



## A Time to Pray

*“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18*

Prayer...When you see that word, what comes to mind? For many, an honest response might be, “Oh yeah, prayer... that’s something I need to do more often.” For many Christians, the practice of prayer is like choosing to exercise and eat the proper foods to be in good physical health. We know that by doing so we will benefit, but as our minds rewind 2025, we realize around March we lost our motivation and the physical consequences followed. In the same way, our practice or neglect of prayer impacts our life of faith with Jesus.

In a recent sermon, I shared about the “gospel of self-sufficiency” that is communicated to us constantly. This “fake gospel” tells us we can take care of things on our own, we don’t need to rely on anything or anyone. Instead, the good news of the gospel (in the Bible) reveals that we must depend on Jesus for our salvation and the process of sanctification (a devotion to Jesus) that follows. When we pray, we are in a sense “waving a white flag of surrender” to let the Lord know we depend on Him in all things.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:17 we read these three words: *pray without ceasing*. You might be wondering “How am I supposed to pray all day without stopping?” A better way to define this phrase is to maintain a constant, unbroken connection and conversation with God, making prayer your first response to any situation. This is how we reflect a life where we pray without ceasing and practice one of the spiritual disciplines that is God’s will for our lives.

Now that a New Year has arrived, I want to share two specific ways we will focus on prayer at Journey. First, beginning January 1, we will launch a 31 Days of Prayer initiative. Each day we will have a prayer focus to go deeper in pursuing our vision at Journey to Make Much of Jesus a reality.

Second, as we gather on Sundays for worship, we will launch a new sermon series titled “Great Prayers in the Bible.” This series will allow us to look at prayers in the Old and New Testament. We will see how David, Nehemiah, Jesus, and others interacted in prayer with God and how this can apply to our life of prayer.

I’m excited to begin 2026 with a focus on prayer and seeking the Lord individually and corporately as a church family! Whether you see yourself as a prayer warrior, or struggle to be a man/woman of prayer, I want to encourage you to begin right where you are. As we look ahead to the year before us, this is a “time to pray” to seek the Lord and trust His power to do what we can’t.

May this be a season where we maintain a constant, unbroken connection and conversation with God, where prayer is our first response in any situation. In doing so, we will practice and reflect the vision to **Make Much of Jesus** in ways only He can make possible!

Praying with you,

Pastor Michael

## Men Called to Faithful Discipleship

In every generation, God calls men to step forward—not in arrogance or bravado to make much of themselves, but in humility, obedience, and courage to **Make Much of Jesus**. Jesus’ invitation to “Follow Me” was never casual. It was and remains a call to surrender comfort, lay down control, and live lives that point unmistakably to Jesus.

Faithful followership of Jesus begins in the heart, but it never stays there. When a man is truly following Christ, Jesus becomes central in how he speaks, how he works, how he leads his family, how he treats others, and how he responds when no one is watching. Being a man of God is not about appearing strong or having everything together; it is about living in such a way that Christ is clearly seen.

Our culture offers many hollow versions of masculinity—strength without sacrifice, confidence without character, power without responsibility. Jesus offers something far better. He shows us servant leadership, humility, obedience to the Father, and love that gives itself fully for others. When we **Make Much of Jesus**, our lives reflect His priorities rather than the world’s expectations.

Men, the church and the next generation do not need passive spectators. They need men who live visibly dependent on Christ—men who pray because they need Jesus, men who open the Scriptures because they want to know Him, men who repent because they trust His grace, and men who stand firm because their hope is anchored in Him. Faithful discipleship is not limited to Sundays; it is lived out in everyday faithfulness where Jesus is honored in both word and action.

To **Make Much of Jesus** means choosing faithfulness over familiarity. It means refusing to drift with culture and instead anchoring our lives in Christ. It means pursuing holiness not to earn God’s approval, but because Jesus is worthy. It means walking in accountability and obedience so that our lives clearly point others to Jesus.

The question before us is both simple and searching: Are we **Making Much of Jesus** with our lives, or merely fitting Him into them? Faithful men order their lives around Christ, not around convenience, comfort, or personal success.

Now is the time to recommit—to prayer that exalts Jesus, to God’s Word that reveals Him, to Christ-centered community that reflects Him, and to lives that exist for His glory. We do this not to prove ourselves, but because Jesus is worthy of our whole hearts, our whole strength, and our whole lives.

*“Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love.” 1 Corinthians 16:13–14*

As men of Journey Church, we commit ourselves to faithful discipleship so that in every area of life, together and individually, we **Make Much of Jesus**.

Let’s strengthen our faith—walk together in this new year by joining other men of Journey in attending the men’s breakfast planned for **February 7, 8:30a-10:00a**. More details will follow but for now, just know that we are much stronger when we fellowship together.

SEEKING MEN - WHO SEEK JESUS

Pastor Michael and the Elders



# 31 Days of Prayer

Journey Church

Join us in January, as we take time daily to pray for our vision to

**Make Much of Jesus** a reality in 2026!

Scan the QR code to get the app or go to our website [journeyclinton.org](http://journeyclinton.org) to follow the link for the 31 Days of Prayer.



## Sunday Life Groups resume Jan 4

# LIFE GROUPS

*connecting/caring/community*

Sundays at 9:00am and during the week

### New Year's Resolution: Be in God's Word More

A new year is a common time to set new goals, including spiritual goals. Many people set the goal of reading and/or studying the Bible more. Joining Logos Life Group is a great way to help you do just that! It's been said that if you understand Genesis, you can understand the rest of the Bible. So many patterns and foundations are set in the book of Genesis. That's why Logos is planning to continue studying Genesis. We just completed the life of Abraham and, beginning **January 4**, we will begin digging in and studying the lives of Isaac and Jacob, to complete the Patriarch study. Though you may not have been with us to study Genesis to this point, it is a perfect place to jump in and join us now. You will be amazed at how much you will learn and how doable it is! Contact Jon or Lisa Balk @ [jlbalk@yahoo.com](mailto:jlbalk@yahoo.com) (or anyone currently in Logos), if you have any questions.

Awana resumes Wednesday, January 7 | 6:15-7:45pm



We had a full fall of learning the Bible and playing together! It's never too late to start - we have had new friends joining us almost every week and we are loving getting to know each one! We are looking forward to seeing everyone again in January! A special thank you to each of our weekly volunteers and to the Awana kids and teens who came early one week to organize the game closet!

## Journey Church App

Download our free app and let us Journey with you wherever you go!

### Getting Started

1. Use your phone or tablet to scan the QR code or visit [journeyclinton.org/app](http://journeyclinton.org/app)
2. Select an app store from the available options
3. Install the app
4. Tap "YES" to get notifications!



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## Missionary Focus - Ray and Kay Baker

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Ray and Kay Baker are our supported missionaries serving in Stockholm, Sweden for over 35 years. Ray is a theologian, author, editor, teacher, debater in regards to Christian apologetics and contributor to a daily devotional guide. Kay serves as Greater Europe Mission Regional Leader over North Europe, the Isles of the UK, and Ireland and Europe Wide Ministries. From their recent newsletter update they share their prayer requests. Please remember them in your prayers as they ask for:

1. Praise God for a year of productive ministry and for thousands of lives touched. *Twelve thousand eighty-three hits on Ray's Apologia YouTube channel and four thousand + for live audiences.*
2. Pray for us as we return to America in December for a time of ministry there until Easter, 2026. Ray and Kay will be visiting Journey Church Sunday, January 18, 2026. Plan to greet them as they share during the Life Group time.
3. Pray for preparations for many speaking engagements in America; including Journey Church, Clinton, Iowa.
4. Pray for our son David who has final exams at university in early January. He is also looking for a good job.

## GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

MONDAYS  
6:00 P.M.

Together, we find strength and comfort



815-589-2501

Bethel Church in Fulton

This time of year can be especially difficult. Please consider attending the Grief Support Group at Bethel Church in Fulton on Mondays at 6pm.



Available on our website:  
[journeyclinton.org](http://journeyclinton.org)

Online Giving

If you desire to utilize digital giving, our website now offers that option. Simply login, select Giving from the menu and choose *Log in to your giving account.*

Contact Marybeth Giddings with questions at: [marybethg@journeyclinton.org](mailto:marybethg@journeyclinton.org)

## Service Opportunity as Lead Usher

February 1 - April 5

Not sure what Lead Usher does, contact Lynn Wiese 563-249-9265. Your help is appreciated.





A group of volunteers from Journey Church spent a day at the Aurora Operation Christmas Child Shoebox Processing Center where we helped prepare the packed boxes for shipping overseas. Our jobs included checking the boxes for inappropriate items, taping them up so they don't spill during the shipping process, scanning them for the tracking information, and packing them into shipping boxes to go overseas. There was an upbeat, party-like atmosphere in the facility with lively Christmas music playing and kind, friendly volunteers everywhere. Every so often the entire facility would pause and everyone would pray together for the children and the boxes. In just the few hours while we were there the center was able to process several thousands of boxes. It was a meaningful experience and one we hope to repeat!



### Family Christmas Celebration

On December 14, many braved the harsh cold to join us for our Family Christmas Celebration! We enjoyed a delicious breakfast spread organized by Rhonda Lauver and assisted by several other ladies. We laughed together and had fun trying to unwrap boxes while wearing oven mitts! But most importantly, we discovered that because of Jesus, we can find joy even when things don't go as expected. None of us will have a "picture perfect" Christmas this year, but the very reason Jesus came to us as God Incarnate was because life is messy and we all need a Savior! In Him, we can all have a joyous Christmas Day and hope throughout the year. Thank you to all who came and especially to the many hands helping make the morning possible!



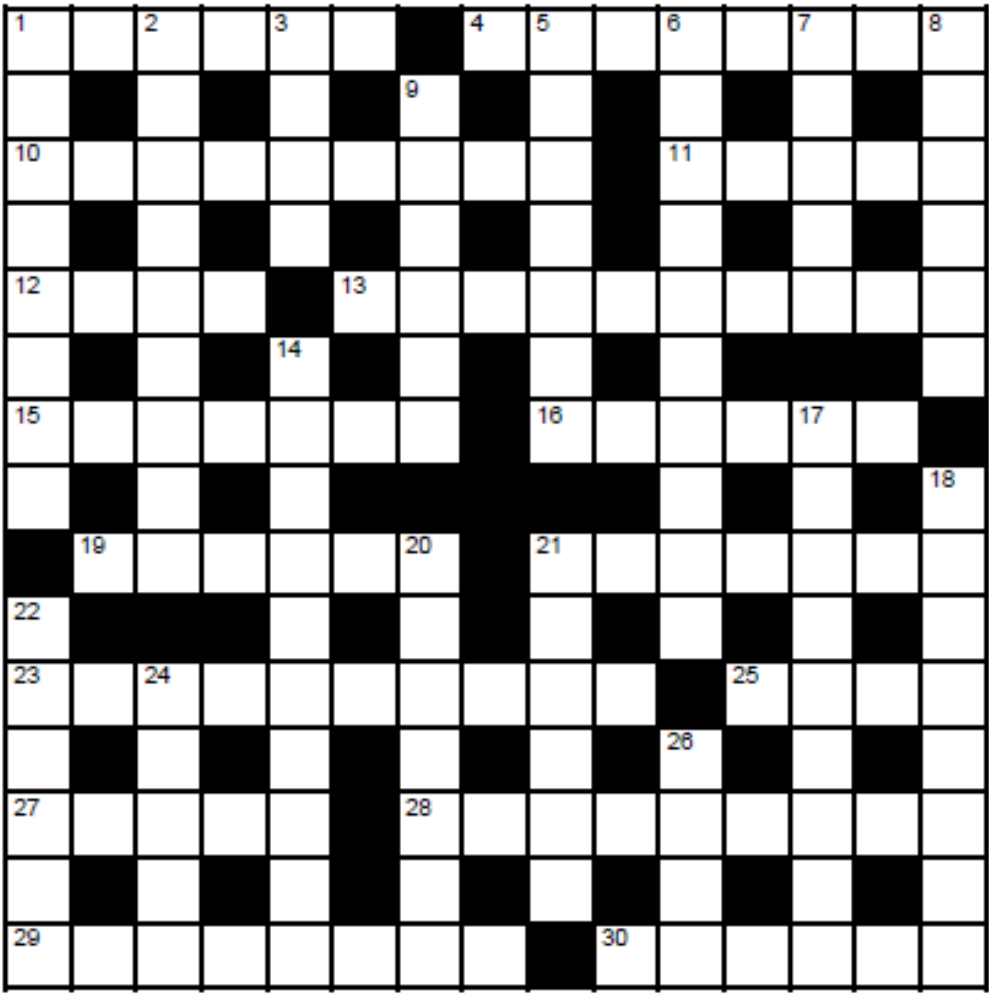
# BIBLE CROSSWORD I

### Across

- 1 An ancient weight (6)
- 4 Seemed (8)
- 10 New Testament book (9)
- 11 Unit of length (5)
- 12 '...it is a \_\_\_\_ thing the king requireth' (Dan 2:11) (4)
- 13 Contemplation (10)
- 15 Abigail supplied David with one hundred clusters of these (7)
- 16 A son of King David (6)
- 19 Concurred (6)
- 21 Light sources (7)
- 23 Propitiations (10)
- 25 A false god (4)
- 27 Gather (5)
- 28 Abimelech was hit by this (9)
- 29 Instructors (8)
- 30 Hastily (6)

### Down

- 1 Skilled animal workers (8)
- 2 Inspiring (9)
- 3 Compass point (4)
- 5 Intense emotion (7)



- 6 The words of Jeremiah said not to listen to these (10)
- 7 Jewish leader (5)
- 8 'He is proud, knowing nothing, but \_\_\_\_ about questions and strifes of words...' (1 Tim 6:4) (6)
- 9 Bread makers (6)
- 14 In this year of King Nebuchadrezzar's reign, Nebuzaradan arrived in Jerusalem (10)
- 17 Ancient city of Og, King of Bashan (9)
- 18 Stringed instrument (8)
- 20 Joseph, perhaps? (7)
- 21 Tiny amount (6)
- 22 Jesus did this with authority (6)
- 24 Last letter of the Greek alphabet (5)
- 26 Province of the Roman Empire (4)