

# 31 Days of Prayer To Start the New Year

**Please read the introduction  
at the start of the devotions.**

## Introduction

Lord, teach us to pray. Lord, teach us to preach. Lord, teach us to cast out demons. Lord, teach us to do miracles. There's no proof that the disciples didn't make all these requests of the Lord. However, only one of these requests is recorded in Scripture, "Lord, teach us to pray." Luke 11:1. The request came after Jesus had finished praying. I suspect the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray because they believed there was a direct correlation between His prayers and all the other wonderful things He did. Luke 5:16 says, "But Jesus often withdrew into lonely places to pray."

Following their request, Jesus uses what many call the Lord's Prayer as a way to teach them. It is recorded in Luke 11 and Matthew 6. Nine of the thirty-one devotions in this booklet are taken directly from this prayer. I've included them early in the booklet hoping they will be an encouragement to us as we join with Christ in the school of prayer.

I wish I'd had more time to give to these devotions. However, the idea for them didn't come to me until the end of October. It was the last Sunday in October that I talked with you about us being a church in transition and about me seeking the Holy Spirit's direction for the future. At the close of that day, I shared with you four steps I believed we intentionally needed to take. The first of those steps was to pray for God's direction in the way we are to go.

It was following that Sunday that I sensed the leading of the Lord to put together a devotional book on prayer for us to go through together during January of 2025. Prayer is to be a normal practice and flow of the Christian life.



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Certainly, the idea of starting the new year with a focus on prayer has to be beneficial. However, if it weren't for what I shared on the last Sunday of October, I probably wouldn't have put this book together. As a result, there will be a few references to our future transition mentioned in the devotions.

**In the back of the book, I have written briefly about some areas where I think we need to focus on in prayer as we seek God's direction for the future. Please read them and use them in prayer.**

As the deadline was drawing near for me to get this booklet done, I was a few devotions short. Pastor Matt willingly stepped up to do 3 of them for us. I am grateful.

As always, Beverley has been a huge help in this project. She has read through everything, proofed, and offered suggestions. She is such a blessing to me and us.

I hope the Lord can use these simple devotions as a means of helping us to grow in prayer and, as a result, in our intimacy with the Lord. Let us grow together

Pastor Mike

At the close of each devotion there will be a prayer focus for that day. It is also our goal during the month of January to pray for each family that is part of LSM. We've taken the total number of families and distributed them among the 31 days.

On the next couple of pages, I've listed some things from Scripture to help you pray for people, whether you know them or not.

Now, before you go to Day 1, please stop and ask, "Lord, teach me to pray."

There are times we know how to pray for people and there are times that we don't. We can always use Scripture to help us pray. I've listed a few suggestions. I'm not recommending that you use them all at one time, but I do encourage you to try to become familiar with them to help you.

2 Peter 3:18 - For them to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Matthew 6:33 - For them to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

Matthew 4:19 - That they will follow Christ and seek to win souls

Matthew 6:20 - That they will lay up treasures in heaven.

Luke 4:18 - That they will be anointed to preach (proclaim) the gospel to the poor and to heal the broken hearted.

Matthew 3:2, 4:17 - That they will walk in the way of true repentance.

John 3:30 - That they will have the heart of John the Baptist- that Jesus must increase and they must decrease.

Acts 4:13 - For there to be clear evidence in their lives that they have been with Jesus.

Acts 10:38 - That they would be anointed with the Holy Spirit and power and go about doing good and delivering those who are oppressed of the devil.

John 4:24 - That they choose to be the person who the Father seeks; one who worships Him in Spirit and truth.

Matthew 22:37 - That they will love the Lord their God with all their heart, soul, and mind.

I Corinthians 12:31 - That they will choose the greatest gift of love.

Ephesians 1:19 - That they know what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward them.

Ephesians 2:10 - That they will understand they are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God has already prepared for them to do.

Colossians 4:6 - That their speech will be filled with grace.

Ephesians 4:32 - That they will be extremely grateful for God's forgiveness to them and, therefore, willing to forgive others.

Hebrews 10:25 - That they will be faithful in gathering with the saints.

1 Corinthians 12:12 - That they will recognize they are a vital part of the body and that they will be faithful to fulfill their part.

Psalms 139:14 - That they would invite the Lord to search them for anything not pleasing to Him.

January 1 - As you read today's Scripture, try to imagine that you are part of what is happening.

2 Chronicles 20:1-17 LORD, we do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon You (12b).

Which would best describe you at the start of this year; optimistic, pessimistic, or somewhere in between? Regardless of how you answer that, and regardless of your plans, one thing is certain - none of us knows what is ahead in the coming year. Another thing is certain; even when things are going along well, we would be extremely wise to pray the prayer of Jehoshaphat, "*LORD, we do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you.*" Because of Jehoshaphat being in an extremely dangerous place, this seems like a logical prayer. Yet, in all circumstances, we would do well to live a life of faith which says, LORD, we do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon You.

I wonder how often I mess up because of thinking I do know what to do instead of humbly seeking the LORD's guidance? As individuals, families, and a church, it would be to our benefit to remember Jehoshaphat's prayer. On this first day of this year, I challenge you to make it your goal to keep your eyes on the LORD. When our eyes are fixed on Him, there is peace. When our eyes are fixed elsewhere, there is confusion and fear.

**Today's Prayer Focus** - For confidence that the same God who led Jehoshaphat will lead us as we trust in Him.

**Designated families to pray for today** - Robert & Shirley Anderson, W.G. & Maxine Anderson, Larry & Betty Arthur

January 2 - Then He who sat upon the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." Revelation 21:1-5

New is an exciting concept: Newlywed, a new baby, a new job, a new house, a new pet, a new \_\_\_\_\_ (you fill in the blank). The New Year is a time many people set new goals. Setting positive goals is good. As the saying goes, "If we aim at nothing, we are bound to hit it."

I'm grateful for the Lord's desire to do a renewing work in us day by day. We don't have to wait for a new year for Him to do it. However, since it is a new year, what greater goal could we have than to seek Him and His renewing work in our lives. Consider the following verses and invite the Spirit of God to do a fresh work in you as you begin the New Year.

*2 Corinthians 4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.*

*Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

*Isaiah 43:18-19 [18] Do not remember the former things, Nor consider the things of old. [19] Behold, I will do a new thing, Now it shall spring forth; Shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness And rivers in the desert.*

**Prayer Focus for Today** - For us to be open to, and desirous for, the Lord to do a renewing work in us this year.

**Designated families to pray for today**- Danny & Barbara Black, Gerald & Melissa Black, Ricky & Lisa Black

January 3 - Lord, Teach us to Pray. Luke 11:1, Matt. 6:5-13

In Luke 11:1, after Jesus had finished praying, His disciples asked Him to teach them to pray. Even after 45 years of walking with the Lord, I can still relate to the disciple's request - *Lord, teach me to pray.* The Lord Jesus responded to their request with a few teaching points followed by a model prayer of less than 70 words. It really is amazing the depth, length, width, and height of this short prayer.

After today we will spend 8 more days considering 8 **Ps** highlighted in this prayer. These include:

1. The **Person** to whom we pray.
2. The **Position** of the Person to whom we pray.
3. The **Praise** due the One to whom we pray.
4. The **Purpose** for which we pray.
5. The **Provision** for which we pray.
6. The **Pardon** for which we pray.
7. The **Protection** for which we pray.
8. The **Power** of the One to whom we pray.

Before moving on to look at the model prayer itself, let's consider some of Jesus' teaching points which precede it:

- 1) Prayer isn't intended for impressing, but to declare our adoration, need, and thanksgiving to God.
- 2) We are not heard for our many or our fancy words. Man looks on the outward appearance but God looks on the heart.
- 3) The Father knows the things you need even before you ask.

**Prayer Focus for Today** - For the Holy Spirit to draw us into prayer and that we will receive faith to pray.

**Designated families to pray for today** - Tim & Sam Black, Don & Nancy Blanchard, Philip Brooks

## January 4 - The Person to Whom we Pray - **Our Father**

Jesus wanted His followers to understand that because of Him, they now had a new relationship with God whereby He is Abba Father. The cornerstone of prayer is based on this relationship and without understanding this **P**, much of the value of prayer is absent.

Romans 8:15 says, For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." Abba is an Aramaic (a common language spoken by Jews in Jesus' day) word which conveys intimacy and personal relationship, similar to how American children use papa or daddy. I once had a Jehovah's Witness tell me that I didn't know God because I didn't call Him Jehovah. I won't go into anything else I said, but I'll share one thing I said that goes along with the beginning of this prayer. I told him that before I knew my father's given name, I was one of only 4 people in the world who called him daddy. For those of us who have a personal relationship with God, because of our relationship with Christ, we have the great privilege of calling Him Abba Father.

In the Gospel of John alone, Jesus refers to God as Father more than 100 times. It is clear that He wants us to understand the Almighty in an intimate way. Let's pray for those who struggle with the Fatherhood of God because of an unhealthy experience with their earthly father.

*Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. 1 John 3:1*

**Prayer Focus for Today** - That we come to know, in a deep way, the Spirit of adoption. Pray for those who struggle with the concept of God as Father because of their experiences with their earthly father.

**Designated families to pray for today** - George & Kathy Broughman, Ricky & Lisa Brown, Roy, Jennifer, Bailee, Case, Carter & Dylan Brown

## January 5 - The Position of the Person to Whom we Pray - **Our Father Who is in heaven ....**

The One to Whom we pray is seated upon the throne and has authority over everything. I often say we must learn to tell ourselves the truth. The truth is the Word of God, and the Word of God teaches that the Lord is sovereign. In the dictionary sovereign is described as supreme power.

In the book of Daniel we meet Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, which was the world power of that day. Nebuchadnezzar spoke of his greatness and of the wonderful things he had done. In Daniel, Chapter 4, the powerful king Nebuchadnezzar had an encounter with the Almighty King. Verses 34-35 records the words of Nebuchadnezzar following that encounter:

*[34] And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever: For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom is from generation to generation. [35] All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven And among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand Or say to Him, "What have You done?"* Nebuchadnezzar experienced firsthand that the Almighty was in charge.

When David came to bring food to his brothers while they were fighting the Philistines, he found the Israelites shaking in fear because of the threats of Goliath. David had been with God and came in faith telling them the victory is the Lord's. The Goliaths are screaming loudly today causing many, even Christians, to live in fear. The Sovereign Lord invites you to reject fear and embrace faith, resting in the assurance of our Lord's victory.

**Prayer Focus for Today** - That we will recognize the greatness of God and worship the Lord as He is worthy to be worshiped.

**Designated families to pray for today** - Eddie & Melinda Bryan, Ronnie Carpenter, Chad, Marglen, Canaan & Rylee Clark

January 6 - The Praise of the Person to Whom we Pray  
- **Hallowed be Your Name.**

Hallowed means to make holy or to sanctify, which means to set apart. The Name of the Lord is to be set apart from all other names and above all other names. His name represents Him, His character, His attributes, what He does, etc.

The pages of Scripture define the Lord using a great multitude of names. Meditating upon these names while praying can be very beneficial. Lord, I praise You today that You are the Almighty King. I praise You that you are the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world. I praise You that You are the resurrected Lord. I praise You that You are the Alpha, the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I praise You that You are my Protector who delivers me from the evil one.

While you may choose to focus on many of the ways He describes Himself, you might want to consider picking one for the day to meditate upon. Pick a time to set aside and make a list of some of the ways/names by which He describes Himself. This can certainly be an ongoing project. I want to share just a couple of passages about His name in closing:

*Philippians 2:9-11 [9] Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, [10] that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, [11] and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

*Genesis 22:14 And Abraham called the name of the place, The-LORD-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, "In the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided."*

**Prayer Focus for Today** - That we would live so that our words and actions bring glory to the name of the Lord.

**Designated families to pray for today** - David, Laurel, Nathan & Jacob Clark, Leonard & Beverley Clark, Mark & Wanda Clark

January 7 - The Purpose for which we Pray – **Your Kingdom Come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

Scripture reveals prayers of various types and for various reasons. However, the meaning behind this one sentence is foundational and always appropriate to pray. This prayer is certainly the will of God.

In John, Chapter 3, Jesus said, “Unless someone is born again, he/she cannot see the kingdom of God.” When a person is saved, they are delivered from the kingdom of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, Colossians 1:13. In Matthew 6:33 Jesus said, “Seek you first the kingdom of God and everything else will be added unto you.” The kingdom of God is both now and in the future. In time His kingdom will rule over all. As it says in Revelation 11:15, “The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever.” However, today His kingdom doesn’t rule over all, but in the hearts and lives of those who have said, “Be my King.”

This is a prayer we pray now - “Let Your kingdom come, let Your will be done, **ON EARTH** as it is in heaven.” His kingdom comes to earth when we, as His followers, submit ourselves to His Kingdom directives. In Matthew 5:44 Jesus said to love our enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you. He’s obviously not preaching worldly kingdom principles, but Kingdom of God principles. You’re encouraged to pray this often and invite the Lord to empower you to be a person that brings His kingdom and will to this earth.

**Prayer Focus for Today** - That we will be convicted of what it means to belong to the kingdom of God and choose to live towards that end.

**Designated families to pray for today** - Stella Clark, Dave & Ann Condon, Ron, Tammy & Ryan Counts

January 8 - The Provision for which we Pray – **Give us this day our daily bread.** Our Father knows we have needs and He desires to meet them and more.

While it is often our nature to begin our prayer with needs, Jesus calls us to get our focus on the One who can meet all of our needs. By fixing our hearts in worship on the Lord, it brings us to a place of faith in the One who can meet our needs. I've often heard people say, "That's not big enough to bother God with." If it's big enough for you to be concerned about, it's important enough to take to the Father. I Peter 5:7 says, "Casting **ALL** your cares on Him, for He cares for you."

In the 23rd Psalm, David said because "The LORD is my Shepherd, I shall not want." He trusted his Shepherd to meet all of his needs. I mentioned earlier that this prayer is less than 70 words, yet Christ used the words **OUR/US/WE** nine times. When we come to the place of praying, "Give us this day our daily bread," it is a place to pray for ourselves and for others. Allow the Holy Spirit to lead you in this area.

**Prayer Focus for Today** - Praise God He knows what we have need of before we ask. Pray that we will walk in the truth that we belong to the larger body of Christ.

**Designated families to pray for today** - Richard & Jody Craddock, Seth, Beth, Emilia, Briele, Thea & Truett Dame

January 9 - The Pardon for which we Pray - **Forgive us as we have forgiven others.** I encourage you to begin here by praising God for the forgiveness and reconciliation that has been provided through the finished work of Christ. Focus on the work of redemption.

Now it is time to invite the Holy Spirit to search our heart and reveal areas where we need forgiveness. Often, in the Psalms, the psalmists would ask the Lord to search them and point out any wickedness in them. Repentance and forgiveness is an ongoing precious gift of God.

Peter walked with Jesus, he loved Jesus, he wanted to serve Jesus. However, he betrayed the one he loved so dearly. The crow of the rooster made Peter aware of sin and called him to repentance. He received the Lord's forgiveness and was used powerfully by God.

Of course, there is the second part, "Forgive us as we have forgiven others." Forgiveness can be difficult and costly. After all, it cost Jesus emptying Himself of His rights as God and choosing the cross that we might be forgiven. Ephesians 4:32 tells us to forgive one another as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven us.

God's kingdom is about forgiveness and reconciliation. May we grow in our appreciation of the grace and mercy given to us, and out of our love for Christ, extend His grace and mercy to others.

**Prayer Focus for Today** - Pray that we will quickly be convicted of sin in our lives and willing to forgive others.

**Designated families to pray for today** - Jason, Christy, Nathan, Micah & Anna Fender, Steve & Diane Fenton

January 10 - The Protection for which we Pray - **And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one.**

Jesus personally knew the work, deception, and wickedness of the devil, but He never teaches us to fear him. He does want us to know the evil one is REAL and that his mission is to steal, kill, and destroy. He instructs us to pray to be delivered from the evil one because, of ourselves, we are powerless against him and can fall for his schemes. However, our Savior won the victory over all the powers of hell on the cross. Jesus has complete power over the evil one and is aware of all of his schemes. By praying this, He is teaching us to declare our dependence on Him and to walk with Him so that He can completely protect and deliver us.

When we begin to live as if the devil isn't real or as if he isn't out to destroy us, we enter a dangerous place. Ephesians 6:10-11 says [10] *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.* [11] *Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.* The word **WILES** indicates pursuing an orderly methodical plan to accomplish your purposes. This means the devil is willing to take his time to try to accomplish his purpose in your life.

Most Christians don't backslide overnight; it is a process and the enemy is behind that process. But the Spirit of God tells us how to keep this from happening: **be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might and put on the whole armor of God.** Pray Lord, help me to realize that I have an enemy who is out to destroy me. Today I choose to look to you as my protector. Show me when I'm in danger.

**Prayer Focus for Today** - Pray for spiritual protection over all the youth of LSM. Pray that their parents will take seriously teaching them the ways of the Lord.

**Designated families to pray for today** - Shane Fury, Ranelle Garber, Sandra Haynes

January 11 - The Power of the One to Whom we pray - **For Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

In teaching us to pray, Christ begins and ends the model prayer by instructing us to focus on the character and greatness of the Lord. This is a foundational truth to understand in prayer. If you needed help carrying a heavy object, you wouldn't seek out a small child but would look for someone who had the power to do what you need.

Often we begin our prayers giving our attention to the problems. Yes, God cares about our problems, but He wants us to settle in our hearts who He is. When we pray with a conviction that His is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, then we are able to pray in faith because our focus is on the problem fixer instead of the problem.

In an earlier devotion I wrote about how the army of Israel looked at Goliath in fear. When David came along, he recognized that the problem (Goliath) was real, but he looked at the situation in faith because His focus was on the Lord. Listed here are just a few Scriptures which can be used to help our focus be where it needs to be in prayer. Matthew 28:18, Jeremiah 32:17, Deuteronomy 10:17-18, 1 Timothy 1:17, Revelation 15:3-4. Father, we praise You that Yours' is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

**Prayer Focus for Today** - Pray that we will experience the power of God as He intends.

*And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. 1 Corinthians 2:4*

**Designated families to pray for today** - Jared & Cassie Hayslett & Emmalyn, Larry & Joanne Hayslett, Lonnie & Cindy Hayslett & Kevin



January 12 - Read Daniel 3:3-18

None of us know what we may face this coming year. However, most, if not all of us, will face some difficult times. None of us enjoy these times, but if we are able to focus on the Lord instead of upon our circumstances, we can walk in victory.

Today's passage is a story that is very familiar to us about the three Hebrew children who were tossed into the fiery furnace because they refused to worship the image of the king. When told what would happen to them if they did not worship the image, their response was, "Our God is able to save us." Then they go on to say, "Yet, even if He does not, let it be known oh King, that we will not serve your gods nor worship your gold image which you have set up."

God rewarded their faith and they were rescued. In addition, Christ is manifest to the pagan king. However, there are Christians who stand for their faith whose temporary outcome is not nearly as good. Yet they trust in the fact that whatever happens, God will ultimately deliver them. We read about some of these in Hebrews 11:35b-38. While it's highly unlikely that we'll be thrown into a fiery furnace, it doesn't mean that your trial won't be intense. Let us pray today that God will help us to fix our eyes upon Him above our circumstances and trust Him with whatever happens.

**Prayer Focus for Today** - For the persecuted church. Many of them are facing life and death choices for serving Christ.

**Designated families to pray for today** - Dale & Debbie Heath, Kelly & Crystal Hostetter, Lucy Hostetter

January 13 - Read Psalm 47:1-8

These eight verses contain at least 15 different commands. Often we hear the word commands and have negative thoughts. However, these commands are given by our Heavenly Father because He wants us to walk in His peace in the midst of the world that is full of chaos.

Verse one begins with the admonition of fret not and verse eight ends with that same admonition. The term fret not means don't be agitated. Wouldn't it be great to live a life where we are not agitated. When the Lord instructs us to do something, He will give us the power to do it.

Use these eight verses for prayer today. Ask the Lord to help them become real in your life. As you do so, you may think of a person who's having a hard time in one of these areas. Pray for that person also.

**Prayer Focus for Today** - Pray for a move of God that will set people free from worry, fear, and anxiety.

**Designated families to pray for today** - Fred & Lucille Johnson, Pam Johnson, Sandy Jones

January 14 - Pray for Spiritual Renewal Read Psalm 139:23-24, Ephesians 4:17-32

The spiritual life begins with the new birth (John 3:3), but it must be a life that grows and continues to be renewed. As we begin the new year there may be many things for which to pray. However, if the fire of God doesn't burn within the child of God, we can become people who go through the motions without the true motivation needed for the Christian life.

If we love God with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength, everything else will fall into place. When we pray the word of God, we pray the will of God.

**Prayer Focus for Today** - Pray today's Scriptures and ask the Lord to ignite a spiritual blaze in our hearts that causes us to love God and His purposes.

**Designated families to pray for today** - Donnie, Kelly, Christian & Caylin Kern, Arnold & Sheila Keyser, Kae Lacy

January 15 - Meditating on Who God is - Merciful and Just John 3:13-18, Ezekiel 33:10-11, 2 Peter 3:7-13

It is easy to become overly focused on our own performance. We beat ourselves up when we know we have fallen short, and we pat ourselves on the back when we think we've gotten it right. As children of God, adopted through Christ Jesus, we SHOULD hunger for righteousness and hate sin. However, righteousness doesn't come from ourselves, it belongs to Christ. Meditating on who Jesus is, is the cure for both a heart weighted down with shame, and one puffed up with pride.

When speaking to Nicodemus in John 3, Jesus is teaching the religious leader about what it takes to be right with God. In the midst of showing Nicodemus his need to be born again, He also tells us something pretty incredible about God. In verse 17 He says God's purpose in sending Jesus was not to condemn the world, but to save them. God is so holy that none of us could enter His presence without being completely reborn. Yet, instead of rejecting us, He did everything He could to save us from our guilt.

This same testimony of God's mercy is echoed in Ezekiel 33:10-11 when His people cry out to Him, knowing they can't live in their sin. Sometimes when we are convicted of our sin, it can cause us to run from God in fear of judgment. But here God declares He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, and urges His people to return to Him.

When you read 2 Peter 3, it teaches us about the return of Christ and the ultimate judgment of wickedness. Yet, even here, we see the testimony of God's mercy as He patiently withholds His judgment, in the desire that the wicked will take hold of forgiveness in Jesus.

Spend time thanking God for His incredible Mercy and patience with you. Answer Peter's question in verse 11 for yourself. Who do you know who needs to hear about the incredible Mercy and Justice of God?

**Prayer Focus for Today** - That young people, and couples, within the LSM family will feel called of God to step into roles of service.

**Designated families to pray for today** - Clarence & Doris Lavender, Shawn, Cori, Micah & Isaiah Layman, David & Connie Liptrap

January 16 - Meditating on Who God is - Sovereign  
Jeremiah 29:10-14, Romans 8:28-39

In Jeremiah 29, God's people are not where He wants them to be. He had brought them to the Promised Land to bless them, to care for them, and so they would know Him like no other people ever had. But from the moment they arrived they had begun to reject God and His plan for them. Instead of being a light to the wicked, they became more and more wicked themselves, worshiping and lusting after the gods of the world.

And yet God did not reject them. They were God's people, not because of their goodness, but because God had made a promise to them through Abraham. Because God made that promise, nothing could break it. In this passage, God reassures them His never-ending promise still stands. Even when they sin, suffer, and even when they feel alone, or when God has to correct them, they will always be His people.

More than that, God is going to fulfill His promise by saving them and bringing them back to Himself. He knows His plans for them, and nothing can stop them. It didn't mean life would be easy. They were about to experience captivity for seventy years in heart wrenching defeat to the Babylonians. But God was in control and, ultimately, they were in His good hands.

In Romans 8, Paul echoes a similar truth to Christians who are suffering. He in no way denies the reality of the pain we experience, but instead challenges us to contrast our suffering with the reality of the all-powerful, all good God who holds us in His hands. Nothing we experience here on this earth can disrupt the promise He has made us in Christ Jesus. Everything pales in comparison to the goodness we will experience in His eternal salvation.

Thank God for His sovereignty and His promises. Spend time turning your pains and worries over to His care. Ask God to increase your faith.

**Prayer Focus for Today** - That we will be a people filled with thanksgiving and who refuse to complain.

**Designated families to pray for today** - Ronnie Liptrap, Sr., Ronnie & Selena Liptrap, Jr., Al, Cathy & Jonathan Lush

January 17 - Meditating on Who God is - Glorious  
Isaiah 6:1-7, Isaiah 42:5-9

Glory is a small word used a whole lot in Scripture. When we hear it, we immediately think of God and His greatness. In a non-spiritual way, the word can mean "weighty." As a Millennial, I love that definition. It reminds me of Marty McFly in "Back to the Future" when he experiences time travel for the first time and exclaims, "Woah, that's heavy!" There truly is nothing more "heavy" than God, the Great "I AM," the creator of all things!

In Isaiah 6 we see the calling of the prophet Isaiah, in which he has an unbelievable vision of the throne of God in His heavenly temple. Isaiah is understandably overcome by the reality of the glory and holiness of God, and equally aware of his own sinfulness. He immediately recognizes his own presence is an insult to the glory of God. He despairs of his existence, but is saved by the cleansing mercy of God. He sees the Seraphim taking part in their eternal worship service, declaring the truth, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, The whole Earth is full of His glory."

These are only the beginning of Isaiah's mind-blowing visions. Read the passage Isaiah 42:5-9 as God is giving him a glimpse of the coming Jesus. God declares that no longer will the praise of His glory go to anything or anyone other than Himself. When Jesus came, it was not just to save us from our sin, but to restore our worship to its rightful place. In making us right with God, Jesus reclaimed every bit of glory that is due God's name. Jesus is the glory of God, worthy of all praise, beautiful, and worthy of worship for all eternity. There is incredible peace in knowing that our worship is righteous and rightly placed in Jesus. There is great peace in knowing that we are living for the reason that God created us.

Take time to declare the glory of God all around you. Ask God to help you meditate on His importance. Share with someone your praise of God today.

**Prayer Focus for Today** - That we as individuals, and as a local church, will be vessels of God's glory.

**Designated families to pray for today** - Luke & Becca Lyons, Rose Mace, Debbie Michael

January 18 - The Difference Between Success and Failure.  
Exodus 17:8-16

Moses was among the greatest leaders talked about in Scripture. Any good Jew of Jesus' day would have been extremely knowledgeable of Moses, as would practicing Jews today. The lesson of this passage is as valuable for today as it was then.

Often a single leader will get most of the credit for success or most of the blame for failure. A strong leader can have a huge impact. However, in this passage the difference behind success and failure were those who were holding up Moses' arms. No matter how much Moses wanted to succeed, he couldn't do it without the help of others.

When I read this story, it makes me think of people supporting leaders through prayer and encouragement. Christian leaders often deal with issues they can't share with anyone else. Moses' arms became heavy and he couldn't hold them up in his own strength. The soul of the shepherd can get heavy with the burdens of the flock and the church. Prayer, words of encouragement, and a willingness to be part of the team helps hold up the arms of the leader, and then everyone wins.

**Prayer Focus for Today** - Pray for the pastors and the elders to grow in their relation with Christ and to walk in the strength of the Lord. Pray for them to have wisdom to lead us into the future.

**Designated families to pray for today** - Joshua, Faith, Paisley & Malachi Mills, Wayne, Burgundy, Tinsley & Serenity Myers

January 19 - Pray that you would desire for your life to align with the will and purposes of God.

Read Matthew 6:8-10, Matthew 26:42, John 6:38, Romans 12:1-2

Consider what the word WILL means. Although we could come up with fancier definitions, ultimately it means to make a choice. God revealed His will to Adam & Eve. The serpent told Adam & Eve that disobeying God's will would be better for them, and so they chose their will instead of God's.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus often spoke about how He came to do the will of the Father. Hebrews 10 tells us that Jesus doing the perfect will of the Father is what opened the door for our salvation. The Christian walk consists of choosing many times each day whose will we will do. In His word, God declares His will. Satan, the world, and our flesh will seek to convince us there are no consequences for choosing our will over God's.

What are some of the areas in your life where you're struggling to follow God's will?

**Prayer Focus for Today** - 1 day from today is inauguration. Pray that our elected officials would desire to do the will of God and that they would have powerful encounters with the Almighty God.

**Designated families to pray for today** - Michael, Kristina, Gabe, Judah & Haddie Neill, Gary & Teresa Nicely, Richard Nicely

**Daniel 9:1-19 is one of the longer prayers in the Bible. By studying the prayers of Scripture, we can learn principles to help us pray. This is a prayer of repentance which Daniel prayed while he and the Jewish people were captive in Babylon. Because this prayer contains so much insight, I don't want us to rush through it. I plan to break this prayer into different segments over the next 3 days.**

January 20 - **Please read the paragraph above written in bold as an introduction to today.** Read Daniel 9:1-19. It is a prayer of repentance accompanied by a plea for God's mercy. Today we will focus on verses 1-7. As you read the points below, consider how they can apply to our prayers.

V2 - Notice it was the word of God that inspired Daniel's prayer.

V3 - He took the posture and attitude of humility and repentance.

V4 - He focused on the greatness and mercy of God.

V5 - He prayed WE. He was an extremely godly man, yet in his prayer Daniel includes himself when speaking of the sins of the nation and the people.

V7 - He compares God's righteousness to their shame of face.

V7 - Daniel doesn't excuse their sins, but acknowledges them and the consequences of them.

*What can we learn from these verses to help us as we pray?*

**Prayer Focus for Today** - Ask the Lord for genuine repentance in our nation that would bring healing and righteousness.

**Designated families to pray for today** - Pastor Matt, Amy, Eliot & Morgan O'Meara, Robert & Shelley Persinger, Dave, Kathy & Hannah Pritt

January 21 - **Before doing today's devotion, reread the paragraph written in bold that comes before January 20th.**

Once again, read the first 19 verses of Daniel 9 and we will focus on verses 8-15. As you read the points below from these verses, how can they guide your prayers?

V8 & 9 - How does Daniel compare what belongs to them and what belongs to God? Why is it important to recognize these contrasts when it comes to prayers of repentance?

V10 & 11 - Again, Daniel doesn't pray "THEY" but "WE." He acknowledges their sin, as well as the consequences. God desires to forgive and show mercy. However, forgiveness doesn't mean He undoes the results of our sins.

V13 - What did Daniel say they had not done? We often say, and pray, "God Bless America." Yet this isn't some magical phrase. If God is to bless America, we must turn from our sins and seek His truth.

V14 & 15 - Again Daniel declares God's righteousness and power and their wickedness.

**Prayer Focus for Today** - Daniel confessed the sins of the nation. Pray for the heart of America to change regarding the unborn.

**Designated families to pray for today** - Chuck & Robyn Ratliff, Pastor Mike & Tracy Rollins, Mary Ryan

January 22 - **Reread the paragraph written in bold, that precedes January 20th, before doing today's devotion.**

Today we will look at Daniel 9:16-19, but I ask that again you read the first 19 verses of the chapter. Once again, ask the Lord to show you principles of effective prayer from these verses.

V16 - Many places in this prayer Daniel compares God and people. In this verse it is God's righteousness and people's sins. We often make the mistake of comparing ourselves to others. God compares us to Himself to let us know our sinfulness compared to His holiness. Thankfully He uses this to reveal His desire to show mercy and to cause us to know our need for Jesus.

V17 & 18 - Daniel acknowledges how desolate their condition is. Yet He comes in faith, repenting and seeking God's favor and knowing He has the power to restore.

V18 - The last phrase of this verse continues to have a strong impact on my prayers. I do not ask because of my righteous deeds but because of His **Great Mercies**.

V19 - Consider the boldness and confidence with which Daniel prays. How should this affect your prayers?

**Prayer Focus for Today** - Pray for conviction any time we choose our will instead of His. Pray we will love Him so deeply that we will be like Jesus and want to do His will.

**Designated families to pray for today** - Danny & Barbara Ryder, Gertrude Simmons, Lee & Frannie Simmons

January 23 - The Power of Humility and the Poison of Pride. Luke 18 9-14, 1 Peter 5:5-7

*God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.* Ten total words. Ten words that every professing believer should take to heart. Ten words that every child of God should seek to make a guiding principle of their life. Ten words that can change the course of everything. Ten words whose truth is unshakable.

Oh, in the eyes of the world, pride is applauded. We see it in sports, in politics, in entertainment, and, sadly, even in the church. But it's not the opinion of the world that has the final say so. The One who put this in His book, in three different places, says He hates pride - Proverbs 6:17. God resists the proud. God STANDS AGAINST the proud. It is possible to be right on issues but still have God resist us because of our prideful attitude.

But there is the opposite; God gives grace to the humble. Grace is the agent that produces positive change in our lives and situations, but God can't give grace to those who don't recognize their need. Notice that 1 Peter 5:5 instructs us to be clothed in humility; we have a choice in the matter.

***God doesn't say He resists the proud but gives grace to the humble to beat us up. He says it because He wants us to experience His best.***

**Prayer Focus for Today** - For the Holy Spirit to reveal to us any areas of pride in our lives. The questions below may help.

1. Are you willing to admit when you're wrong and apologize?
2. Are you more concerned about what God thinks of you, or what people think of you?
3. Do you feel you're above serving in some area?

**Designated families to pray for today** - Michael Simmons, Minnie Slayton, Greg & Cindy Smith

January 24 - Accepting the Lord's invitation. Hebrews 4:12-16

Verse 16 is one of my favorite prayer verses and the verses leading up to it give it more depth of meaning. Verses 12 & 13 teaches that the Lord knows everything there is to know about us, even that which we don't want anyone to know. Then, verses 14 & 15 teach that one of the main reasons to have confidence in prayer is that our Resurrected High Priest can sympathize with our weaknesses.

Our needs in prayer can cover many areas. However, when we look at the context of these verses, knowing that every area of our life is completely exposed to Him, it would indicate that the need/s being talked of in verse 16 chiefly addresses our sin.

We did a devotion about Jesus teaching us to pray that the Father would deliver us from the evil one. Jesus taught that the devil is the father of all lies. He is the master deceiver. When we sin, the deceiver seeks to convince us that God is upset with us and we can't turn to Him until we get everything right in our lives. This passage teaches us the exact opposite. It says that when we recognize our sin and our need, we are to come boldly to the throne of grace to receive the mercy and grace to help us. The deceiver knows if he can convince us to run from God, we can't fix ourselves.

When we fail, God doesn't quit loving us, but He hates what our sin is doing to us and to others. He says, "Child, come to me so that you can realize my forgiveness, restoration, and receive from me what you need to walk in victory."

**Prayer Focus for Today** - That we would understand the gift of prayer and know the door of access is open through the blood of Jesus.

**Designated families to pray for today** - Jesse, Holly, Eliana & Maddie Smith, Betty Snead, Chris & Amber Sorrels

January 25 - Losing hope that our prayer will be answered.  
Luke 1:13-20

Most of us probably have something for which we've prayed for a long time. Perhaps we've prayed for so long without seeing the answer that we've quit praying about it or, at best, we mention it without much faith every so often. Zacharias could relate. He and Elizabeth had prayed for a child for a very long time but they must have given up. Gabriel says to Zacharias that "Your prayer is heard and is being answered," but we can see from the rest of the story that Zacharias really didn't believe and, as a result, he was mute until John was born.

Yet, in spite of Zacharias' unbelief, God still chose to use him. (I'm grateful stories like this are in the Scriptures because they encourage me in my faith battles.) God didn't just choose to give them a son, He chose to give them **THE SON** who would come to be called the prophet of the Highest; the one who would go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways and to give knowledge of salvation to God's people.

If you believe God has put something in your heart to pray for, and you've yet to see it happen, perhaps the story of Zacharias and Elizabeth will encourage you to continue on.

**Prayer Focus for Today** - Pray for our senior adults. Thank God for their years of faithful service and for them to know the Lord's joy, peace, and hope in their daily life.

**Designated families to pray for today** - C.R. & Vicky Sorrels, Brad & Kandace Speer, Larry & LaDonna Stevenson

January 26 - When we don't know how to pray. Romans 8:26-27

We spent 9 days looking at how we can learn vital prayer concepts from the model prayer in Matthew 6. Studying prayers in the Bible can be very helpful in teaching us to pray. Yet, this passage tells us there will be times when we don't know how to pray as we ought.

There are 2 very important things to be learned here:

1) We need to learn to rely on the Holy Spirit when we pray. He knows the will of God and when we allow, He will intercede for us according to His will.

2) There are times when we seek to be led by Him in prayer, that our prayers won't be uttered with our human words. It will literally be groanings of the Holy Spirit. This can make us nervous. It doesn't make sense to us. It doesn't seem dignified. It can make us uncomfortable. Just because something makes you uncomfortable and doesn't fit into your reasoning doesn't mean it's wrong. Fasting can be very uncomfortable but it is biblical.

Will you ask the Lord to help you learn to rely more completely on the Holy Spirit as you pray?

**Prayer Focus for Today** - That we would experience liberty in prayer and realize it can't be contained in a one-way-fits-all box.

**Designated families to pray for today** - Paul & Joan Strausbaugh, Donna Talbert, Alan & Beverly Taylor

January 27 - Anxiety or peace Philippians 4:6-8

Obviously, I'm writing these devotions before you read them. As I was driving to work today, I found myself meditating on this passage and what the Lord wants to reveal to me in it. I think that perhaps I should make this my personal passage for 2025. There are certainly areas where I'm anxious, concerned, and worried. One area that I find myself focusing on a lot is the future of LSM. I want answers. I want things to fall into place. I want to know that everything's going to be alright. I want, I want, I want...

But what does God want? He wants me to walk in His peace and not my anxiety. These verses seem to indicate that God knows, when left to our own resources, we will worry. But He says, you're not left to your own resources. You have me. I'm God and you're not. Jesus said, "My peace I give unto you." He wants us to give Him our worries and live in His peace that comes from trusting Him.

The Bible teaches that we have a responsibility to make plans and to work to take care of things. However, it is possible to work, plan, do everything we know to do and still be worried. Sometime today, or as soon as you can, get a piece of paper and make a list of everything you can name that you are anxious about. Now, one at a time, talk it over with the Lord, with thanksgiving, and ask Him for His peace which passes all understanding.

**Prayer Focus for Today** - That we would be people of peace - receiving the Lord's peace and ministering it to others.

**Designated families to pray for today** - Bryan & Wendy Tennant & Emma, Robie Tucker, Scott, Jodi, Michelle, Kerri & Oliver Vaughn



January 28 - My House shall be called a house of prayer.  
Matthew 21:12-13

Today's devotion could be condemning, but it's not God's desire to condemn. It's His desire to convict and lead us to repentance which brings about positive change.

There are many things we do, and should do, in the house of the Lord. We should worship, preach the word, fellowship, and encourage each other in the faith. Yet Jesus didn't say my house shall be called a house of singing, a house of preaching, a house of fellowship, etc. He said, "**My house shall be called a house of prayer.**"

In my 43 plus years of being a pastor, it has always been a challenge to get people to gather to pray. Sadly, I know this is a reality in the great majority of churches, regardless of their size. As your pastor, I feel we're in a season where prayer has to be made a priority.

As I shared with you the last Sunday of October, we are in a season of major transition. Regardless of what we choose to do, the transition will take place. However, if we make the choice to be a people of prayer, who seek God and His will, it can be a transition where we recognize that the Spirit of God is leading us in the way we should go, and the best days can be ahead.

I believe that LSM is known for many good things, but I'm not sure we would be recognized for prayer. I would like to see that happen and I welcome your suggestions on how we can be more intentional about becoming a house of prayer.

**Prayer Focus for Today** - Lord, move in our lives that we will become people of prayer, both individually & collectively.

**Designated families to pray for today** - Bill, Irene & Becki Wade, Wayne Walton, Wilson & Pam Webb

January 29 - A short prayer with a lot of power. Ephesians 3:14-21

Ephesians is a book that Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus while he was under house arrest in Rome. This is the 2nd prayer recorded, with the first being found in Chapter 1. Neither time did he just say he was praying for them. He wrote out prayers with very specific focus.

In place of writing a devotion for today, I'm asking you to do the following; read back through the prayer and pick out one of the things Paul says about God, and then pick out a specific thing he prays for those who have been saved. Seek to remember these to help you when you pray.

Each day we have families listed for whom we are asked to pray. Maybe you don't feel you know how to pray for them. This prayer offers a lot of help. When I pray for people, I often ask the Lord to strengthen them in the inner person by the power of the Holy Spirit. I take that from this prayer and, therefore, I know that I am praying the will of God.

**Prayer Focus for Today** - That we will have a burden for the lost and actively seek to bring people to Christ.

**Designated families to pray for today** - Laila White, Erick, Christina, Morgan, Georgia, Ellis & Wesley Williams

January 30 - Seasons in the wilderness. Matthew 4:1-3,  
Psalm 63:1

Wildernesses are dry, they are lonely, they are often referred to as wastelands. In old movies, when someone was stranded in the desert, their goal was to survive and to get through it as fast as possible. There can be wilderness seasons in the Christian life. When we are there, we desire to get through it as fast as possible, and we might even wonder if we will spiritually survive. We also usually question what we have done to cause us to be there. If it is something you have done, and you want to know, the Lord will reveal it to you.

However, I want us to consider how God placed His servants in barren places and, following that season, brought them into seasons of abundant fruitfulness. Jesus was **led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.** Yet He came out of the desert to minister in the power of the Holy Spirit. Moses spent 40 years in the wilderness tending sheep but God brought him out to deliver the Hebrew children from slavery in Egypt. In Galatians 1, Paul speaks about the time he spent in Arabia (a desert land) before he began to publicly preach.

Most likely your wilderness won't be a physical place, but a place where your soul feels barren. If you find yourself there, and you know you aren't in rebellion against God, ask the Lord to help you trust Him and invite Him to do what He wants in you.

**Prayer Focus for Today** - Pray that those who feel they are in a spiritual drought will trust God to bring them through and into a season of refreshing.

**Designated families to pray for today** - Juanita Williams, John, Ann, Carson, Spencer, John, Paislee & Bella Woods, Samantha Woodson

January 31 - My grace is sufficient for you. John 1:16,  
2 Corinthians 12:7-10

Go back and read the passage once more asking the Holy Spirit to show you His truth.

Many years ago, I had a very important decision to make. It was a door of opportunity, but I felt if I made the wrong decision, it could have costly consequences. I truly wanted the Lord's will and asked Him for guidance. This was a time I felt the Lord gave me a clear answer. I didn't hear an audible voice but I knew He had spoken to me. His answer was this, "Either decision you make is fine. Whichever way you go, I'm going to be with you." What I learned; this was not a case of one choice being wrong and the other right. Either way I couldn't go wrong because He was going to be with me.

John 1:16 teaches that the fullness of His essence is grace; He is equivalent to grace and pure grace is equivalent to Him. Therefore, when it says His grace is sufficient, it means His presence is sufficient. I came to rest in the fact that whatever I chose He would be with me. With that I had the courage to face my fears and step through the door of opportunity and I'm grateful I did.

In the year ahead you will make thousands of choices. Some of those choices should be clear because of the truth of God's word. However, some decisions aren't as clear. Tell the Lord you want His will, and unless you get clear direction, trust that His presence will be with you either way.

**Prayer Focus for Today** - That others will experience the Grace and life of Jesus by being around us.

**Designated families to pray for today** – Marge Collins, Daniel, Babs & Raylan Sorrels

## Closing Thoughts

Psalm 25: [1] To You, O LORD, I lift up my soul. [2] O my God, I trust in You; [4] Show me Your ways, O LORD; Teach me Your paths. [5] Lead me in Your truth and teach me, For You are the God of my salvation; On You I wait all the day.

As I shared in the introduction, this devotional book was born out of my sharing about us being in a time of transition when it comes to leadership. I'm certainly seeking the Lord's direction for me and my role as pastor of LSM. Many of our key leaders are older than me. This has weighed on my mind for a long time. I know we need to be intentional about focusing on the transition, but I do not have the answers to make everything work out.

When LSM was started I/we didn't have all of the answers. We just knew the Lord had called us to do it. We sought to walk in faith and the Holy Spirit led us. Many times, when people would ask me what we were going to do about different things, my answer was, "I don't know." I just know the Lord has called us to it and we're going to continue to trust Him and seek His direction. LSM would never have survived if it would have been of our own making. I knew we couldn't take credit for any success. The story of LSM is one of the Lord's faithfulness, and I believe He has used us as a vessel to minister His life locally and throughout the world.

If we are to continue to be a life-giving church, it will be because we are committed to seeking the directions of the Lord and then being willing to walk in obedience to those directions.

While there are many things for which we can/could pray, I'm listing just a few for us to focus on.

- Use the passage, Psalm 25, at the top of the page for a foundation of our/your prayer/s, asking the Lord to give us direction about the future of LSM.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to lead us in how we go about selecting the next senior pastor and to lead us to an under-shepherd who loves Him and His people.
- Pray that younger adults will sense the call of God upon their lives to prepare for, and to step into, roles of leadership.
- Pray that people will sense the call to places of ministry (anything done unto the Lord) and serve as unto the Lord.
- Pray for the Spirit of God to give us a zeal for the glory of God.