

LENT

TEACH US TO PRAY

*A Citizens Church
Devotional Guide*

Citizens Church

LENT: TEACH US TO PRAY

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*“To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible
than to be alive without breathing.”*

Martin Luther

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THE LORD'S PRAYER

And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. Pray then like this:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

Matthew 6:5-13

“Lent is a time for discipline, for confession, for honesty, not because God is mean or fault-finding or finger-pointing but because he wants us to know the joy of being cleaned out, ready for all the good things he now has in store.”

NT Wright

INTRODUCTION

Following Jesus is a way of life: a means by which we learn to be with Jesus, become like Jesus, and then do what Jesus did.

This way of life doesn't come naturally, but it is possible. This process is known as spiritual formation but can go by many names depending on your church background - such as the process of sanctification or the spiritual disciplines.

In addition to practicing personal spiritual formation for thousands of years, the church has also integrated corporate spiritual formation tools and seasons to remind us that we are not alone in our faith; we are a people who follow Jesus together.

One such season in which we can follow Jesus together is the season of Lent.

The purpose of Lent is to prepare our hearts as the people of God to remember and celebrate Jesus' death and resurrection on Good Friday and Easter. It is a time for Christians to identify with the sufferings of our Savior, to remember His sacrifice for us, and to lament our sin, brokenness, and temporality before a holy God.

Historically, the church has done this through observing various special days, communal practices of fasting, and unceasing prayer, all pointing back to the life of Christ.

For example, the 40-day length of Lent points back to Jesus' fasting and testing in the wilderness for 40 days. Holy Week (the final week of Lent) remembers Jesus' final week of ministry before His crucifixion and resurrection.

PRAYER

Our goal for this season and this guide is to give ourselves as individuals and as a community to the practice of prayer.

Specifically, we will be walking through the Lord's Prayer found in Matthew 6. Each week we will walk through a specific line of the Lord's prayer and how we can practice Jesus' example for how to pray.

Each weekly prayer practice has a different focus, but each day, we want to invite you to "pray without ceasing" by setting aside three times to pray.

We are recommending the following format:

Morning Prayer (8AM)

Praying through the Lord's Prayer from Matthew 6, using each day's devotional content as a guide for your time of prayer.

Midday Prayer (12PM)

Make a list of 5-10 people you personally know who are not Christians and commit to praying for them over the

next 40 days, that they would come to know Christ and be changed by the gospel.

Evening Prayer (8PM)

At the end of each day, take time to thank God for all He did within the day. Nothing is too small or too great for you to praise and thank Him for.

The goal of this is not to be formulaic, but rather to give you a framework to cultivate a life of abiding with Christ in prayer each day.

There are different posture prayers we will try, and we encourage you to try them as well. Some practices you will see over the course of this guide are breath prayers, praying out loud, writing in a journal, even trying different physical postures such as standing, sitting, or kneeling. We also encourage you to pray while walking, driving, at home or out in public.

In all of this, our hope is that we would become a church that prays.

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

FASTING

Many church traditions take the 40 days of Lent to fast from food and non-water drinks to focus on God. Some will fast on specific days of the week or at specific times during the season.

We encourage you to pray and discuss with your community what it could look like to fast during Lent to make room to seek God as we prepare for the death and resurrection of our Savior, Jesus.

Download our Practice Guide for Fasting and Feasting at <https://www.citizenscharlotte.com/fasting-feasting> to learn more.

HOLY DAYS WITHIN LENT

Lastly, during this season we will be commemorating specific days as marker points in our history with God.

Those days include:

Ash Wednesday – A chance to remember our sin and temporality together before God.

Palm Sunday – A celebration of Christ’s triumphant entry into Jerusalem.

Maundy Thursday – A remembering of the Lord’s Supper as first instituted by Christ.

Good Friday – A time for reflection on the nature of our sin and the crucifixion of our Savior.

Easter Sunday – A celebration of the resurrection of Christ!

For details about these occasions, visit [citizenscharlotte.com/events](https://www.citizenscharlotte.com/events)

DEVOTIONAL

*For more resources on spiritual formation and spiritual practices, visit
rhythmsandformation.com.*

*“Prayer is a moment of incarnation – God with us.
God involved in the details of my life.”*

Paul Miller

WEEK ONE – “OUR FATHER”

Prayers of Communion

DAY ONE

“Our Father in heaven...”

Matthew 6:9a

Referring to God as father may not seem strange to us today, but when Jesus first called God “Father”, it made a statement. While Father was not a completely uncommon name for God at the time, those who heard Jesus say it likely gasped. Prayers in the temple were full of extreme reverence (which we will discuss more about in Week 2 of this guide). The traditions passed down from generation to generation saw God as holy and powerful, but not always personal and knowable. Jesus spoke of Him with familiarity. There is a big difference between knowing about God and His character, and intimately knowing Him for yourself.

Father implies a close relationship. Jesus telling us to call God, “our Father,” means we can have communion with Him. Communion is the sharing or exchanging of intimate thoughts and feelings. Your heavenly Father desires for you to know Him and to trust Him with your thoughts and feelings.

Prayer is the avenue by which we get to pursue communion with God.

When we create space in our days to talk to God, we are building a deeper relationship with Him. The more we know Him and the more we allow Him to know us, the more trust and intimacy we will have.

The same way we make plans with people we care about to catch up on life and share our desires with one another, is the same way we can grow closer to God. Though we know He is always with us, prayer is an opportunity to live into that presence in an experiential way.

So today, invite a deep awareness of His presence into where you are sitting. Ask Him to show you what it looks like to commune with Him throughout your day today.

BREATH PRAYER

One way we can practice the presence of God is through breath prayers. Here is a step-by-step guide for this practice:

Sit with both feet on the ground.

Take a deep breath in, breathing in the grace of God.

Breathe out the worries of your mind.

You can pray simple phrases like, “Here I am, Lord,” or “Lord, have mercy.”

MORNING PRAYER FROM SCRIPTURE

MIDDAY PRAYER FOR THE LOST

EVENING PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

DAY TWO

Read Genesis 3

God designed us to have perfect, unbroken communion with Him. In His original creation, we had it. But in Genesis 3 it was broken. When the serpent tempted Adam and Eve to eat the fruit, he called God's character into question. And they fell for the lie that God wasn't who He appeared to be. They believed the lie, they sinned, and mankind was separated from God.

Because of sin, God can often feel unapproachable and distant. While we no longer must go through priests like the ancient Israelites to talk to Him, our sin can make us want to hide like Adam and Eve.

Making God seem far away, not someone we can intimately know. It's easy for us to question God when we don't really know Him. But something in us longs to know Him more – and that longing isn't something that goes away. That's why in our broken and imperfect world, we constantly must reorient our hearts back to communion with God.

The best practice to draw closer to God is through prayer.

The good news is that God made a way for us to know Him and be close to Him again by sending His Son, Jesus. Through faith in Christ, we have access to communion with God. Not through sacrifices and priests, but through prayer and God's word.

BREATH PRAYER

One way we can practice the presence of God is through breath prayers. Here is a step-by-step guide for this practice:

Sit with both feet on the ground.

Take a deep breath in, breathing in the grace of God.

Breathe out the worries of your mind.

Ask God to remind you of His trustworthy character, His kind nature and His deep love for you. Ask Him to remind you that through Christ you can approach His throne of grace with confidence.

MORNING PRAYER FROM SCRIPTURE

MIDDAY PRAYER FOR THE LOST

EVENING PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

DAY THREE

Read Psalm 103

The Bible is constantly calling us to “remember”. Over and over again, we are told to remember who God is and who we are because of Him.

Which could be why Jesus started off by praying, “our Father,” to remind us Who it is we are talking to. Because if we are honest, we quickly forget.

Some days life is so busy it’s hard to recall what we ate for breakfast that morning, let alone what we read in our Bibles last week. It becomes increasingly challenging when unwelcomed circumstances take over our attention and emotions. In those moments we quickly think God is not fair, or that He is far away, or worse, that He does not care.

But remembering God is our Father helps us not forget He is with us.

In whatever you are facing today, He is near. He cares deeply. Psalm 103 reminds us that forgives, heals, and redeems. He gives us steadfast love and mercy. He satisfies us with good things and renews us. He is a good and faithful Father who loves you, His child.

BREATH PRAYER

For your breath prayers today, pick a few lines from Psalm 103 to remember and repeat.

Sit with both feet on the ground.

Take a deep breath in, breathing in the grace of God and reciting the first half of a verse.

Breathe out the worries of your mind and recite the second half of the verse.

Ask God to help you remember Him as Father and for the Holy Spirit to remind you of this throughout your day.

MORNING PRAYER FROM SCRIPTURE

MIDDAY PRAYER FOR THE LOST

EVENING PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

DAY FOUR

Read Psalm 103

Yesterday, we talked about why we need to remember who God is as our Father. Today, we will talk about why we need to remember ourselves as His children. In ancient Jewish culture, you were known by your father. For better or for worse, we are often known by our family too. You are so-and-so's son or so-and-so's sister. And that comes with certain implications, privileges, and hardships.

The same is true as a child of God. But instead of the baggage and dysfunction that can sometimes come with our earthly families, we get the benefits and privileges that come with being part of the family of God. We are His children and heirs to His kingdom. That means He longs to bless us with the benefits listed in Psalm 103. Not because we have earned it, but simply because we are His.

Remembering God is our Father helps us not forget we are fully loved by Him.

That love is not conditional, it is given in Christ. And we forget that easily. Like Adam and Eve, we hide in our shame, and He comes to seek us out. To remind us we are loved by Love Himself. The untainted love of a father has a great impact on a child.

When a father speaks life, encouragement, identity, and truth over their child, it changes everything about the way a child lives.

Which is why it is crucial to remember God is our Father and we are His kids.

BREATH PRAYER

For your breath prayers today, pick a few lines from Psalm 103 to remember and repeat.

Sit with both feet on the ground.

Take a deep breath in, breathing in the grace of God and reciting the first half of a verse.

Breathe out the worries of your mind and recite the second half of the verse.

Ask God to help you remember Him as Father and for the Holy Spirit to remind you of this throughout your day.

MORNING PRAYER FROM SCRIPTURE

MIDDAY PRAYER FOR THE LOST

EVENING PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

DAY FIVE

“See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.”

1 John 3:1-2

In Western culture, we often look at our relationship with God as personal and individual. We have quiet times alone in the morning. We listen to sermons in our headphones and read books. But we miss something crucial in our hyper-individualistic culture: we miss community.

In Christ, we become the family of God. This means God is more than just “my Father”, it means He is “our Father.” All those in Christ become our brothers and sisters. We are no longer just a child of God; we are the family of God. A family that is designed to be united by love for each other and for God.

The problem with being part of a family with other humans is, well, we are human. In our sin and brokenness, we can hurt one another, which makes the idea of family feel difficult and complicated. The enemy longs to keep us divided by our differences, rather than united by God’s unfailing love. But when we live as beloved children of God, we are better able to extend that love to one another.

Remembering God as our Father reminds us we are a family.

When we live out our identity as the family of God, it is appealing to others. Those who are lost and don't know God can see there is something different when a group of people who have little in common come together around their identity as children of God. This kind of radical, family love is the way God wants to usher in His kingdom. Together, we are all co-heirs with Christ in this kingdom that never ends. (Romans 8:17)

BREATH PRAYER

Today, set a few moments aside to pray breath prayers. Again, sit with both feet on the ground. Take a deep breath in, breathing in the grace of God. Breathe out the worries of your mind. Ask God to call brothers and sisters in Christ to your mind to pray for today.

Sit with both feet on the ground.

Take a deep breath in, breathing in the grace of God.

Breathe out the worries of your mind.

Ask God to call brothers and sisters in Christ to your mind to pray for today.

MORNING PRAYER FROM SCRIPTURE

MIDDAY PRAYER FOR THE LOST

EVENING PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

WEEKEND REFLECTION

The Psalms give us language that reminds us of who God is and who we are in Him. These words have been used for generations to praise God.

Pick a Psalm to read. Try reading it out loud.

Pay attention to what characteristics of God stick out to you and let that lead you into your own time of prayer.

“Adoration is the spontaneous yearning of the heart to worship, honor, magnify, and bless God. We ask nothing but to cherish him. We seek nothing but his exaltation. We focus on nothing but his goodness.”

Richard Foster

WEEK TWO – “HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME”

Prayers of Adoration

DAY ONE

“Hallowed be Your Name...”

Matthew 6:9b

The Greek word “hallowed,” means “to make or declare as holy”. When Jesus started His prayer off with “hallowed be your name”, He wanted God’s name to be recognized as holy. Throughout the Old Testament, “holy” is the main title for God. When we say, “hallowed be your name” we are saying, “may your name be holy”. It’s adoring God.

Why does this matter? It’s expressing God’s unique, one-of-a-kind status as Creator. It’s reminding ourselves that He is not only our Father, but The One Holy God. When we call Him as He is, it reminds us of who we are talking to. He is not like us. He is great.

We don’t acknowledge His holiness to make ourselves feel bad, we adore Him in His holiness because it helps us see Him for who He is to us and see ourselves rightly in response.

This is adoration. Expressing our love and praise to God who is worthy. But adoration is not natural to us, in fact it’s difficult for our rebellious hearts to respond in praise and worship. We don’t often run to praising God first thing in the morning, or in the troubles and trials of our days.

Which is exactly why we need to constantly train our hearts to adore Him.

PRAYERS OF ADORATION

Today, we'll practice adoration. Starting with God's holiness, craft a prayer of praise to God. Tell Him why He is worthy of all the glory, honor, power, and praise.

Write down what makes Him holy or reflects His holiness.

Let your heart be reminded of what His holiness means for your life.

MORNING PRAYER FROM SCRIPTURE

MIDDAY PRAYER FOR THE LOST

EVENING PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

DAY TWO

“About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.”

Acts 16:25

Yesterday we talked about how adoration is not natural to us; it’s something we must work to do. Like many things in life, it takes discipline to praise God. There will be days where we don’t feel like it. There will be days we don’t want to. But faith is believing God is still good, even in the midst of life not looking the way we want it to.

When we actively choose to adore God, it doesn’t always change our circumstances, but it changes us.

In Acts 16, Paul and Silas were in prison and yet still chose to sing praises to God. Even when they were suffering for their faith, they still hallowed God’s name. The guards in the prison were so amazed, they put their faith in Jesus too! Our adoration can become a testimony of God’s goodness to others.

Whatever you are facing today, God is with you. He has not left you. He is working, even when we don’t see or feel it. His character never changes, and because of that we still have reasons to praise Him.

PRAYERS OF ADORATION

As you practice training your heart to adore God today, start by praising Him for His unchanging character.

Remind yourself that He remains the same, even if everything around you is changing.

Ask Him to help you overcome your doubts. Let your adoration be a testimony to those who don't know Jesus.

MORNING PRAYER FROM SCRIPTURE

MIDDAY PRAYER FOR THE LOST

EVENING PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

DAY THREE

Read Psalm 34

The Psalms are full of prayers of adoration to the Lord. When David wrote Psalm 34, he was running for his life and hiding in a cave from Saul. Not exactly the circumstances for finding reasons to praise God.

But Psalm 34 lists out so many reasons to praise the Lord that have nothing to do with our circumstances. He delivers us from fears, He keeps us from shame, He saves us from our troubles, He blesses us, He is our refuge, and the list goes on.

In God, we lack no good thing (Psalm 34:10). Prayers of adoration remind us that God is to be trusted, even when we feel something is lacking from our lives.

These are the reasons we continue to praise Him. His worthiness of our praise is not dependent on our perspective, but on His promises.

PRAYERS OF ADORATION

Use Psalm 34 as your guide for a prayer of adoration today. Pray it out loud. Pray it over your circumstances. List out the ways God has blessed you according to the passage.

MORNING PRAYER FROM SCRIPTURE

MIDDAY PRAYER FOR THE LOST

EVENING PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

DAY FOUR

Read Psalm 107:1-9

One of the ways we adore God is through gratitude or thanking God for all He has done. Like the psalmist praises God with thanksgiving in Psalm 107, so can we thank the Lord for all He has done.

This week we have offered prayers of adoration for who God is, and today we shift to offering Him praise for what He has done. We can thank Him for the ways He has blessed us individually, and corporately as a church.

Maybe today you find it difficult to find things to be grateful for. You may be facing tragedy, questioning your future, and wondering how to find God's blessings in the middle of something so very disappointing.

There is good news: God has given us everything we need in Jesus.

Regardless of what your life looks like, His plan to redeem it all has already been set in motion. Jesus died and rose again so that we would spend eternity with God. So that there would be a day where there is no more weeping, death or mourning. (Revelation 21:4)

That gives us something to be grateful for every day.

PRAYERS OF ADORATION

Take a few moments to offer prayers of gratitude to God. Like we have been doing each evening, offer Him thanksgiving to begin your day. Pay attention to how it changes your perspective throughout the day.

MORNING PRAYER FROM SCRIPTURE

MIDDAY PRAYER FOR THE LOST

EVENING PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

DAY FIVE

Read Psalm 34

What does it mean to constantly praise God? How do we become a community of people who are known for their gratitude?

We bless the Lord. Not just on the good days, but the hard ones. Not just at church on Sunday, but every day of the week. Not just when we are alone with God, but when we are with others.

This is not for God's benefit, it's for ours. When we remember how good God is, it helps us not forget how loved we are. Adoration flows from a place of being fully known and loved.

How would our church, our workplaces, and our city look different if we were a people marked by praise? What if we proclaimed God's name was truly deserving to be hallowed? To be called holy?

We would be different. The people around us would be different. Adoration is not just praising God; it's fighting back the lies of the enemy and giving people a taste of God's kingdom.

PRAYERS OF ADORATION

Spend time adoring God this morning. Tell Him everything He is to you. Thank Him for all He has done for you. Ask God for how you can use adoration as a way to show others His holiness.

MORNING PRAYER FROM SCRIPTURE

MIDDAY PRAYER FOR THE LOST

EVENING PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

WEEKEND REFLECTION

One of the ways we can adore God is through musical worship. When we sing songs of adoration and praise back to him, it not only honors Him, but it helps us remember His goodness and holiness.

Worship helps our hearts and minds align on who God is.

Find some of your favorite worship songs and make a playlist. Try a variety of old hymns, current favorites, and some you don't know yet.

Spend time at home or in your car singing the words to God. Gather with your family or community group and worship together.

Let the truth of the words as you sing be your offering of gratitude to God.

“If we can’t say “thy will be done” from the bottom of our hearts, we will never know any peace. We will feel compelled to try to control people and control our environment and make things the way we believe they ought to be.”

Tim Keller

**WEEK THREE – “YOUR KINGDOM
COME, YOUR WILL BE DONE”**

Prayers of Lament

DAY ONE

Read Psalm 13

What is lament? Lament is a type of prayer that draws us closer to God when we are suffering or in pain. It's an acknowledgement of "it's not supposed to be this way." Because of sin, the world is not operating as God originally intended it to, and that causes so much of the hurt we experience and witness daily.

Often when we are overwhelmed with sorrow, grief, or anguish, turning to God in prayer isn't our first response. It can feel tiring to try at best, hopeless at worst. Praying, "Your kingdom come, your will be done" is much harder to do when God's kingdom feels far away and His will doesn't seem good at this moment.

But lament is actually a gift. It's an invitation to be close to God. He is not far from our pain, He is near. And He is coming soon. It reminds us that we get to be in a relationship with Him. And lament reminds us to long for a better Kingdom.

PRAYERS OF LAMENT

This week, we're going to have the same prompt for prayers of lament each day. We would encourage you to create appropriate space and quiet to walk through these steps each morning.

Invite God to be near to you in your pain. He is the One who can answer your prayers and calm your soul. Trust Him.

Then, describe your pain to God. Be honest with Him about what you are seeing and what you are feeling.

Depend on Him. Ask Him for help, for peace, for comfort, to answer you. Seek Him to supply all your needs, even as you wait for resolutions.

Finally, dwell on His character and faithfulness. Each Psalm you read this week will show a different example of who God is and how He is faithful to you.

MORNING PRAYER FROM SCRIPTURE

MIDDAY PRAYER FOR THE LOST

EVENING PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

DAY TWO

Read Psalm 3

As we read through our next Psalm today, think about a relationship you may need to lament.

Is there someone you have struggled to forgive? Has someone intentionally or unintentionally broken your trust? Do you have a family member who is far from God? Or one you don't communicate with?

Spend some time walking through the steps of lament for whatever relationship the Holy Spirit puts on your heart. Ask God to restore your vision for what His Kingdom coming means for this relationship.

PRAYERS OF LAMENT

This week, we're going to have the same prompt for prayers of lament each day. We would encourage you to create appropriate space and quiet to walk through these steps each morning.

Invite God to be near to you in your pain.

Then, describe your pain to God.

Depend on Him.

Dwell on His character and faithfulness.

MORNING PRAYER FROM SCRIPTURE

MIDDAY PRAYER FOR THE LOST

EVENING PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

DAY THREE

Read Psalm 22

Is there an area of your life that feels distant from God? Maybe it's an unanswered prayer causing you to question if He really is good. A person, season, or dream that you are grieving. Or a sin struggle you can't seem to overcome.

Take some time today to ask the Holy Spirit what you need to lament and invite the Lord's presence to be tangible as you do.

PRAYERS OF LAMENT

Invite God to be near to you in your pain.

Then, describe your pain to God.

Depend on Him.

Dwell on His character and faithfulness.

MORNING PRAYER FROM SCRIPTURE

MIDDAY PRAYER FOR THE LOST

EVENING PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

DAY FOUR

Read Psalm 42

Part of praying for God's kingdom to come and His will to be done is feeling the weight of our world's brokenness. As we pray Jesus' words from Matthew 6, let's ask the Holy Spirit to make our hearts break for what breaks God's heart. Let's lament the things in the world that are not as they should be.

PRAYERS OF LAMENT

Invite God to be near to you in your pain.

Then, describe your pain to God.

Depend on Him.

Dwell on His character and faithfulness.

MORNING PRAYER FROM SCRIPTURE

MIDDAY PRAYER FOR THE LOST

EVENING PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

DAY FIVE

Read Psalm 44

When Jesus was on the cross, He also lamented:

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying,

“Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?”

that is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

Matthew 27:46

If Jesus, who is the son of God also lamented in His pain, how much more do we need to?

But here’s the good news about lament: it won’t last forever. Because of the empty tomb, we have hope that God’s kingdom is coming and His will is being worked out. Jesus died for our sins and rose again so that one day, our laments would cease (Revelation 21:4). When we bring our sorrows and pain to God, we can trust that He is going to put an end to them for good.

PRAYERS OF LAMENT

Invite God to be near to you in your pain.

Then, describe your pain to God.

Depend on Him.

Dwell on His character and faithfulness.

MORNING PRAYER FROM SCRIPTURE

MIDDAY PRAYER FOR THE LOST

EVENING PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

WEEKEND REFLECTION

Spend some time reflecting on the past week of lamenting.

How have you experienced God's comfort through this practice?

What do you feel like you know about God now that you didn't at the beginning of the week?

How would you describe your sense of hopefulness in God and His promises after this week?

“It is not enough to begin to pray, nor to pray aright; nor is it enough to continue for a time to pray; but we must patiently, believingly, continue in prayer until we obtain an answer; and further we have not only to continue in prayer unto the end, but we have also to believe that God does hear us, and will answer our prayers. Most frequently we fail in not continuing in prayer until the blessing is obtained, and in not expecting the blessing.”

George Müller

**WEEK FOUR – “GIVE US THIS DAY
OUR DAILY BREAD”**

Prayers of Petition + Intercession

DAY ONE

“In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.”

John 16:23-24

This week, we’re taking time to practice prayers of petition and prayers of intercession. Prayers of petition can often be referred to as prayers of “supplication,” which by definition means, “asking or begging for something earnestly or humbly.”

This type of prayer is probably the one we are most familiar with. We are asking God for something. It can be something simple, whether it’s to bless our food, or to help us find a parking spot. Or it can be something as heavy as asking for a family member to become a Christian or for the healing of a loved one from cancer.

Often though, we are afraid to ask God. Maybe it’s because we’re scared of the silence, or that He won’t come through. Or maybe it’s simply because life gets busy and we forget.

But our God longs for us to ask. In today’s passage, Jesus Himself tells us to ask whatever we want in His name. While that doesn’t mean He will answer how we want Him to every single time (and we will address that more this week), we are invited to bring our all-powerful God our questions, fears, needs, and desires.

PRAYERS OF PETITION + INTERCESSION

Today, we will start with making some prayer cards. Find two index cards or pieces of paper.

On one, write out a list of all your longings and desires that God has not given you yet.

On the second one, write out a list of the people you know who are not Christians. This can be the same person/people you have prayed for during your midday prayer time.

Commit to praying through both cards daily this week.

During your morning prayer, ask God to “give you your daily bread” and ask Him for the things on your first card.

During midday prayer, pull out your second card and ask God to soften the hearts of those on your list to come to know Him. Ask Him for opportunities to share the gospel with them as well this week.

MORNING PRAYER FROM SCRIPTURE

MIDDAY PRAYER FOR THE LOST

EVENING PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

DAY TWO

“And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith.”

Matthew 21:22

If petition is asking God for what you want, then what is intercession? Intercession is asking on behalf of another person. When we petition, we are asking God for our daily bread and to supply what we want/need. Intercession is intervening for another by asking God to move for them.

But intercession is hard. We start out with all the intentions to pray things through. We commit. Then, life gets in the way. When we don't see immediate answers, we grow tired, or we simply forget and quit.

Intercession is a long process. It's not saying you'll pray for someone when they ask and then forgetting before you've even left the conversation. It's surrendering to God's will and continuing to ask Him to move anyway.

What would it look like if we took Jesus up on His invitation to pray for others, then we actually prayed?

What if God gave you everything you prayed for last week, how would your life be different? What would you have prayed for?

Let's make the answer “everything would look different.”

PRAYERS OF PETITION + INTERCESSION

As you continue praying through your prayer cards, find a place that you can claim as your prayer spot. It can be your favorite chair by the window, a closet where you can close the door, or maybe even a bench outside your office building.

Make it a priority each day this week to pray through your cards at your spot.

MORNING PRAYER FROM SCRIPTURE

MIDDAY PRAYER FOR THE LOST

EVENING PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

DAY THREE

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.”

Matthew 7:7

What are you asking God for? Do you believe he is listening? Or do you think he grows tired of hearing you?

Ask, seek, knock. Those three words make all the difference in our prayer life. They aren't just one-time actions. The original language actually better translates to, “keep asking, keep seeking, keep knocking.”

Jesus is telling us that God does not grow tired of our prayers. Asking builds our relationship with God and empowers us to pray more boldly.

How much joy comes when you see a prayer answered for yourself or someone? The feeling of knowing that you prayed for that specific thing and God moved is unlike anything else. He heard you and you can have confidence in asking.

PRAYERS OF PETITION + INTERCESSION

Set a time to pray through your cards in your spot today. Write down some prayers you've seen God answer in the last month, or even revisit requests in earlier parts of this guide to see how God has answered.

How do you feel knowing you were part of praying for that person or situation? Ask, then seek, then knock. And keep doing it again and again.

MORNING PRAYER FROM SCRIPTURE

MIDDAY PRAYER FOR THE LOST

EVENING PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

DAY FOUR

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.”

Matthew 7:7-8

Yesterday we talked about how these verses charge us to keep asking, keep seeking and keep knocking when it comes to petitions and intercession.

But what happens when our prayers aren't answered? When we are met with what feels like silence? Not just for days, but for months and years.

We get a choice. To trust God or to give up. It's part of the mystery of faith. Being certain of what we hope for and trusting in the unseen (Hebrews 11:1). In the middle of when God seems silent and unbothered by your pain, that gets harder to do.

But the good news is that he doesn't leave us there. Jesus is proof that hope is always on the way. Even in grief, confusion and heartache, Jesus enters in. And he's not finished yet.

PRAYERS OF PETITION + INTERCESSION

As you enter your time of prayer today, be honest with God about how you feel about your yet-to-be-answered prayers. Ask Him to reveal more of His heart towards you as you continue to pray. Ask Him to change your heart to be more aligned with His will.

MORNING PRAYER FROM SCRIPTURE

MIDDAY PRAYER FOR THE LOST

EVENING PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

DAY FIVE

“But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you, delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.”

Acts 26:16-18

A life of prayer is slow. God’s timing is not our timing. It looks like dealing with the pains of unanswered prayers over the long haul. Sometimes for a lifetime. But you continue to push through, because what’s birthed on the other side is far better than the pain of right now.

But we like quick fixes, Amazon Prime one-day deliveries, and instant gratification. The slowness of prayers of petition and intercession is not glamorous.

So how do we cultivate a life where we labor in prayer?

It’s really this simple - we keep praying. We discipline ourselves, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to learn the art of persevering. What’s on the other side of our prayers impacts eternity. God keeps track of our prayers and our tears (see Revelation 5:8 and Psalm 56:8). We can know we don’t labor in vain.

PRAYERS OF PETITION + INTERCESSION

Dream about what it could look like if you got to start crossing names off your list of folks who don't know Jesus. Commit to putting your cards in a place where you will see them often and keep adding people to the list as you meet them.

MORNING PRAYER FROM SCRIPTURE

MIDDAY PRAYER FOR THE LOST

EVENING PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

WEEKEND REFLECTION

Take some time to reflect on these questions. Maybe go to a coffee shop or find a park bench. Somewhere you can get alone with God and think about your prayer life.

What would it look like if you prayed through your cards every day?

What does God's kingdom coming, and daily bread being provided look like today, this week, this month? In your family, in your life, or in your city?

Where do you struggle to trust God when it comes to prayer?

How can you keep asking, seeking, and knocking as a part of your daily life?

“Only in the context of grace can we face our sin; only in the place of healing do we dare to show our wounds; only with single-minded attention to Christ can we give up our clinging fears and face our own true nature...It is a place where Christ remodels us in his own image and frees us from the victimizing compulsions of the world.”

Henri Nouwen

WEEK FIVE – “FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS”

Prayers of Examination + Confession

DAY ONE

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

1 John 1:9

This week we will shift our focus to prayers of confession. Depending on your church background, you can have differing experiences on the idea of confession. But it’s not just something reserved for certain denominations. By definition, it’s a profession of faith. Romans 10:9 says, “because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” Confession is a prerequisite for salvation.

It’s also an acknowledgement of our sins to God and anyone we have sinned against. (Leviticus 16:21 and James 5:16)

Now, admitting our wrongs and what we are ashamed of doesn’t sound like fun. But confessing our faults and failures paves the way for us to experience freedom.

PRAYER OF EXAMEN

This week, we will practice a type of prayer called “prayer of examen”. Which is simply, examining your day and heart with God. It’s a practice of looking for signs of God’s activity and love.

Typically done at the end of the day, there are four parts to this prayer:

Recall - remembering your day and asking God to show you His presence and activity.

Rejoice - thanking God for all He did, which we have been practicing with our evening prayers of gratitude

Repent - confessing and repenting for where you sinned against God and others and experiencing the gifts of forgiveness and grace.

Renew - with hope, consider tomorrow and ask God for wisdom and strength

MORNING PRAYER FROM SCRIPTURE

MIDDAY PRAYER FOR THE LOST

EVENING PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

DAY TWO

“Because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

Romans 10:9

Confession is not designed to shame us, it’s about freeing us from the weight of our shame.

When we stop hiding, we can start healing.

One of the most beautiful parts of confession is getting to experience forgiveness, whether it’s from God or another person. Freedom comes from being forgiven.

PRAYER OF EXAMEN

Recall - remembering your day and asking God to show you His presence and activity.

Rejoice - thanking God for all He did, which we have been practicing with our evening prayers of gratitude

Repent - confessing and repenting for where you sinned against God and others and experiencing the gifts of forgiveness and grace.

Renew - with hope, consider tomorrow and ask God for wisdom and strength

MORNING PRAYER FROM SCRIPTURE

MIDDAY PRAYER FOR THE LOST

EVENING PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

DAY THREE

“For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.”

Psalm 51:3-6

This psalm was David’s confession after being confronted by his friend. Notice, he doesn’t try to defend himself, rather, he admits how he has sinned against God and against others, and asks for forgiveness. As you pray through examen today, ask God to soften your heart like David’s to confess the in areas he has shown you.

PRAYER OF EXAMEN

Recall - remembering your day and asking God to show you His presence and activity.

Rejoice - thanking God for all He did, which we have been practicing with our evening prayers of gratitude

Repent - confessing and repenting for where you sinned against God and others and experiencing the gifts of forgiveness and grace.

Renew - with hope, consider tomorrow and ask God for wisdom and strength

MORNING PRAYER FROM SCRIPTURE

MIDDAY PRAYER FOR THE LOST

EVENING PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

DAY FOUR

“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.”

Psalm 51:10-12

Notice the words David uses here: create, renew, cast me not away, restore, uphold. David couldn't do any of these things for himself. He needed God to do the work. And God answered this prayer for David. His sins had consequences, but it wasn't too much for God to forgive and redeem.

The same is true for us. Whatever mistakes we feel too afraid to say out loud, the thing we fear someone finding out about us, are not too much for God. When we confess, He is always faithful and just to forgive. (1 John 1:9) If you are tired of hiding, come to Him. Tell someone in your community that you can trust. There is so much power in not having to hide. When we hide, the enemy can whisper lies that threaten to keep us in the dark. But confession reminds us in Christ we are free!

PRAYER OF EXAMEN

Recall - remembering your day and asking God to show you His presence and activity.

Rejoice - thanking God for all He did, which we have been practicing with our evening prayers of gratitude

Repent - confessing and repenting for where you sinned against God and others and experiencing the gifts of forgiveness and grace.

Renew - with hope, consider tomorrow and ask God for wisdom and strength

MORNING PRAYER FROM SCRIPTURE

MIDDAY PRAYER FOR THE LOST

EVENING PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

DAY FIVE

*There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ
Jesus.*

Romans 8:1

As we finish this practice, it's important to remember that God's kindness leads us to repentance. (Romans 2:4) In our preparation for Easter, let's remember God's kindness in sending us Jesus. He wants to remove anything that separates us from Him. That's why He sent Jesus. Jesus lived the sinless life we couldn't and died so that He could make a way for our sins to be forgiven.

PRAYER OF EXAMEN

Recall - remembering your day and asking God to show you His presence and activity.

Rejoice - thanking God for all He did, which we have been practicing with our evening prayers of gratitude

Repent - confessing and repenting for where you sinned against God and others and experiencing the gifts of forgiveness and grace.

Renew - with hope, consider tomorrow and ask God for wisdom and strength

MORNING PRAYER FROM SCRIPTURE

MIDDAY PRAYER FOR THE LOST

EVENING PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

WEEKEND REFLECTION

As we continue our practices of confession and examen, take some time this weekend to consider these questions:

How can you bring your community in?

What areas have you noticed God moving in your life?

Where have you seen patterns of sin in your life?

How can you bring them into the light and ask for accountability?

“God has given us prayer as a wartime walkie-talkie so that we can call headquarters for everything we need as the kingdom of Christ advances in the world. Prayer gives us the significance of frontline forces and gives God the glory of a limitless Provider. The one who gives the power gets the glory.”

John Piper

**WEEK SIX – “LEAD US NOT INTO
TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US
FROM EVIL”**

Prayers of Spiritual Warfare

DAY ONE

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”

Ephesians 6:10-12

We live in a physical reality, but there is a spiritual reality that is at play. The war between heaven and earth may not be something we can see with our own eyes, but it can play itself out in hidden and obvious ways in our life and world.

The good news is that Jesus has already defeated the enemy. One day, eternity will be brought into the present and we will get to experience it.

But because there is a darkness trying to overtake the light of Christ in the world, our prayers matter. Like we've learned in previous weeks, our prayers move the heart of God. The name of Jesus defeats the enemy.

When we pray, we are participating in spiritual warfare.

WARTIME PRAYERS

The first step is acknowledging it. The second is fighting back.

This week as you pray in the morning, ask God to show you areas of your life that the enemy is trying to defeat you. It may be in a sin pattern you can't shake, physical ailment, a battle with mental illness and lies, or in some other way.

Pray in the name of Jesus to put on the armor of God and ask Him to deliver you from evil.

MORNING PRAYER FROM SCRIPTURE

MIDDAY PRAYER FOR THE LOST

EVENING PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

DAY TWO

“Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.

Ephesians 6-13-16

How do we engage in spiritual warfare? We fight against sin and temptation by preaching the gospel to ourselves and pushing back the kingdom of darkness.

Fighting to say “no” to sin and “yes” to God is a way to fight the darkness. Once we are willing to confess, we can fight. The power of Jesus’ death and resurrection gives us this authority.

We also can live like Jesus did: casting out demons, healing the sick, and preaching against the kingdom of darkness.

WARTIME PRAYERS

In your prayer time today, ask God how you can fight against temptation in your own life and how to live like Jesus did. Look for opportunities to share the Gospel, and to pray for those who need it today.

MORNING PRAYER FROM SCRIPTURE

MIDDAY PRAYER FOR THE LOST

EVENING PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

DAY THREE

“In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God...”

Ephesians 6:16-17

There is a cosmic war going on between the kingdom of Darkness and the kingdom of God. We see in Scripture Satan, the enemy of God, goes after Israel and fails, then he goes after the Messiah, and fails. And now the Bible says he makes war with the Church.

It shows up in our lives through accusation and deceit. He’s the father of lies and a liar from the beginning. And yet the invitation for us is not to shrink back in fear but to step up and fight. To do the work we see Jesus doing, advancing the kingdom of God in the world against the kingdom of darkness and the schemes of the devil that would lull us to sleep.

WARTIME PRAYERS

Today in your time of prayer, ask God to reveal what lies you have been believing.

What has the enemy tried to tell you is true about you that contradicts God’s word?

Ask God to speak truth and identity over you.

MORNING PRAYER FROM SCRIPTURE

MIDDAY PRAYER FOR THE LOST

EVENING PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

DAY FOUR

*“Praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.
To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for
all the saints...”*
Ephesians 6:18

Praying at all times in the spirit. That’s what this series for Lent has been all about.

This week as we’ve looked at Ephesians 6, we can see the weapons given to us in Christ. We can access these through our relationship with Jesus. But putting on the full armor of God comes through prayer.

In prayer we can have:

Truth instead of lies.

Righteousness instead of apathy.

Peace instead of anxiety.

Faith instead of doubt.

Salvation instead of insecurity.

The Word of God instead of false teaching.

WARTIME PRAYERS

Walk through each piece of the armor of God outlined in Ephesians 6. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you trade the ways the enemy weighs you down for the armor and weapons you need to fight back.

MORNING PRAYER FROM SCRIPTURE

MIDDAY PRAYER FOR THE LOST

EVENING PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

DAY FIVE

“[Pray] also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.”

Ephesians 6:19-20

How do we fight against our enemy? The blood of the Lamb.

We are more than conquerors because Christ has conquered (see Romans 8). We don't win this battle on our own. We don't just will our way through the accusations and deceit of the enemy.

What is our hope in the war, in the battle, in the chaos? That Christ has rose again! That Christ used the ultimate weapon of Satan - death - to defeat death.

When the enemy would accuse us with lies like: you're not smart enough, good enough, gifted enough, holy enough - we look to the blood of the Lamb which cleanses us from all sin and makes us children of God with an eternal inheritance.

When the enemy would accuse someone else in our mind: they don't care about you, they don't love you, they betrayed you, abandoned you - we look to the blood of the Lamb which reconciles us to one another and unites us as the family of God.

When the enemy would deceive us saying: God is not good, He is not kind, He is not caring, He is not for you - we look to the blood of the Lamb which shouts across history the endless mercy and goodness of God.

This is the gospel: the cross and to the empty tomb! This is what we celebrate this Easter. Jesus defeated sin and death and we can live with hope and victory until He returns.

WARTIME PRAYERS

Take time today to pray through Ephesians 2. Ask God to help you remember and live out of your gospel identity in Christ Jesus.

MORNING PRAYER FROM SCRIPTURE

MIDDAY PRAYER FOR THE LOST

EVENING PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

WEEKEND REFLECTION

This week, take time to go on a prayer walk. Maybe around your house, your neighborhood, your place of work, or the city. Cry out to God for how you long for His name to be made great in those places. Ask God to push back evil and darkness and to bring more of His Kingdom to bear in this space.

Come back to this page to record some of what the Spirit speaks to you during your time.

CITIZENS CHURCH

“The death of the Lord our God should not be a cause of shame for us; rather, it should be our greatest hope, our greatest glory. In taking upon himself the death that he found in us, he has most faithfully promised to give us life in him, such as we cannot have of ourselves.”

Augustine

TEACH US TO PRAY

WEEK SEVEN – HOLY WEEK

Prayers of Preparation

OVERVIEW

As we journey through Holy Week as a community, we invite you to take this time leading up to Easter to continue our rhythms of prayer, seeking to prepare our hearts to remember the death of Christ on Good Friday and celebrate the resurrection of Christ on Easter Sunday.

For each day, read the Scripture and pray as you have been during Lent.

CITIZENS CHURCH

Monday – Read Luke 19:28-20:8

MORNING PRAYER FROM SCRIPTURE

MIDDAY PRAYER FOR THE LOST

EVENING PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

TEACH US TO PRAY

Tuesday – Read Luke 20:1-40

MORNING PRAYER FROM SCRIPTURE

MIDDAY PRAYER FOR THE LOST

EVENING PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

CITIZENS CHURCH

Wednesday – Read Luke 20:41-47 and 22:1-6

MORNING PRAYER FROM SCRIPTURE

MIDDAY PRAYER FOR THE LOST

EVENING PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

TEACH US TO PRAY

Maundy Thursday – Read Luke 22:7-46

MORNING PRAYER FROM SCRIPTURE

MIDDAY PRAYER FOR THE LOST

EVENING PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

CITIZENS CHURCH

Good Friday – Read Luke 22:47-23:48 and John 19:1-37

MORNING PRAYER FROM SCRIPTURE

MIDDAY PRAYER FOR THE LOST

EVENING PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

TEACH US TO PRAY

Holy Saturday – Read Luke 23:50-56 and John 19:38-42

MORNING PRAYER FROM SCRIPTURE

MIDDAY PRAYER FOR THE LOST

EVENING PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

CITIZENS CHURCH

EASTER SUNDAY – Read Luke 24 and John 20

MORNING PRAYER FROM SCRIPTURE

MIDDAY PRAYER FOR THE LOST

EVENING PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

BOOKS

A Praying Life by Paul Miller

How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People by Pete Greig

Prayer by Tim Keller

Praying Like Monks, Living Like Fools by Tyler Staton

PODCASTS

“Pray the Word” with David Platt

“Praying Like Monks, Living Like Fools” with Tyler Staton

“Daily Liturgy” from Coram Deo Church

ONLINE

Rhythmsandformation.com

24-7prayer.com

Practictheway.org/prayer

CITIZENS CHURCH

