ASBURY CHURCH

February PRAYER GUIDE

Theme: For the Love of God

In the middle of February is the sometimes silly and sappy, but also special, Valentine's Day. Of course stores and commercials make a big deal out of it, but perhaps it is an opportunity for us to consider how the Lord has loved us…PERSONALLY.

For example, consider the very familiar "love" passage from 1st Corinthians 13:4-8: *Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.* (NIV)

It's easy to gloss over this because we have read it, studied it and heard it frequently. However, have you read it in one of the more current translations/paraphrases? It sometimes makes a difference when the words and cadence are unfamiliar. Ask the Lover of your soul to speak to you in one or both of the following passages. It might help if you put the name "Jesus" where it says "Love," or read it as if He is speaking to you personally:

• *Love is patient; love is kind. Love isn't envious, doesn't boast, brag, or strut about. There's no arrogance in love; it's never rude, crude, or indecent—it's not self-absorbed. Love isn't easily upset. Love doesn't tally wrongs or celebrate injustice; but truth—yes, truth—is love's delight! Love puts up with anything and everything that comes along; it trusts, hopes, and endures no matter what. Love will never become obsolete. Now as for the prophetic gifts, they will not last; unknown languages will become silent, and the gift of knowledge will no longer be needed.* (The Voice)

• *Love is large and incredibly patient. Love is gentle and consistently kind to all. It refuses to be jealous when blessing comes to someone else. Love does not brag about one's achievements nor inflate its own importance. Love does not traffic in shame and disrespect, nor selfishly seek its own honor. Love is not easily irritated or quick to take offense. Love joyfully celebrates honesty and finds no delight in what is wrong. Love is a safe place of shelter, for it never stops believing the best for others. Love never takes failure as defeat, for it never gives up. Love never stops loving. It extends beyond the gift of prophecy, which eventually fades away. It is more enduring than tongues, which will one day fall silent. Love remains long after words of knowledge are forgotten.* (The Passion Translation/TPT)

Prayer Points:

• Take some time before the Lord and think back over your life with Him. How has He personally loved you? What situations and circumstances can you point to where you can say categorically, "that was the Lord?"

• Read John 11:1-6. It is clear from this passage and others that Jesus and the family at Bethany had an unusually close relationship. Yet when Lazarus was very ill, Jesus purposely stayed away even after the sisters asked Him to come. The passage makes a point of saying that "Jesus loved" them. Can you think of a time/times in your life when you expected Jesus to act one way towards you and He acted differently? How did you reconcile that with His professed love for you? How do the remaining verses in John 11 help you?

• The Lord has empowered us by His Holy Spirit to be His hands and feet of love towards others. How has His personal love for you motivated you to do these good works?

• 1 Corinthians 13 is not given to us as a chapter for lovers. It is actually embedded in Paul's letter to the Corinthian church which was in the midst of all sorts of dysfunction that Paul was trying to connect. What does this passage teach us about how the Lord feels about His Church?

Apostolic Prayers *(Note: Pray something IN, rather than casting something OUT)*

Song of Songs 1:1-8:14
John 3:16
1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Isaiah 49:15-16a
John11:1-44
Ephesians 2:4-5

Jeremiah 31:3
Romans 5:8
1 John 3:1

PERSONAL PRAYER REQUESTS:

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