

21 DAYS OF PRAYER CHALLENGE



DAYS OF PRAYER



CONNECT
CHURCH
CHRIST • COMMUNITY • PURPOSE

RED LETTER
LIVING



DAY 1

WHY CAN'T I HEAR GOD'S VOICE?

FROM PASTOR ZACH ZEHNDER

BIBLE VERSES

Psalms 19:1-4, Isaiah 55:11, Jeremiah 33:3, John 1:1-3, 14, 10:27

Dallas Willard once said, **"If God doesn't speak today, then the greatest disservice we could ever do to people is to tell them that they could have a personal relationship with God."**

The voice of God can be a tricky subject. One of the most often asked questions that I have heard as a pastor is, "Why can't I hear God's voice?" I often wonder why we struggle to hear God's voice because I am confident that we have a God who speaks.

All throughout the Old Testament, we see God speaking. God speaks to Adam and Eve in the garden, calls Abraham to a new land in Genesis, meets Moses on the mountain, and comforts Elijah in the cave. He spoke to the prophets in numerous ways. God is so passionate about speaking to His children that He sent Jesus, literally called "The Word of God," to dwell in our midst. Even after Jesus ascended, He meets Paul on the Damascus Road and speaks to John in Revelation. God is a speaking God.

However, as crucial as hearing God's voice is, what is more important is being in a real relationship with Him. Brother Lawrence, who wrote the book, *The Practice of the Presence of God*, says, **"There is not in the world a kind of life more sweet and delightful than that of a continual conversation with God."** Amazingly, God wants a relationship and to speak with us. God can use people, His Bible, and even His creation to speak to us.

The problem is not that God isn't speaking; the problem is that we aren't hearing.

Why, then, do we struggle to hear God's voice?

We have a connection problem.

First, we are disconnected from God. Many of us talk about being in a relationship with God, but are you consistently and habitually putting yourself in a place to hear God? Do you want to know the surefire way in which God will speak to you? The Bible is God's Word to you and to me.

Second, we are too connected to the world. We only have so much capacity for what we can let in, and too many of us prioritize the created things of this world more than we do the Creator. To hear God's voice, you have to turn down the world's volume.

God can speak to anyone at any time. Still, generally speaking, Dallas Willard says, "God will not compete for our attention. Occasionally a Saul gets knocked to the ground and so on, but we should expect that in most cases God will not run over us."

Instead, God comes to us kind, gently, and frequently, through a still, small whisper. He still speaks to us today. Can you hear Him?

DAY 1 CHALLENGE

Sit quietly and alone in a room for five minutes. Ask God to speak to you during these 21 days. Use the prayer prompt below if needed. In addition, invite your friends to walk alongside you during the *21 Days of Prayer Challenge*.

PRAYER

For spiritual growth in the year ahead and for clarity on who to invite to do this Bible Reading Plan with you.

WEEK 1 CHURCHWIDE PRAYER FOCUS

JESUS, HELP ME TO TAKE A NEXT STEP IN MY WALK WITH YOU.

DAY 2

WHY SHOULD I PRAY?

FROM PASTOR ZACH ZEHNDER

BIBLE VERSES

James 1:5, Philippians 4:6-7, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, 1 John 5:13-15

We exist to be in a relationship with God. Jesus's life, death, and resurrection make this relationship possible. **The greatest followers of Jesus are those in great relationship with Him.** And any great relationship starts with great communication. Prayer, ultimately, is how we communicate with God.

Okay, that's a lot to digest. So let's back up a bit.

GPS is an incredible invention. I don't understand how it all works, but I often utilize it to guide me to where I want to go. For example, I once read a story about a woman in Belgium who got into her car to pick up a friend at the train station. She activated her GPS to give her directions. The trip should have only taken about 90 minutes, but somehow, the GPS took her in the wrong direction, and sadly, she just blindly followed where the GPS led her. So rather than ending at the train station, she ended up more than 900 miles away from where she was supposed to be!

This silly little example shows me that **even when we follow the best of the world's directions, it can still take us to the wrong destination.**

I believe the world has always been broken and messy, but you could argue that the world has never been as confusing as it is right now.

My wife asked me to pick up some milk from the grocery store the other day. But, when I got to the grocery store, I wasn't sure what type of milk she wanted me to grab. Have you noticed how many types there are these days? Did she want me to buy 1%, 2%, Fat-Free, Whole, or how about Soy, Almond, Coconut, Organic, etc.? I didn't know, and she wasn't answering my text at the moment, so I was intrigued by a brand called "8th Continent" and threw it in the cart.

Many of us deal with much more significant issues than what milk to bring home. We live in a world where racial oppression, gender confusion, political tension, and pandemic opinions are real issues. As parents, we are the first generation trying to navigate how to raise kids in a social media, smart-phone-crazed world. It's a confusing world we live in. But in the middle of it, we can cut through all of the confusion and chaos and communicate with the God who created us. **Prayer gives us direction in a confusing world.** And God's guidance will never steer any of us in the wrong direction.

Why pray? Because you need God's direction.

DAY 2 CHALLENGE

What are three confusing areas for you now? List them out and pray about each one of them today, asking for God's guidance and wisdom.

PRAYER

For your national, state, and city leaders.

WEEK 1 CHURCHWIDE PRAYER FOCUS

JESUS, HELP ME TO TAKE A NEXT STEP IN MY WALK WITH YOU.

DAY 3

WHAT IS THE CONNECTION BETWEEN PRAYER + FASTING?

FROM PASTOR ZACH ZEHNDER

BIBLE VERSES

Psalm 86:1-7, Daniel 10:3, Matthew 6:16-18, Luke 4:1-4

On Day 1, we stated that we struggle to hear God's voice because we have a connection problem. So if the two issues are we are disconnected from God, and we are too connected to the world, what's the answer? I believe Jesus gives us the solution: prayer and fasting.

Prayer connects us to God.

At any time, at any place, in any situation, we can connect to God. With that being said, I often can't understand why I choose to pray not as a first response but instead as a last resort. When life's demands come my way, I sometimes forget to pray. Honestly, it's easier for me at times to talk about the power of praying than to actually pray. However, I don't want that to be true for me, and I want to grow in the practice of prayer.

This means that when I'm going into a tough meeting at work, I can pray for His Spirit to direct me. Before I go into a doctor's office to receive test results, I can pray for God's peace. Before I send an email, I can pray and discern if it's appropriate. Before I post something on social media, I can ask for God's direction. We can connect with God in real-time, and He promises to act on behalf of His children.

If prayer connects us to God, **fasting disconnects us from this world.**

One of the least known disciplines in the church is fasting. Very few people have a regular practice of fasting.

The real simple definition of fasting is letting go of some things for a period of time. When you fast from things, you begin to see things more clearly. However, no matter what you have heard or been taught, fasting is not primarily about giving something up. More so, it's about replacing that something with God's presence.

When you fast, I promise you your flesh will not like it. Your Spirit will love it, but your body will be weak. The enemy will come during times of fasting and try to replace that thing you have given up with something other than God. That's why when so many fast, they also choose to pray. It's about connecting to God as we disconnect from the world.

Most people choose to fast from food or drink. Other fasts that could be important are social media, television, etc. Remember, that part of fasting is to disconnect from this world.

DAY 3 CHALLENGE

Choose some type of fast that you will participate in for the remainder of this challenge and tell at least one other person.

PRAYER

For your city and its prosperity.

WEEK 1 CHURCHWIDE PRAYER FOCUS

JESUS, HELP ME TO TAKE A NEXT STEP IN MY WALK WITH YOU.

DAY 4

HOW CAN I GROW IN PRAYER?

FROM PASTOR ZACH ZEHNDER

BIBLE VERSES

Hebrews 4:16, Romans 8:26-27, John 15:4-7, 1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Not long ago, I went to a prayer service. Rather than feeling stimulated and refreshed, I walked away feeling guilty and frustrated. That night, when we were encouraged to pray silently for 15 minutes, I had difficulty fighting off distractions and focusing on praying. I felt guilty because if anyone should be praying well at this point, it should be me. I'm a lifelong follower of Jesus and have been a pastor for more than a decade. I shouldn't be struggling this much to pray. I felt frustrated because I was genuinely committing and taking the time to instill this habit in a deep, meaningful fashion. Yet, it didn't inspire me or make me feel closer to God.

It didn't take me long to realize that both the guilt and the frustration were actually just lies from the enemy. I don't need to feel guilty because the truth is that I'm making strides in my walk with God and in my prayer life, even when I don't sense it. And I don't need to be frustrated because when we begin to develop a habit, it often feels awkward, and we don't see much change. That's the thing about habits: you don't always see growth while you're in the moment. The realization of progress usually comes much later.

If you aren't sure how to start praying, or you've come to a plateau in your prayer life, I want to encourage you today that the best way to learn to pray is to keep praying.

I've set goals with my workout partners to hit specific benchmarks in the gym. Truthfully, it feels like I experience short seasons of growth and long seasons of being stuck. I love the seasons of growth, and I hate the seasons where I feel stuck. But even when I'm stuck and don't feel like I'm getting stronger, I can look back and see that I've made progress. I need to just keep putting in the reps. As I keep putting in the reps, I'm trusting that the repeated effort will one day help me get stronger.

If you want to become more effective in prayer, simply pray. Put in the reps. You may not notice your growth on a day-to-day basis, but you'll see it eventually. In the course of this challenge, we'll show you how Jesus prayed (who better to learn from?) and teach you a few handles that can help you.

When you pray, you may not see the immediate change in yourself or those you pray for. You may be discouraged because you don't feel like your prayer life is getting any better. You may not sense God's presence as you pray, but God assures us that He's at work. While feelings are real, they aren't always true. Dallas Willard says, "Feelings are good servants, but they are disastrous masters." Trust in God's promises and not your feelings.

Keep praying. Put in the reps. **God doesn't care about how we come, just that we come.**

DAY 4 CHALLENGE

What is one small thing you can do daily that will help you make prayer more of a habit in your life? Identify that one thing and tell at least one other person.

PRAYER

For your church and the local churches in your area.

WEEK 1 CHURCHWIDE PRAYER FOCUS

JESUS, HELP ME TO TAKE A NEXT STEP IN MY WALK WITH YOU.

DAY 5

HOW DID JESUS PRAY?

FROM PASTOR ZACH ZEHNDER

BIBLE VERSES

Mark 1:35, Luke 5:16, Luke 6:12, John 17:20-26

Think about this. If there was ever someone who didn't need God's direction, you'd think it would be Jesus. It is a great paradox, but we believe that Jesus was fully human and also fully God at the same time. And yet, still, we see Jesus praying early and praying often.

As we continue to learn about prayer, we ought to examine how Jesus prayed. Remember, He was the only person to exist in a perfect relationship with God, so we should learn from Him.

When you read through the 4 Gospels, you would find nearly 50 times that Jesus either practiced prayer or taught about the importance of prayer. For example, Jesus is shown praying alone, praying in public, praying early in the morning, praying in the evening, praying before meals, praying before essential decisions, and praying before and after healings.

You get the sense that He communicated with God the Father and the Holy Spirit everywhere He went. By looking at His example, we see that Jesus made prayer a priority at all times and in all circumstances. The word "priority" has a surprising history in our English language. According to Greg McKeown in his book *Essentialism*, "The word priority came into the English language in the 1400s. It was singular. It meant the very first or prior thing."

We pluralized this term somewhere along the line and thought we could have multiple priorities simultaneously. But, really, having many things as a top priority actually means that nothing is.

Prayer was a priority for Jesus. Is it for you?

Let me ask a challenging question: Take a look back at the last week of your life before you started the 21 Day Prayer Challenge. **If God answered every one of your prayer requests, what would be different in the world today?**

Sadly, if I answered the question for myself, there would be some weeks when the world wouldn't look all that different. If my prayers were answered in the way that I asked them to be, here's how the world would be different: my sermon would be creative and powerful, new people would have come to church, the Cleveland Browns would have won their game, my kids would have done well at school, my wife would have had a great week, a couple of people would have gotten new jobs, and a few healings would have happened. Still, nothing crazy in the world would have happened most weeks if all my prayers had been answered. That's sad.

How about you?

If you genuinely believe in the power of prayer, you, too, would prioritize it, just like Jesus. But, the great news is that no matter how failed your prayer habits have been in the past, you and I have an excellent opportunity to start anew today. In fact, we can pray to God right here, right now, and not only thank Him for His grace but ask God for wisdom to help us in this area in the future.

DAY 5 CHALLENGE

Look back to the 10 days before starting the *21 Days of Prayer Challenge*. Ask yourself what would be different in the world if God answered "Yes" to all of your prayer requests.

PRAYER

For your pastors and those leading your church.

WEEK 1 CHURCHWIDE PRAYER FOCUS

JESUS, HELP ME TO TAKE A NEXT STEP IN MY WALK WITH YOU.

DAY 6

DOES PRAYER CHANGE GOD'S MIND?

FROM PASTOR ZACH ZEHNDER

BIBLE VERSES

James 5:16-18, Exodus 33:12-17

One of the questions I'm asked most often is this: "Does prayer change me, or does it change God?" The answer is YES!

You benefit from praying. When you pray, you're connecting with God. Being more connected to God has many upsides. You live with more purpose and direction. You gain a peace that passes human understanding. You possess an unspeakable joy and even confidence in the midst of what can feel like chaos. That's a robust list of how prayer helps you and changes you.

But I would also argue that prayer changes God.

When I read the Bible, one thing is very apparent: every time it mentions that God changes His mind or "relents," it's always for our benefit, not our harm. That's why He appears to change His mind with Moses and the grumbling Israelites, grants King Hezekiah more years of life, and gives the Ninevites another opportunity to repent in the story of Jonah. These examples give us great comfort because they tell us that when we return to Him, He's always willing to accept us back.

What does this mean for us in today's study? It means that our prayers matter! They actually make a difference. It means that when we're in conversation with God, we can affect Him and bring His mercy to people in a lost and broken world.

James 5:16 reminds us, **"The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective."**

Righteous people's prayers can change the course of human history.

When we believe that our prayers can change the course of history, it means that we can pray with the same desperation that Moses prayed, pleading for the future of the Israelites. We can pray with the same expectation that Elijah prayed when he asked God to send fire down so that others might know that He is the true God. We can pray with the same trust that Daniel prayed when thrown into a lion's den. We can pray with the same faith that Jesus prayed with when He healed the sick, calmed the storm, and even raised the dead. We can pray with the same passion that the disciples prayed when they healed the sick, raised the dead, and began the church. And we can pray with the same excitement and hope that our church fathers prayed when they asked God to move powerfully as they advanced the Good News of Jesus Christ throughout the world.

Many people talk about wanting to make an impact in this world. **But, did you ever think that the most significant impact you could make in this world would be through your prayers?**

DAY 6 CHALLENGE

What is one thing you hope God changes His mind about? Pray boldly for this to happen today.

PRAYER

For the poor and needy.

WEEK 1 CHURCHWIDE PRAYER FOCUS

JESUS, HELP ME TO TAKE A NEXT STEP IN MY WALK WITH YOU.

DAY 7

HOW CAN I TELL IF GOD IS SPEAKING TO ME?

FROM PASTOR ZACH ZEHNDER

BIBLE VERSES

John 10:4-5, Romans 10:17, 1 John 4:1, Proverbs 12:15, 1 Corinthians 14:33

I remember buying our first home and enjoying the air conditioning in the house when the air conditioner stopped working out of nowhere. Being a new homeowner, I had no idea what to do, so I called a local air conditioning company. It was a minimum charge of \$200 to come, but it was in the heat of summer, so we agreed. One minute after he arrived, he ensured us that the problem was fixed. He held an utterly black air filter in his hand and said that the air filter had never been changed. When I grew up, I'll be honest, I never even knew there was such a thing called an air filter. Nobody ever told me. So, of course, I had no idea they needed to be changed. I learned from this costly mistake how essential filters are.

I've found that to be true not just for air conditioning but also for the voice of God.

As a pastor, I can't tell you how many conversations I've gotten in where someone says, "God told me...." But, sadly, that statement "God told me" has often been followed up with something that I know is simply not the voice of God.

So how do you know if it's God's voice? How do you know if it's God speaking to you, or is it the enemy speaking to you, or the Bean Burrito you ate for dinner last night?

I learned three questions from Church of the Highlands to help form your "Voice of God" filter. The voice of God will always pass through these three tests.

Let me repeat. It will always pass all three of these tests.

- **Does the Bible agree?**

God's voice will never contradict His Word.

- **Does godly counsel agree?**

Every one of those words is important. Ensure that it is godly counsel. If you are discerning whether it's God's voice, don't ask someone who is not a follower of Jesus. It's shocking to me who some people ask for counsel. Finally, make sure the council agrees. Many people would call themselves "godly" that have pretty wacky beliefs that are incongruent with God's Word.

- **Do I have peace?**

The Holy Spirit brings peace. The devil brings anxiety. Now, God's voice may not always lead you to comfortable places, but He will bring His peace with you wherever you go. If it passes all three, it very well could be from God. Still not sure? Here are some other good follow-up questions to ask:

- **Will this make me more like Jesus?**
- **Is it consistent with how God made me?**
- **Does it concern my responsibility?**
- **Is it convicting or condemning? Hint: God's voice is never meant to condemn.**
- **Is it wise? That three-word question would save so many headaches and so much stress.**

DAY 7 CHALLENGE

Take a question or two you have been wondering about recently and take it through the "Voice of God" filter.

PRAYER

For local missions, non-profits, and organizations seeking to make a difference in your area.

WEEK 1 CHURCHWIDE PRAYER FOCUS

JESUS, HELP ME TO TAKE A NEXT STEP IN MY WALK WITH YOU.

DAY 8

IS THERE A PROPER WAY TO PRAY?

FROM PASTOR MARK ZEHNDER

BIBLE VERSES

Matthew 6:5-8, Luke 18:9-14, 2 Chronicles 7:14-15

I love what Richard Foster says: “In the same way that a small child cannot draw a bad picture, so a child of God cannot offer a bad prayer.”

Perhaps that offers a simple answer to this question.

Still, what are we talking about here? The posture of prayer? If that is where the question comes from, there are all kinds of possibilities. The Bible talks about praying when we are walking and moving. It speaks of standing, sitting, kneeling, and lying prostrate on the ground.

Or are we talking about the actual “words” of our prayers? Do we have to have “good manners” when we pray and be sure that we use all the right words and say them correctly?

My hunch is that while posture and the words we choose are significant, we are really talking about something much more vital here. What’s implied in this question is the ATTITUDE of the person praying, and on that, we can do no better than to look at a couple of times when this topic came up with Jesus.

First, Jesus says this in **Matthew 6:5-8**. “And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the streets to be seen by men...and when you pray, do not keep babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.”

Second, Jesus tells a similar-sounding story in **Luke 18:9-14**. “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’ But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God have mercy on me, a sinner.’ I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

The proper way to pray is with a humble attitude. God cares more about the thoughts in our hearts than the words on our lips. He’d rather have your big worries than your big words, your expression of need, than your eloquence of language. So what are you waiting for? Talk to Him now!

DAY 8 CHALLENGE

Commit to memory 2 Chronicles 7:14-15. Start by writing it down 5 times.

PRAYER

For national and international missions, organizations, individuals, and groups seeking to make a difference in the world.

WEEK 2 CHURCHWIDE PRAYER FOCUS

JESUS, HELP ME TO TAKE A NEXT STEP IN MY WALK BY HAVING A HEART FOR OTHERS.

DAY 9

WILL GOD ALWAYS ANSWER MY PRAYERS?

FROM PASTOR MARK ZEHNDER

BIBLE VERSES

Isaiah 55:8-9, 2 Corinthians 12:8-9, Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, Romans 5:3-4

This one almost seems like a trick question! My first, knee-jerk reaction to this question is, “of course, God always answers my prayers. It’s just that there are times when he might not answer them the WAY I WANT him to!”

Or maybe you have heard in the past that God answers your prayer in three possible ways—yes, no, and wait. Perhaps. I’d like to suggest a more helpful way to look at this question, and so that you might remember these, let’s let them all rhyme. Ready?

Here we go!

NO—there are times that God just simply says “no” to your prayer. This is crystal clear with the Apostle Paul in **2 Corinthians 12:8-9**.

He says “no” when the IDEA is not correct.

After my first year of college, I remember thinking that I had possibly found the girl that would become my wife. But that summer, I realized this wasn’t meant to be. I could have been upset with God, who I heard shouting, “no.” But He knew what I did not know. He knew that I would meet this marvelous young lady by the name of Sharon only a few months later. The idea of my prayer was not right, and God said “No!” (Thank you, Jesus! I have now been happily married to Sharon for almost 45 years!)

SLOW—when the timing isn’t right, God says, “slow.” It’s not that you don’t have the right idea in your prayer; it’s just not the right timing yet. Perhaps it’s like fruit. If you pick a green banana off the tree and eat it, you won’t love it. But, sometimes, God knows that we just have a little more time to wait.

GROW—this is how God answers when YOU aren’t right. The idea and timing may be okay, but you are not. Sometimes I think I know exactly what I need and when I need it. God can see that I’m being selfish, and if I received it now, it would NOT be in my best interest. There are times when I am praying for something that doesn’t seem to be happening, and I can sense God wants me to ask, “Lord, is there something IN me that needs to change?” Is there someplace I need to grow? See **Romans 5:3-4**.

GO!!—I love this one. When everything is right, God says GO! The idea is right, the timing is right, and you are right! These are the fun answers, and God loves to say yes!

So, what are you praying about right now, and what is God saying?

DAY 9 CHALLENGE

Look back at the last year of praying and locate one instance each where God said “No,” “Slow,” and “Grow.” What did you learn about God from each of those?

PRAYER

For God’s justice to prevail in the world’s injustices.

WEEK 2 CHURCHWIDE PRAYER FOCUS

JESUS, HELP ME TO TAKE A NEXT STEP IN MY WALK BY HAVING A HEART FOR OTHERS.

DAY 10

DOES THE OUTCOME OF PRAYER DEPEND ON MY FAITH?

FROM PASTOR ZACH ZEHNDER

BIBLE VERSES

Jeremiah 32:27, James 1:5-7, Matthew 9:22, Matthew 9:29, Mark 5:34

Oh good. Another question with several possible answers! Okay, let's start with this word from **James 1:5-7**: "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord."

Based on this passage, it sure seems like praying without faith is NOT a good idea!

Still, how many times do we see in the New Testament where Jesus healed someone who not only had no faith but didn't even know who Jesus was? Or how about this...Jesus raised a dead boy in a funeral procession (**Luke 7:11-17**) and a little girl in her house (**Luke 8:49-56**). It's 100% impossible to have faith when you are dead!

There were other times when Jesus healed people not because of their own faith but because of their friends. For example, in **Mark 2:1-12**, four friends carry a paralyzed man to Jesus, and Jesus healed the man on behalf of the friend's faith.

On the other hand, Jesus healed many people, and after doing so, made a comment: "Go, your faith has made you well." Check out these verses...**Matthew 9:29; Mark 5:34**.

So, what can we conclude?

When we pray, we should do so with faith, remembering that it is our job to ask and God's job to act! Therefore, we should always pray with faith, trusting that God loves us and knows what we need best.

It helps me to remind myself that I am not praying with faith in my faith. No, I am praying with faith in Jesus because I know this: Ultimately, the fact that a person is healed is based NOT on the quality or even quantity of faith in the person praying, but in the HEALER himself, Jesus.

DAY 10 CHALLENGE

Share the Bible verse Jeremiah 32:27 on social media and declare your trust in God: "I am the Lord, God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?" You can use the verse image in this app to help you share this well.

PRAYER

For the children in our life.

WEEK 2 CHURCHWIDE PRAYER FOCUS

JESUS, HELP ME TO TAKE A NEXT STEP IN MY WALK BY HAVING A HEART FOR OTHERS.

DAY 11

WHAT IS INTERCESSORY PRAYER?

FROM PASTOR MARK ZEHNDER

BIBLE VERSES

Ezekiel 22:30, Romans 8:34, Romans 8:26-27, Romans 1:9-10, Ephesians 6:18-20

Simply put, intercessory prayer is when you pray for someone else. When I think of intercessory prayers, my heart gets thankful very fast. For all the years of my life, I have had people praying for me. My mom and my dad in the early years. My wife for the last 45 years. And some genuinely faithful people at all the congregations I have served have interceded on my behalf.

You might find it interesting to see who else shows up on the list of those who were intercessory prayers. Take Jesus, for example! Paul tells us in **Romans 8:34**, "Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us."

Wow! And not just Jesus, but the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit.

Just a few verses before this, Paul tells us this: "In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words." **Romans 8:26-27**

Paul referenced how he interceded for his fellow believers in many of his Epistles. For example, in **Romans 1:9**: "God, whom I serve with my whole heart in preaching this gospel of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you in my prayers at all times."

Many churches have begun a ministry of intercession called GAP. These are people who know that God Answers Prayer. This GAP ministry flows from a heart that knows there are times when you just can't handle everything on your own. You need someone to stand where you can't.

Ezekiel 22:30 says, "I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found none."

How sad that no one was found at that time and place. How thankful I am that so many of God's people are willing to step up and stand in the gap for me! Will you stand in the gap for others today?

DAY 11 CHALLENGE

Make a list of 10 people you can commit to interceding for. Pray today for each of those people by name.

PRAYER

For the teenagers/youth in our life.

WEEK 2 CHURCHWIDE PRAYER FOCUS

JESUS, HELP ME TO TAKE A NEXT STEP IN MY WALK BY HAVING A HEART FOR OTHERS.

DAY 12

IS THERE MORE POWER WHEN WE PRAY TOGETHER?

FROM PASTOR MARK ZEHNDER

BIBLE VERSES

Matthew 18:19-20, Acts 4:31, Acts 12:1-16

Prayer is a beautiful gift God gives to each of us as his individual children. This is such a comfort...that we always have access to God in prayer no matter where we are and even when we are all alone. There is something very special about having a regular, quiet, solitary time just with God.

But it gets even better.

In addition to having this gift of prayer individually, we also have it together in community. Which brings us to this interesting question, "Is there more power when we pray together?" Let's look at some Scriptures that discuss praying together and see if we can answer this question.

Interestingly, when Jesus' disciples asked Him to teach them to pray, He gave them a prayer that started with the word, "Our." He said, pray, "Our" Father. Not "my" Father, but "our." That says something of the fact that Jesus intended for us to pray together.

In **Matthew 18:19-20**, Jesus says this: "Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three gather in my name, there I am with them." Wow! What a promise! This sure seems to make the case that praying together is very powerful and that Jesus is with us when we pray together.

In addition to these blessings, praying together and seeing how God answers our prayers increases our faith and causes us to be even bolder when we pray. Finally, praying together increases our unity in the Body of Christ.

We see this in powerful times of prayer in the early church. Read **Acts 4:31** and **Acts 12:1-16**.

Recently we were together in worship on a Sunday morning. Many of us had individually been praying specifically for a family in our church. It had been 20 days that we were praying, and not much progress seemed to be happening.

That morning I asked the whole church in the middle of our prayer time to lift this family up, and we boldly asked for a breakthrough. Thirty minutes later, I received a text that the prayer had been powerfully answered, and this breakthrough took place. Of course, this wouldn't mean that all those individual prayers didn't matter, but it would be hard to argue that there wasn't greater power when the whole church prayed together.

DAY 12 CHALLENGE

Pray together with at least one other person today. Before praying, let everyone share any prayer request(s) they may have.

PRAYER

For healthy marriages.

WEEK 2 CHURCHWIDE PRAYER FOCUS

JESUS, HELP ME TO TAKE A NEXT STEP IN MY WALK BY HAVING A HEART FOR OTHERS.

DAY 13

DO MY PRAYERS REALLY MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

FROM PASTOR MARK ZEHNDER

BIBLE VERSES

2 Kings 20:1-6, Matthew 7:7-11, Luke 18:1-8

I am the product of the persistent prayers of my mom and dad when they were initially unable to have children. Despite the medical world's dire predictions and strong doubts, they pressed on in prayer, and well, along came me! And then Carole, Steve, Tim, Lisa, and Michael! My dad always said the moral of that story is, "When you pray, duck!"

And now it is a stupendous blessing that God has blessed me with a hard-to-explain gift of praying for couples who have had difficulty conceiving am sure that it has been near one hundred couples I have prayed for over the years, some who were told they would never have children, that now have kids!

So based on my personal story and personal experience, my answer to this question is a HUGE "absolutely, yes, prayer makes a difference!" But it's not my personal story or personal experience that gives me the most confidence to answer this way. The biggest reason to believe that prayers make a difference is because the Bible says they do! Read through the Scriptures for the day today, and you will be reminded of this truth.

I think of times when people's prayers in the Bible made such a huge difference. Remember when the prophet Isaiah went to King Hezekiah with the message God had given him to deliver that Hezekiah was going to die.

Hezekiah heard that and prayed that God would spare his life. God sent Isaiah back with the answer that He had heard his prayer and would add 15 more years to his life. On top of that, he then gave him a miraculous meteorological sign that reminded him that God could do anything, even override the laws of nature.

Or how about all the times the Lord's holy anger would threaten to wipe out his people? Time and time again, Moses would plead with the Lord, and God would hear Moses' prayer and change the course of his action.

All that said, the very implication of this question is that it does seem, at times, that our prayers might NOT be making a difference. Part of this answer is found by looking back at Day 9. Another aspect of this is God calling us to persevere. I love the story of the woman who would not give up before the judge that we are reading today in **Luke 18:1-8**. In this parable, Jesus teaches us that we should always persevere in prayer, even when the answer can be slow in coming.

So, my encouragement to you...if you wonder if your prayers make a difference? Keep on praying! Don't give up! Keep on asking, seeking, and knocking, and God will do his thing!

DAY 13 CHALLENGE

What is the one thing you will persistently continue to pray for? Set reminders to pray for this one thing at least 7 times today.

PRAYER

For your family.

WEEK 2 CHURCHWIDE PRAYER FOCUS

JESUS, HELP ME TO TAKE A NEXT STEP IN MY WALK BY HAVING A HEART FOR OTHERS.

DAY 14

AM I PRAYING TO THE FATHER, THE SON, OR THE HOLY SPIRIT?

FROM PASTOR MARK ZEHNDER

BIBLE VERSES

Matthew 3:13-17, John 14:26, 2 Corinthians 13:14, Ephesians 3:14-21

So let me set up my answer to this question with a real-life experiment that I have conducted several times over the years. I have begun a message or a workshop or a sermon inviting everyone to speak a silent one-minute prayer in various settings. After a minute, I'll simply ask: "How many of you began by saying, 'Dear Heavenly Father, or dear Lord, or dear God?'" A good number of hands go up for each. When I get to the question, "How many said, 'dear Holy Spirit,'" hardly ever a hand goes up.

I find that interesting, intriguing, and, honestly, a little disappointing. Why should the third person of the Trinity, the one who is our Comforter, Counselor, Teacher, be left off the list of who we address our prayers to?

Now, admittedly, understanding the Trinity, how God can be one and three simultaneously, etc., is challenging and a topic for another discussion!! But be assured that when you are praying to any of the three persons of the Trinity, you are praying to the one true God.

But for our purposes today and to answer the question for the day, I would offer these encouragements.

First, it is MOST CERTAINLY a wonderful thing to pray to the Father. Of all the ways that Jesus could have begun the prayer he taught to his disciples (and us, of course), he chose to say, "When you pray, say our FATHER."

When I pray to my heavenly Father, I thank Him for creating me, making me, being a kind and compassionate Father, and sending His Son to be my Savior. You can never go wrong praying to the Father, in the name of the Son, through the Holy Spirit.

When I pray to Jesus, I thank Him for dying on the cross for me, for rising from the dead, and for making my salvation possible. I thank Jesus for being my brother and my friend. I ask him to take up his rightful place on the throne of my heart—to be my Lord and Master. When I pray to Jesus, I ask him to live in me and through me so that when others see me, they see him.

When I need comfort, I direct my prayers to the Holy Spirit. When I need wisdom, counseling, teaching, I pray to the Holy Spirit. I ask the Holy Spirit to fill me with boldness that I can proclaim Jesus to the world. I thank the Holy Spirit for interceding with Jesus for me to the Father.

DAY 14 CHALLENGE

Spend three minutes each addressing your prayers to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

PRAYER

For your friends.

WEEK 2 CHURCHWIDE PRAYER FOCUS

JESUS, HELP ME TO TAKE A NEXT STEP IN MY WALK BY HAVING A HEART FOR OTHERS.

DAY 15

HOW DOES JESUS TEACH US TO PRAY?

FROM PASTOR ROGER THEIMER

BIBLE VERSES

Luke 11:1-13, Luke 5:16

In church, I remember we all prayed the Lord's Prayer together one time. When we said "Amen," I was startled. We had finished, and I had not thought about a single word I was saying. Instead, I was designing in my mind the workbench I was going to build that afternoon. Ever happened to you?

The Lord's Prayer is beautiful. It's a blessing that we all can recite it together. No doubt Jesus made it that simple so we could repeat it. But there is so much more to it!

Jesus' disciples noticed Jesus' deep prayer life, so they asked him, "Lord, teach us how to pray!" His response was the Lord's Prayer!

Jesus gives the Lord's Prayer as one to be recited, but also it is so much more! It is a pattern for praying. It can be divided into five focused areas of prayer. It is like a pathway with five pauses along the path. When we pause to pray at each of these focus areas, the depth and breadth of our prayers increase tremendously. Each of these five focus areas will be a topic in this week's devotions. But, for now, let's simply highlight them.

- We begin with **Praying with Praise**, or "Our Father who is in heaven." We praise God for who He is.
- The next stop is **Praying for Priorities**, or "Your kingdom come, your will be done." We pray for kingdom priorities.

- The third focus is **Praying for Provision**, or "Give us this day our daily bread." We pray for physical needs.
- The fourth pause is **Praying for Pardon**, "Forgive us our sins as we forgive the sins of others." We pray for forgiveness.
- The final stop is **Praying for Protection**, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil." We pray for spiritual protection.

Jesus told His disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane, "Could you not keep watch with me for one hour?" I think Jesus was saying, "Couldn't you pray for one hour?" If Jesus asked you today, how would you answer? "What would I say for an hour?"

This pattern of prayer will help. If you spent 12 minutes at each of these prayer pauses on the pathway of the Lord's prayer, you would have prayed for a full hour! Time will fly. Also, your recitation of the Lord's Prayer will be filled with new meaning. So get ready for your prayer life to deepen!

DAY 15 CHALLENGE

Find a small notebook or journal and make it a prayer journal. Put the five focus areas of prayers on separate pages. As you pray through items this week, write some prayer thoughts or scriptures that help you pray in that area. Use the prayer journal for ongoing focused prayer.

PRAYER

For those that don't have a relationship with Jesus.

WEEK 3 CHURCHWIDE PRAYER FOCUS

JESUS, HELP ME TO TAKE A NEXT STEP IN MY WALK BY SERVING YOU.

DAY 16

HOW DO I PRAY WITH PRAISE?

FROM PASTOR ROGER THEIMER

BIBLE VERSES

Psalm 103:1-13, John 17:25-26

We live in a culture that loves praise. Why is social media so popular? We want something or someone to praise! What about popular or gifted people at school? Let's praise them with crowns or awards. How about sports? Entire stadiums stand and cheer.

If giving praise is part of our culture, then shouldn't it be easy to give praise to God? Shouldn't it be like cheering Him on more than the local high school football team?

Not at all.

Praising God is an entirely different matter than affirming other people or things. Why do you think that God invites us to worship Him? Is it because He is insecure and needs the attention? Of course not! When we worship Him, our hearts open to Him. We see Him for who He is and what He has done. We see how much He values us and loves us. We know the gift of His Son Jesus, who reconciled us to the Father. We experience the Holy Spirit making God's actions for us known on a most personal level!

God refuses to be known as an object, but He does invite us to love Him. Jesus taught us, Pray with Praise. We begin our pathway of prayer with "Our Father, who dwells in Heaven." He is teaching that His model of prayer begins with praise and an invitation to love Him.

Worship Him for His character and qualities:

- His might and His mercy
- His vastness beyond eternity and His closeness within you
- His commitment to your best interest

Worship Him for Who He is:

- God the Father, His creating power and sustaining life
- God the Son, His one-time sacrifice for our sin and all-time intercession
- God the Spirit, His bringing us into the kingdom and equipping us for that kingdom

From eternity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit have existed in perfect unity AND perfect love for each other. Their joy for each other has been described as a divine dance. It is this love that God wants to pour out on us that we would experience His joy and find our lives filled with His love. As you worship and give Him your love, you are reminded of His great love for you. It is the love exchange, and it is the way we get to better know who God is!

DAY 16 CHALLENGE

Enjoy some time in your prayers today worshipping. Tell God your praise and your thanks. There are so many options. Speak it in your hearts. Sing it. Listen to praise music. Read it in the Bible! Write it in your prayer journal. Meditate on it five minutes in the morning and five minutes before bed!

PRAYER

For all the blessings God has given.

WEEK 3 CHURCHWIDE PRAYER FOCUS

JESUS, HELP ME TO TAKE A NEXT STEP IN MY WALK BY SERVING YOU.

DAY 17

HOW DO I PRAY FOR PRIORITIES?

FROM PASTOR ROGER THEIMER

BIBLE VERSES

Luke 12:27-34, Ephesians 3:17-19, Ephesians 5:1

Let me put some words in God's mouth and ask that you would hear them as a direct question from God to you. How would you answer if God were to say to you the following?

"Go ahead. Ask me. What do you want me to do for you?"

In this scenario, let's say you can't answer what you would want God to do for others, only yourself.

Is the question more complicated than you thought? Would you ask for stuff? Money? Health? Achievement? There's nothing wrong with asking for these things but placing them in a position of utmost importance will always disappoint. They are never enough to build a fulfilling identity or fashion your purpose. Wrong priorities. What priorities would you ask for?

Jesus taught us to **Pray for Priorities**, that is, kingdom priorities. So we pause on the pathway to pray, "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." How would you pray that His kingdom would come into your life? What would your life look like if it were filled with Christ ruling your desires and thoughts?

Pray for spiritual priorities. For example, pray to become more Christ-like. Pray to live out confidently and joyfully the grace given you through Jesus.

Pray to better grasp the depth of His love displayed on the cross. Pray to become more like Jesus not by merely focusing on what you need to improve about yourself but by loving him more! Clare of Assisi said, "We become what we love and who we love shapes what we become. If we love things, we become a thing. If we love nothing, we become nothing." As we love Christ, we are shaped by that love. That's a priority worth praying for!

As you daily read the Bible, be watching for different spiritual priorities. Write them on your journal page to remember to pray for them. Remember to pray that His kingdom would come to others through you. You are making yourself available to Him for His purposes.

Return to the opening question. Instead of hearing God say, "Go ahead. Ask me. What do you want me to do for you?" Now you say it. "God, go ahead. Ask me. What do you want me to do for You?!" This will shape you more into the likeness of Christ!

DAY 17 CHALLENGE

Use your journal. Pray for spiritual priorities that shape you more in the likeness of Christ. Is there a characteristic the Holy Spirit is developing in you today? What are your Bible readings saying to you? Are there kingdom priorities that you can intercede for in others?

PRAYER

For clarity on your purpose in this world.

WEEK 3 CHURCHWIDE PRAYER FOCUS

JESUS, HELP ME TO TAKE A NEXT STEP IN MY WALK BY SERVING YOU.

DAY 18

HOW DO I PRAY FOR PROVISION?

FROM PASTOR ROGER THEIMER

BIBLE VERSES

2 Corinthians 9: 6-12, Philippians 4:19, Romans 8: 31-32

It was a Sunday afternoon, and my roommate and I were hungry. More like starving. We worked a summer job during our college years, far from home and living on meager means. We had just returned from driving to another town to purchase a new car the night before. Actually, it was an old van. At any rate, we spent all our cash. We weren't worried. We had grocery money in the sock drawer and food in the fridge. But when we returned, we discovered someone had broken into our tiny apartment. The cash was gone from the sock drawer, and even the food was taken from the fridge. After church, we came home and sat down at the empty table. No food. No money. What were we to do?

When you don't know what to do, the best thing to do is pray. So we prayed, "Thank you, Lord, for providing for us, for the food we will receive, even if we don't know where it will come from. But please, Lord. Provide."

An hour later, the prayer was answered in a way we never would have guessed. Another college friend and his family passed through this Wyoming town on a cross-country trip and stopped for a surprise visit. It was only one block out of their way. After our joyous greetings, we heard, "Hungry? Buffet at the truck stop sound good? It's all you can eat!" One of the best meals ever! After a two-hour lunch, we parted ways again. Back at the apartment, we found a \$20 bill left on the kitchen table.

"Give us this day our daily bread," Jesus taught us to pray. Our physical needs are essential, and we should pray for them. But what else are we doing when we pray? We are trusting. We are learning that our provision is not something that just comes from our own effort. Food doesn't just come from the grocery store. Money is not just from our earnings. Health is not only in the hands of our medical professionals. God provides.

Jesus teaches us to daily **Pray for Provision**.

Make a list of physical needs and practice trusting God. Pray for:

- Your needs and others in need
- Items easily taken for granted
- Larger financial goals
- Medical or physical needs
- Daily dependence. "Give us today our daily bread."
- Tithe and offerings as an expression of trust

Ask boldly and with a thankful heart!

DAY 18 CHALLENGE

Before moving to prayer, look back at the last year of your life and thank God for three ways He has provided for you. Now, think of the three ways in which you would ask God to provide for your next year.

PRAYER

Pray for your provision this year (financial, medical, physical, etc.). Pray and intercede over family, friends, and acquaintances who are facing illness and physical challenges.

WEEK 3 CHURCHWIDE PRAYER FOCUS

JESUS, HELP ME TO TAKE A NEXT STEP IN MY WALK BY SERVING YOU.

DAY 19

HOW DO I PRAY FOR PARDON?

FROM PASTOR ROGER THEIMER

BIBLE VERSES

Matthew 18: 21-35, Ephesians 4:29 – 5:2, 2 1 Corinthians 7:10

Jesus was tried by Pilate and convicted with the shouts of people, “Crucify him!” He had done no wrong. At the same time, Barabbas, one guilty of crimes deserving death, received a pardon. Barabbas was set free because Jesus paid with His life. It is what Jesus has done for us as well.

Pastor Timothy Keller writes, “Jesus’ salvation is not only like receiving a pardon and release from death row and prison. Then we’d be free, but on our own, left to make our own way in the world, thrown back on our own efforts if we’re to make anything of ourselves. But in the Gospel, we discover that Jesus has taken us off death row and then has hung around our neck the Congressional Medal of Honor. We are received and welcomed as heroes as if we had accomplished extraordinary deeds.”

How do I Pray for Pardon? In Jesus’ prayer model, He teaches us to pray: “Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.” (**Luke 11:4**) We are praying for our pardon and that we also would pardon those who have wronged us! Here’s how:

First, I repent. I turn from actions and motives that are not honoring God or loving others. I turn toward God to confess these sins.

- I admit I sinned against God and do not make excuses or dismiss lightly.

- I embrace Godly sorrow, not selfish regret, because I am sorry for the consequences.
- I check my heart and see what motives need to be confessed.

Next, I believe in the Gospel.

- I receive Jesus as my Savior and His payment on the cross that pardons me.
- Lay my sin at the foot of the cross in humble repentance.
- I accept his pardon and rely on God’s power to share it with others.

Then, I work on forgiving others.

- I identify those injuries others have done to me and any bitterness I hold.
- I admit that I cannot by my power pardon their debt, but God can help me do it.
- I release their debt and lay it at the foot of the cross next to my own sin.

We live in a condition of pardon with God. We rehearse that relationship as we daily confess our sins. So likewise, we pardon others for their offenses and remind ourselves not to hold a grudge daily.

DAY 19 CHALLENGE

Write down one major area that the Lord is leading you to confess. Who is one person that is hardest for you to forgive? Practice releasing their debt.

PRAYER

For my freedom from sin.

WEEK 3 CHURCHWIDE PRAYER FOCUS

JESUS, HELP ME TO TAKE A NEXT STEP IN MY WALK BY SERVING YOU.

DAY 20

HOW DO I PRAY FOR PROTECTION?

FROM PASTOR ROGER THEIMER

BIBLE VERSES

Ephesians 6:10-18, I Peter 5:8-11, Hebrews 2:14

I am amazed at how big Halloween celebrations are becoming in America. I am curious about people's different beliefs behind ghosts, devils, and spiritual things. Statistics tell us that less than half of Americans believe that there is such a thing as a real devil. The costume depictions either make him out to be super scary or comically amusing. I think it is safe to say that most dismiss the importance of taking the spiritually dark forces as a real threat.

Not so with Jesus. He understood the threat and power of Satan and His forces of evil.

In the Lord's Prayer, we pray, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." There is perhaps a better translation. **Matthew 6:13** can read, "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." Catch the difference? Not generic "evil," but "the Evil One." "Evil" has a personal name: "Evil One." Elsewhere it is Satan, or the Enemy, or the Devil. He is joined by an entire evil kingdom of demons who would try to entice us away from the life we have in Christ.

This threat is more significant than you or me to answer independently. We must be alert and call on God's help. It is vital enough to be included in our regular rhythm of prayer.

How do I Pray for Protection?

First, be alert of the enemy's schemes.

- Satan's goal is to pull you away from God.
- Much of the battle happens in your thought life and in the desires of your heart.
- Satan suggests you would best find your ultimate fulfillment not from God but from your old nature.

Second, pray according to the victory Jesus has won.

- Ephesians 6 tells us to stand firm. We stand on the victory of Christ.
- We pray and put on His full armor.
- Put on the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, feet fitted with the Gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit.

We are again praying for God's kingdom to come into our world. This time it is for protection so that we might remain faithful. It will be a battle, but as we call on the name of Jesus, we are reminded that He has already won the war through the cross! That will be revealed on the last day. Let's pray!

DAY 20 CHALLENGE

Reread Ephesians 6:10-18 and spend some time going through these verses. As it mentions arming yourself with spiritual armor, go through the motions like you are physically putting this armor on.

PRAYER

For my trust in Jesus to grow.

WEEK 3 CHURCHWIDE PRAYER FOCUS

JESUS, HELP ME TO TAKE A NEXT STEP IN MY WALK BY SERVING YOU.

DAY 21

HOW CAN I CONTINUE A LIFESTYLE OF PRAYER?

FROM PASTOR ROGER THEIMER

BIBLE VERSES

Matthew 11:11-13, Philippians 4:4-7, Luke 18:1

If you have walked through this journey of prayer for the last 21 days, congratulations! Most people do not get through a full 21 days with a regular pattern of prayer and devotions. Don't give up. You made it to the end. Give yourself grace if you skipped any days. God's mercies are new every morning. What's your next step in developing a consistent prayer habit?

How can I continue a lifestyle of prayer?

Begin by recognizing where your power will come from. A vitalized prayer life is more extensive than our own abilities. Ask God and trust Him to give you the best gift. This gift opens your heart to delight in Him. "How much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" Invite the Holy Spirit. Let the Holy Spirit guide your prayer times.

A vitalized prayer life will have its ups and downs. Stay with it. Sometimes it feels like work, and other times it is the most joyful activity of the day. Richard Foster says: "We today yearn for prayer and hide from prayer. We are attracted to it and repelled by it." He goes on to say, "Real prayer comes not from gritting our teeth but from falling in love."

One thing that helps me is that every night before bed, I remind myself: "The most important thing I will do tomorrow is to spend time alone with God. Why? Because He is glad to be with me, and I am glad to be with Him! And we have things to say to each other." This helps me look forward to our time together.

In the middle of this experience is JOY. Like Philippians 4 reads: "Rejoice in the Lord. I will say it again, Rejoice! ...by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests to God." That is the joy of being together. It's the joy that comes from sharing our love with each other. I plan for an enjoyable setting for our time together. There's a comfortable chair and lamp, soft worship music, coffee, and a regular Bible reading. My prayer journal helps me answer the question, "What are you saying to me today, Lord?" My response? "Lord, here's what I need to tell you...."

There is no one-size-all when it comes to prayer. But keep praying. And you will experience a joy that you never thought possible in this world. God bless you!

DAY 21 CHALLENGE

What is one habit you can place in your life to help you maintain a consistent and joy-filled prayer life?

PRAYER

For your personal vision for the year.

WEEK 3 CHURCHWIDE PRAYER FOCUS

JESUS, HELP ME TO TAKE A NEXT STEP IN MY WALK BY SERVING YOU.



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