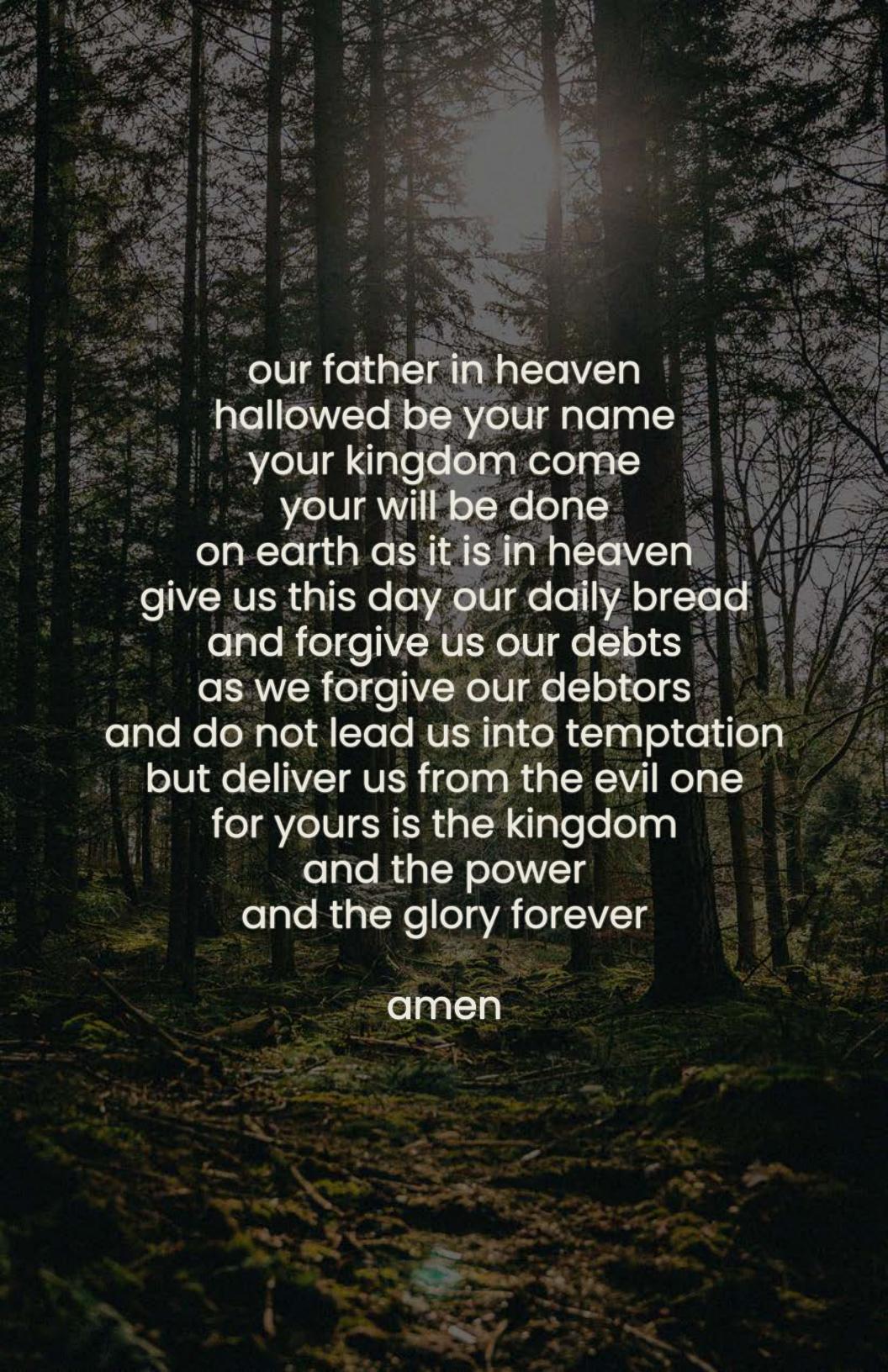


# PRAY FIRST

21 DAYS OF PRAYER & FASTING





our father in heaven  
hallowed be your name  
your kingdom come  
your will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven  
give us this day our daily bread  
and forgive us our debts  
as we forgive our debtors  
and do not lead us into temptation  
but deliver us from the evil one  
for yours is the kingdom  
and the power  
and the glory forever

amen

# A CALL TO FAST

*"Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, To undo the heavy burdens, To let the oppressed go free, And that you break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, And that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; When you see the naked, that you cover him, And not hide yourself from your own flesh? Then your light shall break forth like the morning, Your healing shall spring forth speedily, And your righteousness shall go before you; The glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; You shall cry, and He will say, 'Here I am.'"*  
Isaiah 58:6-9 (NKJV)

Fasting is an important discipline in scripture. In Matthew 6:16, Jesus does not command us to fast but rather speaks about it from the assumption that we are already doing it ("And when you fast...")! Fasting means to willingly abstain or reduce some food or drink (or both) for a period of time with the purpose of seeking and depending on the Lord. There are many different types of fasts held in the Bible including partial fasts, like in Daniel, or absolute fasts (no food or water). Fasting in scripture always included food or meals, but you can include abstaining from things like TV, social media, etc. with the purpose of spending that time with the Lord. When considering how or what to fast remember, if it is important to you, it is important to God! You are not fasting to try and manipulate God into action in your life. You are humbling yourself before him and giving something to Him as a sacrifice with the desire to go deeper in your relationship with Him. The goal is more of Him! God honors that type of sacrifice with the promise that when we seek Him, we WILL find Him!

With that being our intention, look at all the benefits of humbling ourselves in true fasting as recorded in Isaiah 58! Do you want strongholds to be broken? Heaviness to be removed? Greater effectiveness for God's kingdom? Healing? God's protection and rear-guard? Revival within our city and nation? Fasting brings these things because that is what He already desires for us and He honors the heart of His children as they seek after Him. Do not view this time of fasting and prayer as a dread or punishment, but as a time of great expectation! God's heart is for you to draw close to Him.

Ask the Holy Spirit what He is putting on your heart to fast during this period of corporate prayer and fasting. Write it on the provided line below as a vow and commitment before the LORD during this time.

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## **WHAT ARE YOU FASTING?**

We are all excited to see God do a powerful work in your life, in our city, and in our nation during this time!

# AS YOU BEGIN

**If my people....I will.**

## **How many doors have you passed through today?**

In the rush of your comings and goings, you probably gave little thought to whether the door would open when you arrived or close when you left. But let's pause for a moment and consider the reliability of that simple mechanism that makes open doors possible — the hinge. Hinges, like church soundmen, are often taken for granted until something goes wrong. You can pass through the same door a thousand times without a hitch, but over time, a neglected hinge can loosen, come out of alignment, rust, or seize up. Then there's the obnoxious squeak. At first, we might ignore it, but the problem only worsens without attention. Whether it needs tightening, replacing, or just a splash of WD-40, a little intentional maintenance can restore it to quiet, smooth operation. **It all hinges on the hinge.** In 2 Chronicles 2: 7-14, we have a hinge. This hinge is a simple two-letter word - IF.

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

IF we humble ourselves  
IF we will pray  
IF we will seek His face  
IF we will repent

## **Then... HE WILL.**

He will hear.  
He will forgive.  
He will heal.

## **It all hinges on the hinge.**

There are things that hinge entirely on God's grace, mercy, and goodness—our salvation being chief among them. But as God's beloved people, we also have a role to play in seeing His kingdom come, and His will done, right here, right now. God is ready to fulfill His promises in ways that exceed our imagination and expectations. And we are invited to move with Him, partnering with Him, to see that it is so. Action is needed on our part. We have a responsibility. What does the welfare of our city hinge upon? What opens doors that need to be opened and shuts those that need to close? **Prayer. Praying people are like the hinges of a door, facilitating God's entrance, movement, and healing in the people and places we care about so deeply.**

This is a call to humility through fasting, confession, repentance, and both individual and corporate prayer – all in pursuit of seeking God's face. These practices are the hinges that will hold us together in unity over the next 21 days. Maybe some of these practices are new to you, or perhaps they've been neglected like a squeaky hinge in need of attention, oil, and maintenance.

Over the next 21 days, what might God do in response to your humbling yourself through fasting, confession, and repentance? What deep change could occur as you redirect your hunger and cravings toward seeking His face? What answers hinge upon your prayers—and ours—for our spiritual lives, our families, our churches, and our community? Finally, in 2 Chronicles 7:13, God begins by saying, "If I shut up the heavens..." but then, in His grace, He lovingly provides the solution for the heavens to be opened once more. "If my people...." Oh, how we need the heavens to open over our city.

**It all hinges on the hinge. It hinges on the IF. Will you?**



**IF YOU'RE HOLDING THIS GUIDE,  
YOU'VE BEEN PRAYED FOR.**

# INWARD TRANSFORMATION



# AWE & REVERENCE FOR GOD

There's something grounding about starting in the right place. Before the asks, before the plans, before the noise... we pray first. And the first posture of prayer is awe. Awe is that holy pause when we remember who God is and who we are not. Reverence is not fear that pushes us away, but wonder that draws us in. It's the recognition that the God who spoke galaxies into existence also leans close enough to hear a whispered prayer.

When we slow down long enough to recognize God's greatness, our perspective begins to shift. The problems that felt overwhelming start to find their proper size. The pressure to have all the answers loosens. Our hearts remember that we are not carrying the weight of the world. God is.

Scripture reminds us that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Wisdom starts when we stop trying to lead and instead acknowledge the One who already reigns. Awe recalibrates us. Reverence re-centers us. It places God back on the throne of our hearts and gently moves us out of the way.

Today, as churches and believers pray together, we begin here. Not rushed. Not distracted. Simply aware. Aware of God's holiness. Aware of His power. Aware of His nearness. Let this first prayer not be about what you need, but about who God is. Sit in the wonder. Name His greatness. Thank Him for being bigger than every fear, stronger than every obstacle, and faithful in every season.

When we pray first with awe and reverence, everything else finds its rightful place. Pause. Breathe. Behold the greatness of God.

# TURNING BACK TO GOD

James 4:7-10

God never tells us to stop something without showing us what to put in its place. When He calls us to resist the devil, He immediately invites us into something far better: closeness with Him.

The question is, "How do we draw near?" Through prayer. As we come to God honestly, we submit to His authority and resist the devil's lies that tempt us to doubt, deny, disregard, or disobey God and His Word. In prayer, we wash our hands of sinful actions and purify our hearts of wrong motives. We grieve over our sin, allowing godly sorrow to lead us to genuine repentance (2 Corinthians 7:10).

When we humble ourselves before the Lord, He promises to lift us up. He gives us strength to love our enemies, overcome bitterness, and stand firm against temptation.

Take time today to draw near to God in prayer: confess your sins, grieve over what grieves God's heart, and humble yourself before Him. Here's the breathtaking truth—the Creator of the universe is waiting, eager to draw near to you. When you pray with a humble heart, you don't have to beg for His attention or wonder if He will respond. Come close in prayer today, and discover He's been waiting all along.

# LIVING IN GOD'S GRACE

Ephesians 2:8-9

God's grace is so much more than forgiveness for yesterday's mistakes. It's a life-changing power that meets us in the middle of our struggles. Imagine being caught in a raging storm at sea; you're floundering, exhausted, barely able to keep your head above water when suddenly someone throws you a lifeboat fully stocked and ready. You climb in, and it carries you. It doesn't matter how long you've drifted or how badly you've struggled; the boat is free, strong, and more than enough to bring you safely to calm waters, giving you hope and strength for the journey ahead.

As Ephesians 2:8-9 reminds us: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."

Embracing God's grace means letting go of striving to earn what Jesus has already secured. The cross was not a partial payment—it was the full settlement. So when Jesus said, "It is finished," He covered your sin, your failures, and your future completely. Living in grace frees us to wake each day confident, not in our perfection, but in His faithfulness. When we stumble, grace carries us back to Him, turning obedience from fear into love.

As you fast and pray today, release performance and receive God's restoring, life-giving grace.

# RESTING IN HIS PEACE

Genesis 1:1-3,  
Isaiah 32:17

Today, we are talking about resting in the Lord's peace. The Hebrew word for "peace" is shalom, and it means far more than the absence of conflict. Shalom carries the idea of wholeness, harmony, completeness, and even a well-ordered life.

In Genesis 1, God orders the world and brings shalom. What was once a chaotic, watery wilderness that was uninhabitable and without structure became a place where life could flourish. Sin, on the other hand, brings disorder. It throws our lives into chaos and confusion. Because of this, we need peace from sin. We need the righteousness of God.

Isaiah 32:17 tells us the outcome of God-given righteousness: "The work of righteousness will be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever." God's grace does not simply cover sin. It also reorders our disordered lives so that His peace can reign within us.

God's peace is not passive or fragile. It brings stillness to our inner world. It settles our hearts. It restores what chaos has broken. It creates space for our souls to flourish again.

So here is the question for today: *What chaos does the Holy Spirit need to bring into order in your life so you can experience His peace?*

# A CLEAN HEART

Psalm 51:10,  
Matthew 5:8

A clean heart is not about perfection—it's about position. It's a heart that stays soft, repentant, and fully surrendered to God. During prayer and fasting, the Lord doesn't just remove distractions; He refines desires. We begin to see where offense, pride, compromise, or hidden sin may have settled in unnoticed.

Jesus said, "God blesses those whose hearts are pure, for they will see God" (Matthew 5:8). A clean heart brings clear vision – we hear Him better, love deeper, and walk lighter.

Today, ask the Holy Spirit to search you deeply. Not to shame you—but to free you. God never exposes to condemn; He reveals to restore.

Let this be our prayer as a city: "Lord, clean our hearts so our city may see You clearly through us."

# DRAWING CLOSE TO GOD

John 10:27-28

Every now and then, I walk down memory lane and think about the first time I saw my wife. It was the first Sunday of the new school year. She walked into my class and I thought, "Wow." She was beautiful, intelligent, and easy to talk to. I realized that I had a decision to make. I could admire from afar or I could do what was necessary to get to know her. The decision to "draw near" has enriched my life for over thirty years.

We understand that no one fosters a deep loving relationship with another by accident. That includes relationship with God. God will "walk into our lives." He'll give us good reason to believe that He's real and good. But WE have to decide what we'll do with that attraction. Will we ignore God? Will we admire from afar? Or will we do what's necessary to draw near to God?

We've talked this week about repentance and turning towards God. There is no relationship with God until we turn towards Him. But God is seeking more than a first date. Jesus explained that people show that they belong to Him by following Him (John 10:27).

There's a lot more "follow me" language in the Gospels than "obey me" language. In ancient times, when a rabbi said, "follow me," he really meant, "I believe you have what it takes to become like me." Those who chose to follow the rabbi would study with him, but they would also eat with him and work alongside him. They wanted to know more than what he thought about a particular scripture. They wanted to learn how to do life the way the rabbi did life. They copied their rabbi to the best of their ability.

Are you willing to follow Jesus? If you are, then study Him (learn Jesus' answers to the hard things of life).

Communicate with Him (learn how to pray AND to listen for His response). Choose to do what Jesus would do (you'll find that active partnership with God fills you with joy). God longs for more than distant adoration. He wants us to "do life" with Him every day.

# STANDING STRONG IN FAITH

Exodus 14:14,  
Ephesians 6:12,  
2 Chronicles 20:15

Are you facing a battle today that feels impossible? A crisis in your marriage, a crushing financial worry, or a temptation that seems unbeatable? The Bible is clear: our biggest struggles are not against “flesh and blood,” but against unseen spiritual forces (Ephesians 6:12).

It is deeply discouraging to face a supernatural enemy with only human strength. But here is the good news: The God of Heaven’s Armies fights for you!

When King Jehoshaphat was surrounded by an overwhelming army, he didn’t train harder or build new weapons; he prayed and stood still. When Moses was tasked with maintaining a posture of prayer during a fight, his strength failed, but God provided a community to hold him up.

Your ultimate act of faith is not to win the battle, but to trust the One who already has. Your job is to pray, seek God’s face, and, as Paul said, “after you have done everything, to stand” (Ephesians 6:13). Plant your feet firmly in the knowledge that God is already on the field to fight for you. Be still, trust, and watch the Lord secure the victory.

# OUTWARD LOVE



# MARRIAGES & RELATIONSHIPS

Proverbs 18:22, Genesis 2:18,  
Ecclesiastes 4:9-12,  
1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Marriage is a great thing. Proverbs states that he who finds a wife finds a good thing. It goes on to say that in finding your wife you obtain favor from the Lord. Husbands, your wife is a great blessing. Wives, your husband is a great blessing. Do not lose sight of that! Marriage is a sacred gift from God. It is the picture of Christ and the church.

Take time to honor, encourage, and pray for your spouse today. Genesis 2 says that it was not good for Adam to be alone, so the Lord made a helper suitable for him. Think of it this way: Eve was created to help and support Adam in a way that parallels how the New Testament describes the ministry of the Holy Spirit. That is the gift and blessing your spouse is! And don't misunderstand—this isn't exclusive of wives helping their husbands. It is also husbands laying down their lives in support of their wives! The greatest marriages happen when two people die to self in Christ and live to serve one another. Make that your prayer today.

For those who are single, embrace this season with devotion to the Lord, and if you desire marriage, pursue a godly spouse.

For those who are married, your marriage may be in a great place. Praise the Lord and keep Him at the center. Your marriage may be in a difficult place. Take the hope of what marriage is meant to be deep into your heart, submit your situation to the Lord, follow His leading, seek wisdom, and pray for your spouse.

# BLESSING THE NEXT GENERATION

Psalm 127:4,  
Psalm 127:3-5,  
Deuteronomy 6:5-9

Leaving behind a legacy of faith is the greatest blessing we can pass on to the next generation. God gives us a sacred calling to protect, guide, and nurture the children in our lives.

Whether they are our biological children or the spiritual sons and daughters He brings our way, God desires that we bless those in our care by modeling His goodness and kindness in everything we do. The next generation is shaped by the faith they see in us: how we pray, how we worship, how we love others, and how we trust God in every season. Our lives lived out in front of them become seeds planted in their hearts.

Today, as you continue this prayer journey, remember that when you speak life to your children, pray over them, and model a sincere walk with Jesus in front of them, you help build a foundation that will carry them long after you are gone.

Take a moment to pray this priestly prayer over the children in your life:

“May the Lord bless you and keep you;  
May His face shine upon you and be gracious to you;  
May the Lord turn His face toward you and give you peace.  
Amen!”

# HOMES FILLED WITH GOD'S PRESENCE

Matthew 18:20,  
Romans 8:11

There is nothing ordinary about a home filled with the presence of God. His presence has the power to shift atmospheres, calm our hearts, restore the broken areas of our lives, and turn chaos into peace. When God fills your home with His presence, it becomes a spiritually thriving environment for you, your family, and everyone who walks through your doors.

When we choose to honor God with our home and family life, we're inviting Him to take His rightful place in the midst of us (Matthew 18:20 NLT). A supernatural change takes place in the environment of our home when we pray together, when we bless our home, when we speak God's Word over our family, and when we intentionally create space for the Holy Spirit to move.

And here's the good news: the same power that raised Christ Jesus from the dead is alive inside of you (Romans 8:11). That means God's presence isn't reserved just for church services or small groups... it's available in your living room, your kitchen, your kids' bedrooms, and even in the everyday rhythms of busy family life.

Through intentional prayer and the power of the Holy Spirit, your home will become a sanctuary of peace and comfort for others, a place where God dwells, where faith grows, and where His presence can connect with every person who enters.

Take time today to pray that God's manifest presence would fill your home.

# GOD OUR PROVIDER

2 Kings 4:1-7

We serve a God who has the power to supernaturally provide for our every need. One of the names of our great God is Jehovah Jireh, the God who provides.

In 2 Kings 4:1-7, there is a story of a widow who was in need of God's provision. Her husband had been a prophet but had died and his debt became her debt. She was hopeless and desperate.

However, in the story she goes from having just a little oil to multiple jars overflowing with oil. God took her "not enough" and turned it into "more than enough"—allowing her to pay off the debt.

How did this happen?

First, don't diminish what you have. The miracle started with what she had. Take what you have and entrust it into the hands of God.

Second, God's abundance often follows our faith. Once the widow did what the prophet told her, God blessed it. Sometimes I wonder what blessings we are missing out on because we haven't done what God has told us to do?

In this new year, let's put our full trust in the God who provides for our every need. If you have a need, our good God wants to meet it! But we have to take a step toward Him.

# LOVING OUR ENEMIES

Matthew 5:43-44,  
Romans 5:10,  
Colossians 1:21

We often label those who disagree with us as enemies. In politics, in family, or in daily life, when someone wounds us or those we love, resentment feels natural. Some hurts cut so deeply that hatred seems justified. An enemy is one who opposes, harms, or despises us. Nations hostile to America, rival relationships, even neighbors or authority figures can become “natural” enemies. Growing up, I saw enemies everywhere: rival high schools, in my neighborhood, even in my own home.

However, is it right to have enemies? Is it acceptable to withhold love from those who mistreat us? Jesus answers in Matthew 5:43-44: “Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you.” God loved us while we were sinners, reconciling us through Christ. His blessings—sunshine and rain—fall on both the good and the evil.

Loving enemies is not about feelings but obedience. We give because it is right, help because it is needed, and serve because it makes a difference. True Christianity is revealed not in loving those who love us, but in showing mercy to those we are inclined to hate, reflecting the Spirit of God who loved us first (Romans 5:10, Colossians 1:21).

# HEARTS HEALED & UNITED

Isaiah 61:1,  
2 Corinthians 1:4

We have so much brokenness in our lives. It is what life seems to dish out through time. We live in a world that is falling apart at times. What is so great is that Jesus came to heal up the brokenhearted.

One of my favorite passages is Isaiah 61:1—"The Spirit of the sovereign Lord is upon me, for the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to comfort the brokenhearted and to proclaim that captives will be released and prisoners will be freed."

I have faced many hardships in my life that have left me broken. However, it is during my brokenness that Jesus comes to comfort and heal my heart. It is during this time that I seem to grow the most. After going through my brokenness, I find that it is easy to help others who might be walking through the same situation. In 2 Corinthians 1:4, Paul writes that God comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves have received from God.

God heals, comforts, and then allows us the opportunities to help others in need. It is during these times that we see hearts being healed and united through community. We need to keep looking through the lens of God for those who need help and need healing. Let's be a community of believers that are united through the brokenness of our hearts.

# LIVING OPEN-HANDED

Matthew 10:8,  
Philippians 2:4,  
Proverbs 11:25

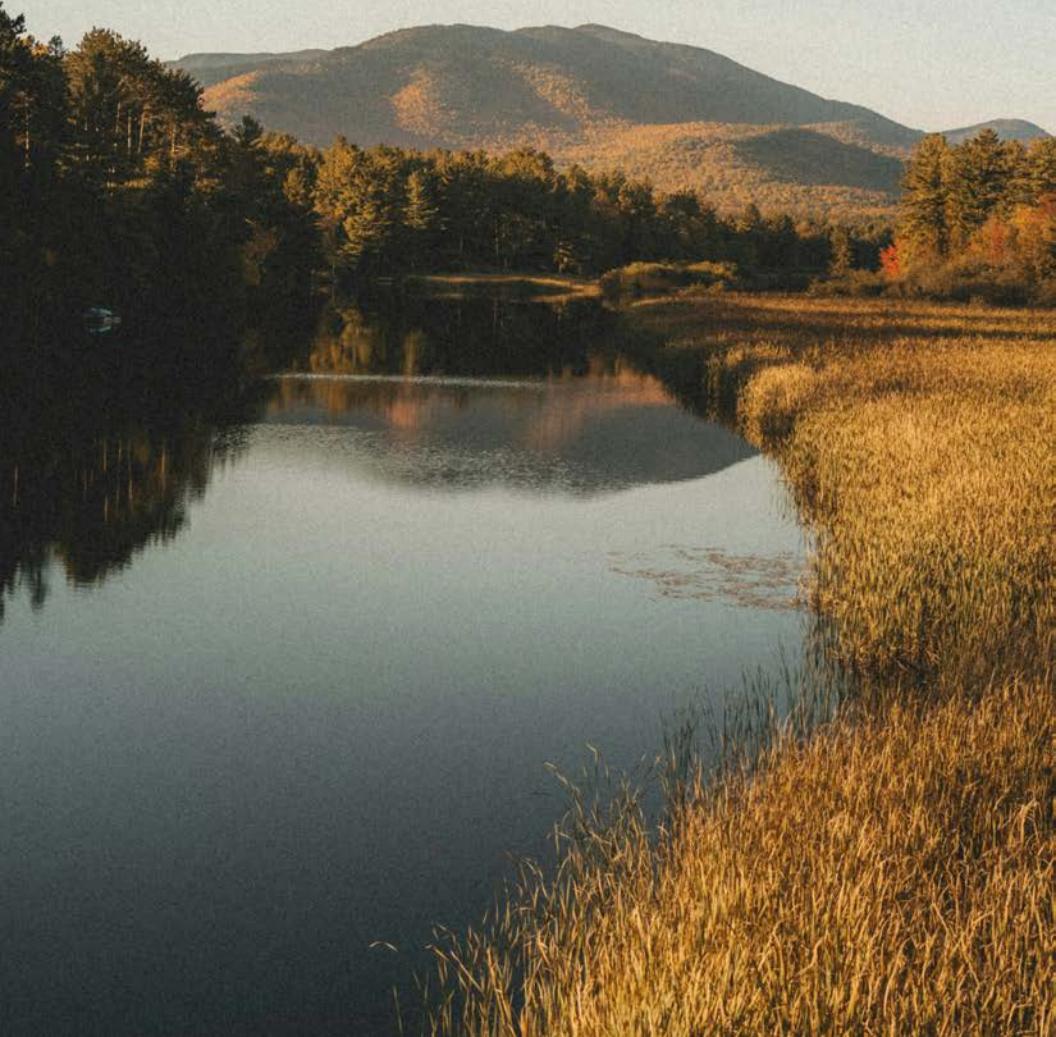
Living open-handed is an outward expression of Christlike love. It's a daily decision to loosen our grip on our time, our resources, and even our plans, trusting that God can use what we release to bless others. Open hands reflect an open heart—one ready for God to work in us and through us.

Jesus teaches, "Freely you have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:8). Paul reminds us to "look not only to our own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Philippians 2:4). And Proverbs assures us, "The generous soul will be made rich" (Proverbs 11:25).

When we live this way, generosity becomes more than an action—it becomes a posture that prepares us for missional purpose. Open hands make room for God's Kingdom to move.

Take a moment to pray this prayer today:  
"Lord, help me live with open hands today. Teach me to give freely, love outwardly, and trust You completely. Use my life as a blessing to others, and prepare my heart for Your mission. In Jesus' name.  
Amen."

# MISSIONAL PURPOSE



# FAITH IN ACTION

James 2:14-17,  
Hebrews 11:6,  
Galatians 5:6

Faith was never meant to stay internal. Scripture consistently shows that real faith moves, responds, and steps into the purposes of God. James reminds us that “faith without works is dead” (James 2:17). In other words, belief becomes powerful when it becomes visible.

Our missional purpose begins when we recognize that God has placed us exactly where we are: in our homes, workplaces, neighborhoods, and communities to be carriers of His light and love. Faith in action means choosing obedience in the small moments, serving when it’s inconvenient, praying when it’s easier to worry, and loving even when it costs us something.

When we put our faith into action, God multiplies its impact. Today, ask the Lord to show you one place where you can take a step of obedient action. It may feel simple, but simple obedience often unlocks supernatural results.

# WORKPLACES

Colossians 3:23

As a pastor, I often talk with people who feel called to full-time vocational ministry. Beneath many of those conversations is an unspoken assumption: that real ministry only happens in churches, nonprofits, or overseas. Without realizing it, we begin to look for “real ministry” somewhere out on the distant horizon—longing for the day we can finally be effective—while overlooking the ministry opportunities right in front of us: in our homes, our workplaces, our schools.

What if, as simple as it sounds, you are already exactly where God has placed you to represent Him? What if your job is not a detour from your calling, but the very context of it – the place where He intends to reach others through you?

Paul told the Colossians to work “from the soul,” and to do their work “as for the Lord.” In other words, you’re not ultimately working for a boss, a company, or a paycheck – you’re working as a representative of Christ wherever you’ve been planted.

So don’t keep waiting on some future, big-stage ministry opportunity. Walk into your workplace this week prayed up, suited up, and ready. Let God shine through you right where you are – and watch how He uses what you’ve placed in His hands.

# WISDOM & TRUST IN EDUCATION

As we near the close of Pray First, we've traced the natural movement of faith: Christ works in us, and His grace flows outward to bless others. I'd like to invite us to view the education of our children through that same lens. Scripture shows a pattern—first comes our life with Christ, then the family: the primary place where wisdom is formed—and from there the influence of faith extends into the wider world.

If we desire wisdom, trust, and clarity in our children's education, the work begins at home. It begins with our own walk with the Redeemer, and then by faithfully teaching and modeling the way of Christ to our kids. As they move through different ages and stages of school, we don't simply hand off that responsibility to teachers, coaches, or mentors. Instead, we remain lovingly engaged, tending what God has already begun in our homes and asking Him to bring it to full fruit.

Prayer prompts:

- Lord, deepen my walk with You.
- Strengthen our family as a place of wisdom and grace.
- Guide our children in every classroom they enter.
- Show us how to stay faithfully involved.

# PEACE & REVIVAL IN OUR CITY

Jeremiah 29:7,  
1 Timothy 2:1-4

Jeremiah 29:7 records God instructing His people to "seek the welfare (shalom) of the city where I have sent you... and pray to the Lord on its behalf; for in its welfare you will have welfare." Imagine being torn from your home and forcibly relocated to a foreign land. The Jews exiled to Babylon experienced this painful reality. Though their suffering came from their own disobedience, and though their deportation wouldn't last forever, God still commanded them to pray for their captors and seek the shalom: literally the peace, wholeness, and flourishing, of their city.

In the same way, 1 Timothy 2:1-4 urges believers to offer "entreaties and prayers... on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority," so that we may "lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity" and because God "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." Though we may feel like strangers in this world, when we pray for our city's welfare, not only will our own life be improved, but, more importantly, it will contribute to the salvation of those who need true peace with God through Jesus Christ. Take time today to pray for peace and revival in our city.

# HEALING FOR OUR NATION

There is a way for sinful people to come into the presence of God – by being “lowly in spirit” (Isaiah 57:15). Verses 16–19 of the same passage remind us that we are sinners saved by grace. We deserved to be accused for our sin, and our disobedience stirred God’s righteous anger (v. 16). We were greedy and stubborn, pursuing the desires of our own hearts (v. 17).

Yet God, fully aware of our ways, declares that He will heal us. He promises to restore and bring peace.

May this be our prayer for our communities and for our country—and may it begin with God’s own people and extend into the world around us.

We, as a nation, have sinned. We have been greedy and are deserving of God’s righteous anger. But we serve a God who does not count people’s sins against them when they come to Him with humility and a lowly spirit.

So let us pray that our nation will turn in humility and repentance—and that the Lord, in His mercy, will heal our land.

# THE NATIONS FOR CHRIST

By day twenty, our prayers have stretched us... outward, upward, and now global. When we pray for the nations, we're reminded that God's heart has always been bigger than borders, languages, and cultures. From the beginning, His promise was clear: all peoples, all nations, all generations.

It's easy to feel small when we think about the world. Wars rage, injustice lingers, and darkness can feel loud. But prayer recenters us in hope. The gospel has never depended on perfect conditions. Only on a faithful God and surrendered people. The same Spirit who moved through the early church is still moving today, quietly and powerfully, across villages and cities, deserts and dense neighborhoods. The nations are not a burden to God; they are His joy. Every tribe and tongue matters. Every story is seen. Every prayer whispered in another language still reaches the same throne.

One of the early church fathers, Augustine of Hippo, once said, "God loves each of us as if there were only one of us." That truth changes how we pray. God is both intimately personal and endlessly expansive. He can hold the whole world in His hands and still draw near to one searching heart.

Today, let your prayers lift your eyes. Pray with expectation. Pray with confidence. Pray believing that revival doesn't have to be loud to be real, and transformation doesn't have to be instant to be eternal.

As we pray for the nations, we join a story God has been writing for centuries. And He's not finished yet. So take hope. The light of Christ is still spreading. And our prayers are part of how God is moving His kingdom forward, one nation at a time.

# STRENGTH FOR SPIRITUAL LEADERS

1 Thessalonians 5:25,  
Ephesians 6:19,  
Romans 15:30,  
Colossians 4:2-3,  
Philippians 1:19

Throughout his letters, the apostle Paul called on believers to pray for him, otherwise he knew his ministry would fail. A few examples of this:

“Brothers, pray for us.” — 1 Thessalonians 5:25

“Pray also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel...” — Ephesians 6:19

“...strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf...” — Romans 15:30

“Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ...” — Colossians 4:2-3

“...for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance.”  
— Philippians 1:19

If apostles can't do their job without prayer, neither can pastors. To be successful, pastors must request prayer, and congregants must help ministers through intercession. It is humble dependence on God, not arrogance, for pastors to request prayer, and it is part of the Body of Christ fulfilling its mission to partner with their pastors through prayer. So pray for your pastor today and commit to pray for them continually!

# WHAT NEXT?

We've just completed Pray First: 21 Days of Prayer and Fasting, and though this intensive time of prayer to kick off 2026 is completed, our work to continue in prayer isn't finished!

Surely during our times of prayer, the Lord made some sacred deposits to your soul that are meant to be carried throughout the rest of 2026. God entrusted these gifts to you to continue to pray over! As you do this, you will see ongoing answers to prayer!

In Colossians 4:2 we read, "Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving." Basically, this means we have a call to continue in prayer, asking God to do a work in our hearts and in our city, and many of the answers to our prayers will not come all at once. Instead, they will come incrementally, but when we see those answers come, we are to be encouraged and thankful! For example, if you are praying for your own growth in holiness, and you see the slightest change in yourself, thank God for His mercy toward you and keep going! If you are praying for loved ones or people to come to Christ, and you see those people taking even the tiniest steps toward the Lord, thank Him for that and keep praying!

Finally, 1 Thessalonians 5:17 calls us to "pray without ceasing." For individuals, this is impossible, but in the original Greek, this verse is in plural form. It actually calls a whole community of believers in one city to pray continuously. The same is true for us! Only as a community united in prayer can we hope to be obedient to this Biblical command to pray unceasingly until we collectively see some real changes to our city, its culture, and our churches. Let's go for it!



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