do about my own status or reputation. I need You, Holy Spirit, to fill me so full that I operate out of Your promptings to show love to those who are different from me, and especially the marginalized and outcast around me. Help me to love as You love.



DO NOTHING OUT OF SELFISH AMBITION OR VAIN CONCEIT. RATHER, IN HUMILITY VALUE OTHERS ABOVE YOURSELVES, NOT LOOKING TO YOUR OWN INTERESTS BUT EACH OF YOU TO THE INTERESTS OF THE OTHERS. IN YOUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH ONE ANOTHER, HAVE THE SAME MINDSET AS CHRIST JESUS. PHILIPPIANS 2:3-5

SO HE GOT UP FROM THE TABLE, TOOK OFF HIS ROBE, WRAPPED A TOWEL AROUND HIS WAIST, AND POURED WATER INTO A BASIN. THEN HE BEGAN TO WASH THE DISCIPLES' FEET, DRYING THEM WITH THE TOWEL HE HAD AROUND HIM. JOHN 13: 4-5

In John 13, Jesus and the disciples – the men He chose as his 12 closest followers and friends – were getting together for a meal. Unexpectedly, Jesus gets down and begins to wash the disciples' feet. In our culture today, we do not usually practice washing our feet when we arrive at a home, but in Jesus' time, it was commonplace. They traveled through cities with only sandals on their feet, and it was the custom of the time to have the dust and dirt washed off. This job was not done by the host but by a servant. So when Jesus got down on His hands and knees and began wiping their dirty feet, His disciples refused Him at first, objecting to the fact that this great man would perform such a lowly task. Remember – their shoes were not Air Jordans; they were open-toe sandals, so the buildup of grime on their feet was surely something to behold.

The most surprising twist in all of this was that Jesus washed the feet of Judas, the man He knew was going to betray Him. If I had been in Jesus' place, and I knew Judas was about to sell my life to satisfy his greed, I would not be getting down on my hands and knees to wash his very filthy feet. But Jesus did it anyway. He washed Judas's feet along with the rest of them, showing us, in an intimately personal way, an example of a servant's heart, giving and loving others regardless of what they do to us or how unloveable they may be to us. Jesus demonstrates for us how to love them with a fierce, unconditional love and how to serve them in the same way that you would serve another person who treats you well.

As followers of Jesus, we are called to be like Him. But how do we do this? How do we love the unlovable? It often feels unreachable, to serve those who are hard to love. However, we can trust that Jesus will give us what we ask by praying. Love is a gift and a byproduct of His Spirit living within us. He loves to surprise us, and if you ask, He can surprise you with a contagious joy and the heart of a servant to an extent that you have never experienced before.

Prayer

Dear Lord, I thank You for giving me a desire to want to put others before myself, to serve and to love them with Your character and love. Give me hands to pour out to those who need it, ears to listen, and eyes to see the people around me as You created them to be.

JESUS RETURNED TO THE MOUNT OF OLIVES, BUT EARLY THE NEXT MORNING HE WAS BACK AGAIN AT THE TEMPLE. A CROWD SOON GATHERED, AND HE SAT DOWN AND TAUGHT THEM. AS HE WAS SPEAKING, THE TEACHERS OF RELIGIOUS LAW AND THE PHARISEES BROUGHT A WOMAN WHO HAD BEEN CAUGHT IN THE ACT OF ADULTERY. THEY PUT HER IN FRONT OF THE CROWD.

"TEACHER", THEY SAID TO JESUS, "THIS WOMAN WAS CAUGHT IN THE ACT OF ADULTERY. THE LAW OF MOSES SAYS TO STONE HER. WHAT DO YOU SAY?"

THEY WERE TRYING TO TRAP HIM INTO SAYING SOMETHING THEY COULD USE AGAINST HIM, BUT JESUS STOOPED DOWN AND WROTE IN THE DUST WITH HIS FINGER. THEY KEPT DEMANDING AN ANSWER, SO HE STOOD UP AGAIN AND SAID, "ALL RIGHT, BUT LET THE ONE WHO HAS NEVER SINNED THROW THE FIRST STONE!" THEN HE STOOPED DOWN AGAIN AND WROTE IN THE DUST.

WHEN THE ACCUSERS HEARD THIS, THEY SLIPPED AWAY ONE BY ONE, BEGINNING WITH THE OLDEST, UNTIL ONLY JESUS WAS LEFT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE CROWD WITH THE WOMAN. THEN JESUS STOOD UP AGAIN AND SAID TO THE WOMAN, "WHERE ARE YOUR ACCUSERS? DIDN'T EVEN ONE OF THEM CONDEMN YOU?"

"NO, LORD," SHE SAID.

AND JESUS SAID, "NEITHER DO I. GO AND SIN NO MORE." JOHN 8:1-11

HE POURED WATER INTO A BASIN. THEN HE BEGAN TO WASH THE DISCIPLES' FEET, DRYING THEM WITH THE TOWEL HE HAD AROUND HIM. JOHN 13:4-5

Have you ever felt like it would be so much easier to follow Jesus if it weren't for other people? Other people making you angry? Other people not doing what they are supposed to be doing? It can be so easy to blame others for all the reasons we fall short. Fortunately, God's grace is big enough for you and that difficult person across the hall. The way Jesus responded to those who came up short can teach us how we can respond to those around us too.

As week two comes to an end, let's spend some time listening and reflecting on Jesus's response to those around Him, specifically those who kept failing and falling. Read John 8:1-11 three times through, pausing in between each time. Imagine the scene in your mind.

Reflect on how Jesus responded. Reflect on how the woman responded. Write down any reflections that come to mind.

Prayer

Jesus, thank You for Your tenderness and mercy to those who fall short. Help me extend that same mercy to those around me.

WEEK 3

**PRAYER FOCUS:
THE CHURCH, CITY, AND WORLD**





LET ALL THAT I AM PRAISE THE LORD; WITH MY WHOLE HEART, I WILL PRAISE HIS HOLY NAME. LET ALL THAT I AM PRAISE THE LORD; MAY I NEVER FORGET THE GOOD THINGS HE DOES FOR ME. HE FORGIVES ALL MY SINS AND HEALS ALL MY DISEASES. HE REDEEMS ME FROM DEATH AND CROWNS ME WITH LOVE AND TENDER MERCIES. HE FILLS MY LIFE WITH GOOD THINGS. MY YOUTH IS RENEWED LIKE THE EAGLES! PSALM 103:1-5

THE LORD IS COMPASSIONATE AND MERCIFUL, SLOW TO GET ANGRY AND FILLED WITH UNFAILING LOVE. HE WILL NOT CONSTANTLY ACCUSE US NOR REMAIN ANGRY FOREVER. HE DOES NOT PUNISH US FOR ALL OUR SINS; HE DOES NOT DEAL HARSHLY WITH US, AS WE DESERVE. FOR HIS UNFAILING LOVE TOWARDS THOSE WHO FEAR HIM IS AS GREAT AS THE HEIGHT OF THE HEAVENS ABOVE THE EARTH. HE HAS REMOVED OUR SIN AS FAR AS THE EAST IS FROM THE WEST. THE LORD IS LIKE A FATHER TO HIS CHILDREN, TENDER AND COMPASSIONATE TO THOSE WHO FEAR HIM. FOR HE KNOWS HOW WEAK WE ARE, HE REMEMBERS WE ARE ONLY DUST. PSALM 103:8-14

THE LORD HAS MADE THE HEAVENS HIS THRONE; FROM THERE HE RULES OVER EVERYTHING. PRAISE THE LORD, YOU ANGELS, YOU MIGHTY ONES WHO CARRY OUT HIS PLANS, LISTENING FOR EACH OF HIS COMMANDS. YES, PRAISE THE LORD, YOU ARMIES OF ANGELS WHO SERVE HIM AND DO HIS WILL! PRAISE THE LORD, EVERYTHING HE HAS CREATED, EVERYTHING IN ALL HIS KINGDOM. LET ALL THAT I AM PRAISE THE LORD. PSALM 103:19-22

You and I were created to worship God (the whole world was created for this!). We innately have a deep desire within us to worship and to adore someone. Many people spend their lives in the pursuit of who/what that someone or something will be, but only the worship of God will satisfy that desire and longing. This chapter of Psalms shows us what it looks like to command our souls in the worship and adoration of God, and it gives us a pathway to engage our mind, heart, and spirit in the process.

David begins in verses 1-5 by naming what he will do: *"Let all that I am praise the Lord; with my whole heart, I will praise His holy name."* Here, David declares that he will praise the Lord with every part of his being, engaging both his heart and his mind. Next, David recognizes the human tendency to forget what God has done. Personally, I have found these verses to be so helpful. When I wake up in the morning, my temptation is to be filled with worry, anxiety, stress, and pressure. Yet when I remind my soul of all that God has done for me, it triggers deep gratitude and peace in my spirit. Try this, and watch God shape your heart in the process!

In verses 8-14, David now shifts to focusing on God's character. The practice of recalling the nature God is absolutely essential if we want to live a life of gratitude and fulfillment.

Today, remember that God is compassionate toward you.

He is merciful toward you.

He is slow to get angry with you.

He is filled with unfailing love for you.

He is not sitting in heaven accusing you today. In fact, His love toward you today is as high as the heavens are above the earth and He has completely removed your sin! That sin that you feel will always have a grip on you, and will have you blackmailed for life, has been covered today!

He is like a perfect father to you.

He is compassionate and merciful toward you today.

Let that truth sink in before we move on.

To finish this chapter off, from verses 19-22, David lifts his eyes once more to heaven, and engages his heart in the worship that is happening there. When we worship God, we join in with the angels as David did. The God who is tender and compassionate toward you today is the same God who is being worshiped right now in heaven by angels. God is above all things. He is contained and limited by nothing. He is not limited by your situation or your worry or fear today. He exists outside of the pressure of daily life, yet He willingly steps into the story with you.

Praise Him for being so big yet so intimate! Praise Him for being like a perfect Father to you today. Praise Him for removing every single one of your sins. Praise Him for being compassionate to you. Praise Him for loving you endlessly today! You and I were made to praise. We were made to adore Him.

Prayer

God, It's amazing to consider all that You have done. As I recall this today, I am overwhelmed with how much You love me. I am reminded of Your character and Your nature, and I want to give You the worship and adoration You deserve. Would You remind my heart and my mind today of this truth? I want to declare as David did, "Let all that I am praise the Lord. With my whole heart, I will praise His holy name."



AND WORK FOR THE PEACE AND PROSPERITY OF THE CITY WHERE I SENT YOU INTO EXILE. PRAY TO THE LORD FOR IT, FOR ITS WELFARE WILL DETERMINE YOUR WELFARE. JEREMIAH 29:7

THE HARVEST IS PLENTIFUL, BUT THE LABORERS ARE FEW; THEREFORE PRAY EARNESTLY TO THE LORD OF THE HARVEST TO SEND OUT LABORERS INTO HIS HARVEST. MATTHEW 9:37-38

God is a God of redemption and renewal. He demonstrates this over and over again by taking what the enemy meant for destruction for individuals and for the world at large and turning it into something for the good of many (Genesis 50:20).

The Bible also tells us that God has given us the privilege of helping to reconcile people to Himself and that He is literally making His appeal to the world through us (2 Corinthians 5:20).

What does this mean for you and me? It means that God has placed us in the city where we live, in the jobs where we work, in the families we love, and in the places we play to be His ambassadors (acting on His behalf).

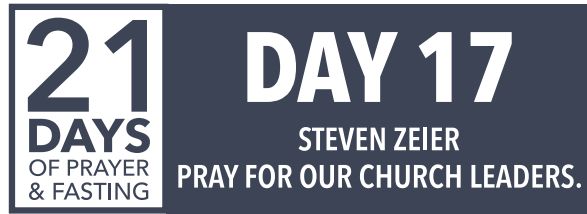
God wants us to partner with Him for our city! He is at work here and He is changing the story and He includes us! We say yes to this in a couple of ways:

One – we should pray earnestly that God would send more of His people out into our city who will represent Him and point people toward a relationship with Him.

Two – we must remember today and every day that God is making His appeal to the people around us, through us. He changes a city one person at a time. So ask Him in prayer to speak through you today. Ask Him to make you aware of who is in front of you who needs His love, and watch as our city is changed! Pray over the city leaders, over the commerce, over those in need. God cares about Northeast Ohio, and He has placed us here. We are privileged to bring this place before Him.

Prayer

God, would You make me aware of all the people around me today who need You and all of the ways our community needs You as a whole. Open my eyes to see what You want me to see, and empower me to be Your ambassador today where I live, work, and play!



OBEY YOUR SPIRITUAL LEADERS, AND DO WHAT THEY SAY. THEIR WORK IS TO WATCH OVER YOUR SOULS, AND THEY ARE ACCOUNTABLE TO GOD. GIVE THEM REASON TO DO THIS WITH JOY AND NOT WITH SORROW. THAT WOULD CERTAINLY NOT BE FOR YOUR BENEFIT. HEBREWS 13:17

The world we live in today is full of prestigious titles and busy schedules.

The Bible says that we all have different gifts according to the grace God has given us.

The church is made up of believers and is not just a building.

With these things in mind, we also know that God calls specific people into roles of leadership within the church. These leaders are responsible for shepherding and guiding the believers in their care. Yes, the pastoral position is one of leadership and authority, but this role does not come lightly and carries eternal joy and responsibility as well as the opportunity for earthly stress. We are thankful that our leaders sacrificially give of themselves in obedience to what God has called them to do. James 3 says that those who teach are held to a strict standard by God as a result of their position, and biblically, the responsibility of leading with strong character is on their shoulders, so we can clearly see the need to pray for them specifically. Additionally, there is a spiritual opposer who wants to do everything in his power to overwhelm and distract leaders from the good work that God has called them to do. We as the body of Christ have an opportunity to intercede on behalf of our leaders and cover them in prayer as they obey God by leading us. This position is not higher in ranking or value, but instead is a humble submission to serve God and His people.

Let's collectively be praying for our pastors and leaders – that they would have the strength to handle whatever comes their way with God's leading hand beside them, that their families would feel peace, and they would find rest in Jesus.

Prayer

God, we thank You for the men and women You have placed in authority and leadership at NewPointe, and we ask that You would guide them and protect them as they navigate all that You have placed before them. Please help us to continue to encourage them as we all walk toward You together.



FOR EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED. BUT HOW CAN THEY CALL ON HIM TO SAVE THEM UNLESS THEY BELIEVE IN HIM? AND HOW CAN THEY BELIEVE IN HIM IF THEY HAVE NEVER HEARD ABOUT HIM? AND HOW CAN THEY HEAR ABOUT HIM UNLESS SOMEONE TELLS THEM? AND HOW WILL ANYONE GO AND TELL THEM WITHOUT BEING SENT? THAT IS WHY THE SCRIPTURES SAY, "HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF MESSENGERS WHO BRING GOOD NEWS!" ROMANS 10:13-15

Missionaries are heroes of faith who shape and make history for generations to come. They carry the heart of God the Father as they serve boldly in places where darkness resides. They are empowered by love and bring a message of hope. In the book of Philippians, Paul, a missionary himself, expresses gratitude and joy for the financial aid the church of Philippi sent to him while in prison. His thankfulness wasn't because they had met his needs, for Paul had learned to be content with whatever he had. More accurately, he was celebrating their generosity and the harvest of blessings that awaited the Philippians because of their willingness to give. Their giving was a sacrifice that was pleasing to God.

We at NewPointe partner with local and international ministries that depend upon our benevolence to advance the work of God in their communities, just as Paul did. They also need our persistent prayers to break through every opposition that is at work to avert God's people from serving, and more often than not, serving as a missionary can be specifically challenging. Although we don't see all the grunt work and sacrifice that goes on behind the scenes like suffering, poverty, and the injustice of corrupt governments, we still have a role to play in supporting those who do. We can make a difference right where we are at. By praying, sending resources, materials, and manpower, we become part of the story that God is writing in other parts of the world. And we know that prayer is the most powerful thing we can do, as God knows what they need. Let us pray for their emotional and spiritual health, for the protection of their families from all harm. Also, let us ask the Lord to show us how we can pray or financially contribute to the movement that's already at work.

Prayer

God, thank You for our missionary partners who continue to advance Your work for Your kingdom. I pray for supernatural protection over them and their families as they risk each day to serve Your people. Fill my heart with generosity and urgency to continuously devote support for those who do this work on Your behalf.



**I AM IN THEM AND YOU ARE IN ME. MAY THEY EXPERIENCE SUCH PERFECT UNITY THAT THE WORLD WILL KNOW THAT YOU SENT ME AND THAT YOU LOVE THEM AS MUCH AS YOU LOVE ME.
JOHN 17:23**

Today, we are turning our attention toward the Church at large which extends around the world. We should be encouraged by the growth of the community of believers, but we should also lift them up in prayer. For our love for one another as the church of Jesus is an example to the world of how much He loves. Here are some specific focuses we can have as we pray for the Church:

PRAY FOR UNITY:

A key prayer that Jesus prayed for the church and all the believers before He ascended was that we as a church "would all be one." Unity pleases God (Psalm 133:1). So we must pray for unity in the local church and the church worldwide. We should pray against division or competition in the church or between churches (1 Corinthians 1:10), and we should pray that there would be great celebration, honor, patience, and forgiveness in our differences (Ephesians 4:11-13, Colossians 3:13-14).

PRAY FOR ENDURANCE:

More than asking God to deliver the church from persecution and hardship, we need to pray for the endurance and purity of the Church in the trials.

PRAY FOR BOLDNESS:

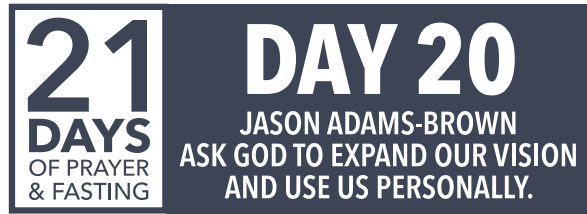
Pray for boldness as the Church proclaims the good news of Jesus, that it would fearlessly stand firm in the face of persecution, and that people and communities would speak boldly, as Paul says in Ephesians 3:19-20.

PRAY FOR PEACE:

The Hebrew word for peace is "shalom." Shalom is not just an emotional state of peace, but a wholeness of our entire being. Pray for wholeness – physical, spiritual, and emotional peace for the Church worldwide! Jesus is the Prince of Peace. 3 John 1:2 says, *"Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul."*

Prayer

Holy Spirit, please teach us how to pray for the Church. We ask for fresh peace and grace and unity for the local churches and the Church worldwide.



JESUS TRAVELED THROUGH ALL THE TOWNS AND VILLAGES OF THAT AREA, TEACHING IN THE SYNAGOGUES AND ANNOUNCING THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT THE KINGDOM. AND HE HEALED EVERY KIND OF DISEASE AND ILLNESS.

WHEN HE SAW THE CROWDS, HE HAD COMPASSION ON THEM BECAUSE THEY WERE CONFUSED AND HELPLESS, LIKE SHEEP WITHOUT A SHEPHERD.

**HE SAID TO HIS DISCIPLES, "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."
MATTHEW 9:35-38**

My wife Lori and I served as missionaries in Southeast Asia for 20 years. I realize that this may seem like something you could never imagine doing, but even for us there were seasons that our faith was so small. During one of these seasons, I started struggling to believe that God was at work around us. It seemed that every time we tried to share about Jesus with our Muslim friends and neighbors, no one was interested. I knew that Jesus had said in Matthew 9:37, *"The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few,"* but I just wasn't seeing this come to life around me.

At one point, we were invited to come to a church meeting in a home. In this meeting, there was a Muslim woman who had been invited by her co-worker. She was in the middle of a very difficult divorce. Her husband was physically and verbally abusive, and she had two children. Without the support of her husband, she was having a very hard time taking care of the family needs.

During our time there, Lori began to share the gospel with this woman in her own language. She opened up an app that had the Bible in her language, and Lori shared with her about Jesus. As Lori continued to tell her the great news of Jesus, this young woman began to weep. Lori was confused as to why she was crying, but later she found out that the week before, this young woman had had a dream in which she saw a white woman who could speak her language opening up a holy book, and a voice told her that she would explain to her the truth. So the whole time Lori was sharing with her, she was thinking – this was the woman from her dream!

Friends, God is constantly at work all around you. He is working in the lives of your friends, your co-workers, your neighbors, and even the cashier where you buy your groceries every day. I've wondered many times since what would have happened if Lori had not been faithful to share that day? What if she was afraid of how this woman would respond as a Muslim? What if that co-worker had not invited her to church and she had not been there that day? She never would have heard the great news that Jesus loved her and had died for her. There are so many ways that God wants to use you in the lives of people around you. Be encouraged, and ask God to show you how.

Prayer

Dear God, I want to join You in the work You are doing all around me. Help me to see where You are at work, and give me the strength and courage to love others as You love them. Help me to love them enough to share about the hope You have given all of us. Help me to invite them to join me at church and to follow You. Open my eyes to see each and every person around me as You see them. Thank You, Jesus, that You allow us and want us to join You in this work.



DAY 21

MANDY SANTOS
LISTENING

DON'T WORRY ABOUT ANYTHING; INSTEAD, PRAY ABOUT EVERYTHING. TELL GOD WHAT YOU NEED, AND THANK HIM FOR ALL HE HAS DONE. THEN YOU WILL EXPERIENCE GOD'S PEACE, WHICH EXCEEDS ANYTHING WE CAN UNDERSTAND. HIS PEACE WILL GUARD YOUR HEARTS AND MINDS AS YOU LIVE IN CHRIST JESUS.

AND NOW, DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS, ONE FINAL THING. FIX YOUR THOUGHTS ON WHAT IS TRUE, AND HONORABLE, AND RIGHT, AND PURE, AND LOVELY, AND ADMIRABLE. THINK ABOUT THINGS THAT ARE EXCELLENT AND WORTHY OF PRAISE. KEEP PUTTING INTO PRACTICE ALL YOU LEARNED AND RECEIVED FROM ME—EVERYTHING YOU HEARD FROM ME AND SAW ME DOING. THEN THE GOD OF PEACE WILL BE WITH YOU.

HOW I PRAISE THE LORD THAT YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT ME AGAIN. I KNOW YOU HAVE ALWAYS BEEN CONCERNED FOR ME, BUT YOU DIDN'T HAVE THE CHANCE TO HELP ME. NOT THAT I WAS EVER IN NEED, FOR I HAVE LEARNED HOW TO BE CONTENT WITH WHATEVER I HAVE. I KNOW HOW TO LIVE ON ALMOST NOTHING OR WITH EVERYTHING. I HAVE LEARNED THE SECRET OF LIVING IN EVERY SITUATION, WHETHER IT IS WITH A FULL STOMACH OR EMPTY, WITH PLENTY OR LITTLE. FOR I CAN DO EVERYTHING THROUGH CHRIST, WHO GIVES ME STRENGTH.

PHILIPPIANS 4:6-13

As you've journeyed through these 21 days, we hope you've experienced God in new ways. Maybe you've heard Him speak new things, or maybe He's given you new dreams for this year. Whatever it is, remember to cling to Him. Allow His truth to fill your mind and His grace to fill your heart, and don't leave this season without allowing the change to take root inside of you.

As our time comes to a close, let's spend this last day reflecting on God's ability to sustain us no matter what circumstances we face.

Read Philippians 4:6-13 three times, pausing in between each. Is there a word or phrase that stands out to you? Is there an image that comes to your mind? How might God be trying to speak to you?

You did it!

You've made it through 21 days of prayer & fasting! God is always faithful when we set aside time to pray and dedicate extra focus on Him and His Word. Even if we are not faithful, God is faithful.

We invite you to remember some of the specific prayers you prayed at the beginning of these three weeks. Have you seen God shift something inside of you or in your world? Thank Him for this! Be encouraged to keep praying, for it is not about what we can see but about who God is. He is good, and He can be trusted with our prayers, our fears, our desires, and our struggles.

We are believing that 2021 will be a great year for you and your family and for our church! Thanks for joining us!

