

PRAY FIRST

PRAYER GUIDE &
DEVOTIONAL



PRAY FIRST 2023

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READ THIS FIRST BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

Pray First is an opportunity to start off 2023 doing what matters most above all—connecting with God and growing in relationship with Him. As we enter a new year, we want to collectively pursue God through prayer and daily connection with Him churchwide. As a church we know that apart from connection with Him we cannot experience the transformation we long for in our lives and in the lives of those in our city and spheres of influence. Taking time to put Him first, sets us on the trajectory personally and collectively to experience the transformative power of His love that comes from regular connection with Him. Join us as we learn to grow in recognizing His voice and experiencing His presence together as we kick off 2023 with *Pray First!*

WAYS TO ENGAGE DURING PRAY FIRST:

All Campus Worship Night:

Join us for our All-Campus Worship Night on January 8th at 7pm at our North Campus.

Daily Devotional:

Connect with God through Daily Devotionals that include a scripture focus, prayers crafted around those scriptures, and journaling prompts with God. This 6-day devotional can be done individually, as a family, as a life group/community group, etc. We want this experience to meet everyone where they are in their faith journey. *Whether you are exploring faith, new to faith or been a long-time Christ follower, our prayer is that you will experience God's heart for you as we seek God together this week. If you come across material in the daily devotional that provokes questions and a desire to learn or explore more about a topic or scripture, please don't hesitate to reach out to your group leader or campus staff.*

“Noon Zoom”

Join us on our all-campus “noon Zoom” call (**Monday, January 9th thru Saturday, January 14th**) where our campus staff and volunteer leaders will share from their hearts and lead us in prayer around the daily devotional topics. You can participate from wherever you are at noon each day, and some campuses will be providing space for those who want to watch the Zoom call together and share/pray in groups live at the campus after the call. For more info on campus specific details, check out gatewaychurch.com/prayer or connect with your local campus staff for more info.

Worship Song Playlist:

Beginning January 8th, you will find a worship playlist for each day of the devotional book. These lists were prayerfully compiled to align with the prayer/journaling focus of the day and can be strategically used to help you further connect with God during this special week of prayer.



More Resources:

Check out gatewaychurch.com/prayer for campus specific opportunities to engage in Pray First together at your local campus (January 9th-14th) as well as upcoming prayer events like the *Hearing God Workshop* and

Transformations Conference. Continue your journey with God at Gateway by connecting with us to Belong, Heal, Serve, or Grow. Consider attending Starting Gate at your campus to learn more gatewaychurch.com/starting-gate

PRAYER JOURNAL DAILY CONNECTION

PRAY FIRST 2023

Know that as you come to meet with God each day this week, **He is fully prepared to meet with you.** As you pray and meditate on these scriptures, picture yourself sitting with Him in a place that brings you joy and peace. He wants to meet you “there.” We encourage you to pray out loud to God and ask Him as you would a friend. If you have yet to begin your journey following Jesus, and want to start this year with making that commitment to follow Him, you can pray this simple prayer:

Jesus, I want what you did on the cross to count for me. Please forgive me for trying to be the leader of my own life. I choose to begin this year by following you and growing in my relationship with you. I invite you to be the leader of my life and to fill me with your Spirit that will empower me to follow you and be transformed by you. Amen.

If you prayed that prayer for the first time or are recommitting to following Jesus, go to gatewaychurch.com/connect to let us know so that we can help support you on your new beginning with Jesus.

As you begin this week of prayer time with God, we have provided scriptures, prayers crafted around those scriptures, and journal prompts to help guide you in a time of daily prayer and connection with God. Our prayer is that as we pursue God together as a church at the beginning of 2023, we will hear His voice and experience His presence together. May our experiences with Him this week lead to transformation within us and within our spheres of influence this coming year!

Day 1 Spotify Playlist



DAY ONE

GRATITUDE – JANUARY 9TH

Scripture Focus:

Psalm 100

A psalm. For giving grateful praise.

Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth.

Worship the Lord with gladness;

come before him with joyful songs.

Know that the Lord is God.

It is he who made us, and we are his;

we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving

and his courts with praise;

give thanks to him and praise his name.

For the Lord is good and his love endures forever;

his faithfulness continues through all generations.

Philippians 4:4-8

*Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, **with thanksgiving**, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.*

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Prayer

Pray out loud if you are in a place where you can do so, and remember, that today's prayer is crafted using the scriptures above:

Father God, I want to come to you with a heart of gratitude at the beginning of 2023. Before making any requests of you or from you, I want to share my thankfulness for who are and who you have been for me in the past, who you are for me now and who you will continue to be in my future. As I sit here with you today, I want to reminisce about the ways you have shown yourself faithful throughout my life. Even before I knew you, you knew me, and I am grateful for your faithfulness to me.



Sit quietly with God and take some time to reflect on how God has loved you, seen you and cared for you directly OR through others who have loved you as He does and specifically thank Him for those things.

God, I thank you for the peace that comes when I focus on who you are and how you are always faithful. The same way you have provided for me, protected me, and seen me in the past will most certainly be the way you take care of me now and in my future. Please forgive me for forgetting to be thankful and express my gratitude for who you are. I pray that you will help me to remain in a place of gratitude and prayer this year by quickly reminding me when I become overly focused on circumstances around me instead of the God who created me. Please remind me to come to you with thanksgiving and the requests of my heart knowing that you, as the God of Peace, will guard over my heart and give me a peace that is beyond what the world or any other thing can give me.

I know that while I am not thankful for all circumstances, I can be thankful in all circumstances because you guard over me and lead me beside still waters as my Good Shepherd described in Psalm 23. Thank you that in you I lack nothing and that you take good care of me. I start this year declaring that you are greater than any circumstance, higher than any problem, and strong when I feel weak. I choose to set my focus on what is true, good, right, pure, and lovely. I choose to seek You in every season of my life and set my eyes on Your goodness. I love you. Amen.

Prompts for Journaling

Multiple prompts have been provided. Take your time and don't feel pressure to complete all of them in one sitting. You can extend your journaling throughout the month if you don't have time to complete responses to all prompts today.

Remember, as you connect with God in prayer, it is two-way conversation with Him. He responds to our prayers, questions, worship, etc, with thoughts, promptings, sensings, creative ideas/strategies, etc. Record what He shares with you and follow His counsel.

- Write a letter to God expressing your gratitude for who He has been for you, your family, etc, in the past and express your desire to experience that same provision, protection, peace, etc in your current circumstances. Take time to soak in that the same God who was there for you in the past will certainly be there for you now. Reflect on His goodness to you in the past and invite Him to hit the “refresh” button in your heart and have a renewed sense of what you experienced in those moments comfort your heart in this present season.
- Make a list of your prayer requests over this coming year. What are you believing God for in this coming year? What are you sensing to pray for related to your family, your spheres of influence, your finances, your physical health, friends/family to come to know Jesus, etc. Spend some time praying about these things and surrendering any concerns, worries, fears to God as you pray. Ask the God of Peace to guard your heart as you surrender these requests to Him.



As you consider what Philippians 4 encourages us to focus on, ask God to reveal to you the following:

- Take some time to ask Him to reveal to you what is true about Him, yourself, and/or others and ask Him to give you practical ways you can stay grounded in this truth.
- Ask him to show you ways you have not believed “whatever is true” about Him, yourself, or others.
- If He revealed any lies you have believed, ask Him to reveal any unhealthy patterns or behaviors that have taken root in your life as a result of believing those lies.

End this time of journaling and reflection by praying this prayer:

God, thank you for revealing to me ways in which I have not believed what is true about you, myself or others. I want to love you, myself and others the way that you love. I reject the lies that I have believed and the negative patterns of behavior produced as a result of the lies I have believed about you, myself and others. I want your truth to be my focus this year and beyond, and I want your truth to guide me in my decisions and actions. Help me to stay rooted in your truth by remaining focused on you and the practical wisdom you gave me today. Amen.



DAY TWO

CONNECTION WITH GOD – JANUARY 10TH

Scripture Focus:

John 15:1-17

*I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit **he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.** You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.*

*I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; **apart from me you can do nothing.** If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. **If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.** This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.*

*As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now **remain in my love.** If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your **joy may be complete.** My command is this: Love each other*

*as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. **I no longer call you servants**, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, **I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.** You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—**fruit that will last**—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. ^This is my command: Love each other.*

Prayer

Pray out loud if you are in a place where you can do so, and remember, that today's prayer is crafted using the scriptures above.

Father God, I thank you for pruning me so that I can bear more fruit, and that the fact you have pruned me means that I have born fruit in the past and you are preparing me to continue to bear fruit that remains. Forgive me for the ways I have tried to do things apart from you or ahead of you because I know that apart from you I can do nothing. I don't want to bear just any kind of fruit. I want to bear fruit that remains.

I cherish the reality that when I remain in you and your words are in me, that my prayer life becomes exciting as I pray and see those things come to pass. I know my prayer life with you will only be as strong as my relational connection with you in the friendship you invite me into. I thank you that I am not one who solely serves and follows you but that you call me your friend.

*I thank you that I am invited to walk in friendship with you and as your (daughter, son) my value to you is not based on what I do or how I perform. Teach me how to work not just **for** You but **with** You. Thank you that you empower me when I remain in You and that completes my joy.*

In you, I find my peace, joy, rest and strength. I ask that you refresh my connection with You today and throughout this year. Whenever I am tempted to do anything apart from you, would you quickly remind me to reconnect with you and walk with you in the cool of the day as Adam and Eve did. I thank you that you demonstrate for me that it is through connection with you, not the toil of my own hands, that great fruit is produced in me and through me. It is a joy to partner with you and I thank you that you invite me to do that as your child and your friend. In your name I pray, Amen.

Prompts for Journaling

Multiple prompts have been provided. Take your time and don't feel pressure to complete all of them in one sitting. You can extend your journaling throughout the month if you don't have time to complete responses to all prompts today.

Remember, as you connect with God in prayer, it is two-way conversation with Him. He responds to our prayers, questions, worship, etc, with thoughts, promptings, sensings, creative ideas/strategies, etc. Record what He shares with you and follow His counsel.

- Write a letter to yourself from God as He prompts you with His thoughts toward you. Invite God to speak to you about how you have grown as you have been pruned over this past season. Let Him show you what is “good”

and the fruit that remains that has been produced in you and through you over this last season in your marriage, friendships, family, ministry etc. Let your Father celebrate “what’s good.”

- Ask God to reveal to you ways that you tried to accomplish things outside of His strength and connection with Him in 2022 (or over the years). Ask Him to forgive you for the times you didn’t abide in Him, and invite Him to reveal to you how to be more intentional about connecting with Him in 2023 and beyond.
- Connect with God about what it means to not only work for Him but also with Him in your spheres of influence including your job/co-workers, family and other relationships, etc. In prayer and conversation with Him, invite Him to show you practical ways to remain in Him and partner with Him as it relates to various areas of your life, family, work, ministry etc.



DAY THREE

KNOWING GOD AND BEING KNOWN BY GOD GOD – JANUARY 11TH

Scripture Focus:

Ephesians 3:14-21

For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Ephesians 1:17

I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.



Prayer

Pray out loud if you are in a place where you can do so, and remember, that today's prayer is crafted using the scriptures above.

Jesus, I know that mere cerebral knowledge of Your love is not the fullness of what you have for me. I join with the prayer that Paul prayed for the church of Ephesus. I ask that you wed knowledge about you and experience with you in my life and in the lives of those I lead. I know that you do beyond what I can ask, think or imagine when I pray and connect with you, so I come to you with an expectancy and hunger to know you more. I invite you to do what your mom said when she declared that you "satisfy the hungry with good things."

I am hungry to know you more and in the places of my heart where I may have lost hunger and expectancy due to weariness, busyness, disappointment, etc, I invite you to stir hunger in my heart again. I know that a spiritual awakening around me cannot happen without spiritual spiritual awakening within me, so I invite you to stir the waters of my heart to thirst and hunger after you in a refreshed way. In your precious name I pray, Amen.

Prompts for Journaling

Multiple prompts have been provided. Take your time and don't feel pressure to complete all of them in one sitting. You can extend your journaling throughout the month if you don't have time to complete responses to all prompts today.

Remember, as you connect with God in prayer, it is two-way conversation with Him. He responds to our prayers, questions, worship, etc, with thoughts, promptings, sensings, creative ideas/strategies, etc. Record what He shares with you and follow His counsel.

- Ask God to reveal to you an aspect or aspects of His character that you know about but have yet to experience deeply (beyond mere head knowledge) the way that Paul prayed for those in the church to experience. For example, perhaps you know about Him as “Father”, but have yet to experience Him as Father. Ask Him how you can partner with Him to know Him more in these ways. (other examples: Friend, Healer, Protector, Leader....etc) Ask Him if there are things that are blocking you from fully experiencing the love He has for you and how you can partner with Him to see those hindrances and blockages removed.
- Ask God to give you names of people to pray for who need experience with Him in a specific way. Perhaps you have a co-worker who needs to experience Him as Healer or an estranged child who needs to experience Him as Father or a neighbor who needs to experience Him as Provider or the Prince of Peace. Pray for them as Paul prayed for the church in Ephesians 3.





DAY FOUR

POWER OF FORGIVENESS - JANUARY 12TH

Scripture Focus:

Matthew 18:21-35

The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?” Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times. “Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him. Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. “At this the servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’ The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go. “But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded. “His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.’ “But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything

that had happened. "Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

Hebrews 12:15

"See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled.

Matthew 5:44

But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you

Job 42:10

After Job had prayed for his friends (those who had hurt him), the LORD restored his fortunes and gave him twice as much as he had before.

**Context: Job went through a season of great loss including relationally, financially and physically. His friends judged him and concluded that his sin was causing all of these things when God saw him as one who had honored God. Job's response in prayer unlocked justice in his life.*



Prayer

Pray out loud if you are in a place where you can do so, and remember, that today's prayer is crafted using the scriptures above.

Take time to write down anything God reveals to you after praying. Write down names and situations that God brings to mind. Be as specific as you can as you write down what needs to be forgiven including what the injustices against you caused in your life and the lives of those in your family, friends, etc.

After writing down anything God shows you, you are now ready to take these things to prayer. Sample prayers are below.

Part One of Forgiveness Prayer

Jesus, I repent for my judgments and un-forgiveness of _____ (e.g, my mother, my father, co-worker, sibling, etc). I have carried the burden of the pain they inflicted and my own un-forgiveness for too long. I ask you to take from me the pain associated with their sin so that I can forgive more deeply from my heart as you encourage me to do in Matthew 18:35

Share your hurts here and Invite Jesus to take the pain associated with these hurts. As you pray, it is often helpful to picture yourself with Jesus and handing over the pain to Him...letting Him take it. Don't rush this moment with Him. He truly wants to take the burden that pain and unforgiveness cause in our lives.

Part Two of Forgiveness Prayer

I ask for Your grace to forgive _____ right now. I am asking for the same grace you had, to say, “Father, forgive them” while the ones You were forgiving were crucifying You on the cross. I forgive _____ for _____.

I realize that according to Your word, when I forgive, I am releasing the one who offended me from owing me anything, and; therefore, I am positioning myself to receive Your justice that far exceeds what any human can give me. I come boldly before Your throne of grace and ask for your justice. Justice for myself and justice for my enemies. I pray that you give them what they don’t deserve because You gave me what I don’t deserve. At this time, I invite you to come into my life and do the opposite of what the sins against me produced in my life. In the place of all the disappointment, fear, rejection, abuse and trauma, I ask you to release your love, joy, peace, wisdom, confidence, and grace. I thank you for also sending people to me who will model new, healthy patterns in my life and reinforce these patterns around me. I ask you to release blessings to me and through me as I walk out these new patterns. Amen.

Consider Restore to find more tools to live out forgiveness and find healing from wounds. Go to gatewaychurch.com/heal for more information.





DAY FIVE

RECEIVING GOD'S FORGIVENESS – JANUARY 10TH

Scripture Focus:

1 John 1:5-9

This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Romans 3:23

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

2 Chronicles 7:14

If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

Galatians 5:13-25

You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself. "If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other. So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.



Prayer

Pray out loud if you are in a place where you can do so, and remember, that today's prayer is crafted using the scriptures above.

Jesus, I know that without Your grace, I am doomed to repeat history or start patterns of sin in my life through my own judgements and/or repetition of the sin that was modeled for me, done against me or initiated by me. Please forgive me for any times I have expected change to happen around me without first pursuing you to bring change within me. I am equally capable of hurting others the ways that I have been hurt when I operate apart from Your grace and divine empowerment to walk in the fruit of your Spirit.

Therefore, I want to humbly come before you, seek you through prayer, and turn from unhealthy patterns. I know it is only by you and through you that true transformation can happen within me and that transformation around me happens first through transformation in me. I choose not to live life as a victim but rather to pursue you for healing and instruction on how to live in your empowerment.

I thank you for choosing to go to the cross for my sins past, present and future. I come to you for forgiveness today. I ask you to reveal to me anything that I need to repent for (turn from, change with your help, need forgiveness for) Please help me to not only receive your forgiveness but forgive myself the way you forgive me. As I experience your forgiveness today, I ask that you would empower me to walk in the fruit of your Spirit as described in Galatians 5. Amen.

Prompts for Journaling

Multiple prompts have been provided. Take your time and don't feel pressure to complete all of them in one sitting. You can extend your journaling throughout the month if you don't have time to complete responses to all prompts today.

Remember, as you connect with God in prayer, it is two-way conversation with Him. He responds to our prayers, questions, worship, etc, with thoughts, promptings, sensings, creative ideas/strategies, etc. Record what He shares with you and follow His counsel.

Ask God to reveal to you anything you need to come to Him for forgiveness for. Write down anything he reveals to you. In addition to the scripture used from Galatians 5, the sample list below may be helpful in identifying patterns of sin our lives:

Examples of sin include (not exhaustive):

Lack of love	Covetousness	Self-Hatred
Stubbornness	Grumbling	Gossiping/
Judging	Disrespect	Slandering
Bitterness	Provoking others	Bad language
Unforgiving spirit	Jealousy	Idle words
Pride	Strife	Bad motives
Selfishness	Losing temper	Complacency
Boasting	Bodily harm	Hypocrisy
Stubbornness	Anger	Other gods
Lack of submission	Addiction	Worry (fear)
Rebellion	Adultery	Cheating
Disobedience	Pornography	Stealing
Ungratefulness	Covetousness	Prayerlessness (lack
Impatience	Control	of dependance on
Discontent	Manipulation	God)
Complaint	Lying	

Note: this is not a time to carry a weight of guilt or shame, but rather, a time to surrender that guilt, shame and your mistakes to Jesus and trust Him to help you to do your best to make it right and turn from any unhealthy patterns. It is humility and honesty before God and others that opens the door for healing and experiencing God's forgiveness and empowerment to forgive ourselves.

Prayer After Journaling

God forgive me for the ways that I have sinned against you and others. I specifically ask you to forgive me for _____ . I ask you to cleanse me of this sin and reveal to me how to partner with you in not continuing to repeat history. Jesus, I thank you that you are the one who empowers me to not repeat history.

From this day forward, if I step back into default sin patterns would you help me to quickly see my sin, repent for it, and make it right with the people it affected. Thank you for your kind and loving forgiveness that welcomes into participating with you in the new patterns you have for me. I thank you that through your forgiveness I have a way of hope in front of me that separates me from the dark path my sin was creating.

*I reject the shame or guilt that the enemy or others may try to place on me, and I receive your love and forgiveness now. Jesus, I invite you to show me anything you want me to do to make things right with others and what you want me to have in place in my life to help me step out of default, unhealthy patterns and walk "in step with the Spirit." ***Write down anything he shows you and commit to walking that out in 2023 and beyond***



DAY SIX

LOVING OUR CITY, NATION, AND WORLD THROUGH PRAYER JANUARY 14TH

This day's devotional time includes a time of prayer using a prayer guide of scriptures and prayers crafted using those scriptures. It is designed to help you pray God's words over yourself, your family and friends, the city, the nation, and the world. As we unite in prayer and receive God's call to action in this time, we believe God will hear us and heal our land. Today, take time to read these scriptures aloud, pray the prayers crafted using those scriptures as well as anything else God brings to mind and heart.

The last two days were spent forgiving others and receiving God's forgiveness. This begins the pathway to pray for our spheres of influence. Check out these scriptures that reveal this to us:

Daniel 9:17-19

Now, our God, hear the prayers and petitions of your servant. For your sake, Lord, look with favor on your desolate sanctuary. Give ear, our God, and hear; open your eyes and see the desolation of the city that bears your Name. We do not make requests of you because we are righteous, but because of your great mercy. Lord, listen! Lord, forgive! Lord, hear and act! For your

sake, my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your Name.

2 Chronicles 7:14

If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

Key Scriptures/Prayers for the Church to Influence the World with God's Love

Unity

John 17:20-23 (Jesus Prayer for Us to Be Unified)

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

Psalm 133

*How good and pleasant it is
when God's people live together in unity!
It is like precious oil poured on the head,
running down on the beard,
running down on Aaron's beard,
down on the collar of his robe.
It is as if the dew of Hermon
were falling on Mount Zion.
For there the Lord bestows his blessing,
even life forevermore.*

Prayer

(crafted using above scriptures)

Jesus, I pray that I, along with your church, will be an answer to the prayer that you prayed in John 17. I pray that we would be one as you and the Father are one and that we would pursue unity with one another. I thank you that unity does not mean the same thing as uniformity and that you made us all individually unique and beautiful in your image. Please forgive us for the ways we have not honored one another and have judged, competed, held prejudice or racism in our hearts, and, as a result have failed to be an example of unity and love to those who have yet to come to know you.



I pray that we would become a people that demonstrate what it looks like to invite people to come as they are in the same way that you invited people to come to you. In the same fashion, we invite you, God, to come as you are and search our hearts and show us ways that we need to change and be transformed by you so that we can more fully represent you and your character to the world around us. I pray that we would walk in a unity like you describe in Psalm 133—a unity that leads to you pouring out blessing and healing us and those around us in our spheres of influence.

Overcoming Fear and Being a “light” Among Darkness

Psalm 91:1-6, 9-11

Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, “He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.” Surely he will save you from the fowler’s snare and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart. You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday. If you say, “The Lord is my refuge,” and you make the Most High your dwelling, no harm will overtake you, no disaster will come near your tent. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways”

Isaiah 60:1-3

*Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the Lord rises upon you.
See, darkness covers the earth
and thick darkness is over the peoples,
but the Lord rises upon you
and his glory appears over you.
Nations will come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.*

John 14:27

*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not
give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be
troubled and do not be afraid.*

1 John 4:18

*There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear,
because fear has to do with punishment. The one who
fears is not made perfect in love.*

John 10:10

*The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I
have come that they may have life, and have it to the
full.*



Prayer

(crafted using above scriptures)

Father God, I acknowledge that Your faithfulness, protection, and shelter are greater than any “plague” that may come near me. I admit that it can be in my sin-nature to fear in times like we are facing, but I run toward You and not away from You in this time. I pray that You would push back fear and strengthen me to resist the temptation to give in to fear and panic in this time.

I pray that your Church would live from a place of your peace—a peace that surpasses anything that the world can offer—and that this peace we carry would draw others to want to know you. Father God, I ask You for a deeper awareness of Your love for me and those around me, as You push away fear.

You told us that the enemy comes to kill, rob, and destroy, but you come that we may have life. Perfect me in Your love and drive out fear in me and around me. Help me to be an influence of your perfect love around me and that I would impact the lives of others with your love.

Supernatural Provision and Generosity

Philippians 4:19

And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

Acts 2:42-47

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Prayer

(crafted using above scriptures)

Father God, in a time when many are hoarding out of fear, I pray that we would be known for our love, sense of family, devotion to prayer, the miracles you do through us, and our generosity. I pray that You would provide in such extravagant ways, that we would have enough for ourselves and our families, as well as for others in need. I pray that we, as Your Church, would live from a place of abundance and provision instead of lack and scarcity.

Release of God's Love and Family Through His Church

Isaiah 60:1

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of



the Lord rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises upon you (His Church) and his glory appears over you.

Romans 8:15

The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."

2 Cor 5:17-20

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God

Malachi 4:6

He will turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents

Luke 13:29

People will come from east and west and north and

south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God.

Acts 17:23

For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: to an unknown god. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship--and this is what I am going to proclaim to you.

Prayer

(crafted using above scriptures)

Father God, I pray that in a time when the world is in deep panic, Your Church would rise up with hope. I pray that we would be reminded that because of your Spirit we are adopted into your family, and we live from a place of Your deep love for us as Your children.

I pray that, we as Your Church would be awakened by Your perfect love and rise up in supernatural love, peace, joy, faith, and hope, and that this would draw others to You. Where the enemy has intended to bring great destruction, we pray that You would usher us into one of the greatest awakenings the world has yet known. Awaken us and awaken those who have yet to know You in this time. Help us be the ministers of reconciliation and the ambassadors You have called us to be. We pray that You would no longer be “the unknown God” in our cities. May many come to know You as their Father, and I pray that a deep revelation of the family of God and You as our Father would come to our world in this hour.

Journaling Prompt:

Not only did Jesus speak to crowds, we see time and again through scripture that Jesus often stopped for the “one.” In fact, in Luke 15 he teaches about how much a shepherd who has 100 sheep would leave 99 to look for the one gone astray. Jesus, the one who called Himself the “Good Shepherd” invites us to live a life where we are aware of “the one” and live out the very things we just prayed. So many want to do the big things, but few are willing to do the little things—like seeing “the one.”

Invite God to open your eyes and speak to you about who or what your “one” is as you step into 2023.

- Who has God called you to influence with His peace, generosity, love, kindness, or joy? Who is He calling you to be more intentionally influencing? And what action(s) does that require? Write out anything he shows you.
- As we wrap up this week of prayer, ask God what is next for you. Journal about what God has brought to mind for you and consider what next step you can take to connect to a group designed to help you Belong, Grow, Serve, or Heal.
- Then, as you obey Him through prayer and action, let the adventure begin. Happy New Year 2023!!!!

NEXT STEPS

These precious times of prayer and connection with God don't have to end. There are so many ways to continue your journey with God this year. Check out gatewaychurch.com/prayer or scan the QR code for ways to continue to grow in your faith journey.



