



Baptist Churches
of NSW & ACT

40 days of prayer

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 4:6-7



Semester 2, 2021

40 days of Prayer in Discipleship Groups

We hope that you will commit to praying together for 40 days - once a week during your Discipleship Group time, and then individually, with each other or even with friends or family on the other days. This booklet was created by Carolyn Altman (a Morling student 😊) to encourage prayer among the Baptist family of Churches through NSW and the ACT. You might be using another version in your own church as well so you can use this booklet in partnership.

Prayer points for each day

1. A non-editable prayer point for the work and ministry of the church. If you are not in a Baptist church in NSW or the ACT you might like to pray for your own denomination and its vision and mission.
2. A prayer point that focuses on the Morling community in some way
3. A prayer point that encourages us to pray with a global and national focus
4. A blank prayer point – you might want to add the names of the people in your group or other specific prayer points related to your group
5. A non-editable final personal prayer

How to use this booklet

- Semester Week 2 (starting July 26) Discipleship Group: share the booklet, have a look through, identify some prayer points to add, commit to starting with “Day 1” on Monday August 2.
 - You might want to appoint someone as your group’s “editor” who can record your group specific prayer points and save the PDF with your group name
- Semester Weeks 3-9: Pray! On the day of your Discipleship Group you could spend time praying through the day’s prayer points, or read the devotion and reflect together.

Do you have to be in a Discipleship Group to pray through this booklet?

If you can’t join a Discipleship Group you could commit to using this booklet to pray individually, with just one or two other students, a mentor or someone else! If you do, let Peter Friend (peterf@morling.edu.au) know how it goes.

Let’s pray together and see God at work in the world.

Why '40 Days of Prayer'?

40 Days of Prayer is a simple initiative to encourage us all to pray more, to get to know God better through spending time with Him each day as we both talk to and listen to Him.

We also want to encourage praying together as our Baptist family of Churches throughout NSW & ACT. We have a clear vision of having 1000 healthy Churches in a generation, and we know this will require an outpouring of God's grace and power, as we can't do this in our own strength. So, over these 40 days we will be aligning ourselves with His purposes and work, and we will pray for them to come to pass.

This booklet provides a simple structure for prayer for you to follow. We are asking you to let it shape the pattern of your daily prayers. Each day includes a prayer point from the Baptist Association which is repeated weekly, on the same day of the week. The next three prayer points are prayer points from your own Church. There is also space for you to fill in your own prayers each day.

We are looking forward to seeing what God will do through this 40 Days of Prayer!



Carolyn Altman
Prayer Coordinator



Steve Bartlett
Director of Ministries

A helpful structure for prayer

A brief look at the prayers of the Bible, even our own experience in talking to God, will show that prayer should include more than just making requests. Prayer should involve a mix of praise, thanksgiving, confession, and asking (supplication).

However, for the sake of simplicity, each day of '40 Days of Prayer' has an emphasis on making requests to God. This is not something we should be reluctant to do. It shows that we trust God and recognise that he is Lord over all.

Asking God to bring about change may naturally cause us to recognise God's majesty, confess our sin and give thanks before we ever get around to voicing what it is that we are asking for. Many, however, find it helpful to follow a set structure when they pray. ACTS is a pattern for prayer that may be of benefit to you in helping you structure your prayer life as you undertake '40 Days of Prayer.'

A – Adoration

God deserves our highest esteem. To adore and praise the Lord in prayer, focus your thoughts on his majesty and power. Tell him that you love him. Extol his worth. If you find this difficult read a passage in the Bible, particularly the Psalms, to express your praise eg. Psalm 111. Alternatively, sing a song of praise that comes to mind.

C – Confession

Confess your sin to God. Ask him for forgiveness and cleansing and then be assured of receiving it in Jesus' name. 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.' (1 John 1:9)

T – Thanksgiving

"Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 5:18). We have so much to be thankful for. As the old song says, 'Count your blessings name them one by one... and it will surprise you what the Lord has done'.

S – Supplication

Pray for other people, other ministries, other concerns beyond yourself and your own needs.

Pray for yourself. The Lord loves you and cares for you and is delighted when you unload your concerns and anxieties upon him.

Notes

Devotion: Week 7

Rejoice Always!?! Philippians 4:4

Our world is in the middle of a global pandemic. Well over one hundred million people have been infected by COVID-19 and millions of people have died - and this number is increasing daily.

However, this is only one tragedy in the midst of a suffering world. Each of us also have our own hard times on top of the pandemic – financial hardships, health issues, poor relationships, death of loved ones, childlessness, unemployment, emotional neglect or manipulation... how can Paul say, 'Rejoice always?'

If we didn't know anything about Paul, we might be tempted to think he just didn't understand life. But this is the Paul who writes this letter to the Christians in Philippi while in gaol. He was no stranger to suffering – beatings, stonings, shipwrecks, conflicts, accusations by his own people... how then could he say such a thing?

The key is in the verse, 'Rejoice in the Lord always' (Philippians 4:4). The command isn't to just rejoice and laugh about suffering; it is a call to keep being thankful and rejoice 'in the Lord.' In the Lord who never changes despite the circumstances. In the Lord who always loves, always blesses (though sometimes those blessings come in strange packages), always works for the good of those who trust him. Like Paul, if we choose to keep rejoicing in the Lord in ALL circumstances, both easy and hard, then we will mature and grow more like Jesus. We will be able to persevere and grow in patience and joy no matter what.

Paul doesn't imply it will be easy, which is perhaps why he gives the command twice, 'I will say it again: Rejoice!' He followed this principle in his life so that he and Silas were able to sing praises to God in gaol (Acts 16:16ff), and we too can be enabled by the Spirit's strength to rejoice.

Write a list of ten things you can rejoice in today and tell it to the Lord in prayer. They can be rejoicing in God's unchanging character or his gifts to you. As you make this kind of daily rejoicing/thanksgiving a habit, you'll find that you view even hard times with a transformed perspective.

Christine Dillon

Devotion: Week 7

10 things you can rejoice in today

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

**'Give thanks to the Lord for he is good.
His love endures forever.'
Psalm 136:1**

Today I prayed for...

A continually renewed commitment to prayer both individually and together, and for a culture of prayer and seeking God to underpin all we do.

Other concerns:

Pray:

Thank you Lord that you are still in charge even when my life seems out of control. Help me to remember that today. Amen.

‘There is no way that Christians, in a private capacity, can do so much to promote the work of God and advance the kingdom of Christ as by prayer.’

Jonathan Edwards

Today I prayed for...

Revival and renewal in our lives and our communities, asking God to move by His Spirit to draw people to Himself, to see disciples made and lives changed.

Other concerns

Pray

Thank you that you love me even when I fail and you delight in forgiving me and giving new opportunities. Amen.

‘Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.’

Read it for yourself at Luke 18:1-8

Today I prayed for...

Intentional growth and development of leaders in my church and across our movement, and that God would raise up workers for the harvest both locally and overseas. (Matthew 9:38)

Other concerns:

Pray

Thank you that every breath I take comes from you. Help me to remember all my blessings. Amen.

**‘You can do more than pray after you have prayed.
But you cannot do more than pray until you have prayed.’**

John Bunyan

Today I prayed for...

New churches to be formed as we move towards our Gen1K vision of 1000 healthy churches in our Association in a generation, with provision of resources.

Other concerns:

Pray

**Thank you for your forgiveness that means that life can be ‘new every morning’.
Help me to forgive myself and not listen to Satan’s accusations. Amen.**

‘Lord, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, O Lord. Renew them in our day, in our time make them known; in wrath remember mercy.’

Habakkuk 3:2

Today I prayed for...

God's Kingdom to come in justice and compassion in my church, community and our wider society (Micah 6:8)

Other concerns:

Pray:

Help me to always be willing to follow you, take up my cross daily and through this honour you. Use me today in my context. Amen.

‘Jesus, warning against hypocrisy, said, ‘When you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.’

Matthew 6:6

Today I prayed for...

Relational strength and unity amongst the churches and affiliated groups in our movement as we seek to fulfill God’s mission together.

Other concerns:

Pray:

Lord, help us to pray regardless of how we feel or where we are. Amen.

‘Faith, in relation to prayer, can be described as follows: it is the willingness to act on God’s Word with complete abandonment and total trust... When you pray, begin to exercise the muscles of your faith by committing yourself more and more to what God has promised you in his Word.’

Selwyn Hughes

Today I prayed for...

My church and all churches in our movement to be continually renewed.

Other concerns:

Pray:

Lord, help us to see prayer as a necessity to stay spiritually alive and connected with you. Amen.

Time to Reflect

4. From our verse on Day 1, how do you/could you incorporate Psalm 136:1 into your prayer life? *“Give thanks to the Lord for He is good. His love endures forever.”*
5. Thinking back to the reading from Luke 18:1-8, what have you been inspired to pray about with greater dedication?

Devotion: Week 2

PRAY AT ALL TIMES **Ephesians 6:18**

As human beings, we always tend to pray for someone or something: we either pray for someone's healing or we pray for a new job, a car, a house, or a good HSC result.

Sometimes, we pray for a project to take off well or for a dream to come through. Some people pray for guidance when they have to make a major decision in their life, others pray when they particularly feel like it and others maybe only when they have found the time for it.

Most of these prayers are good. God wants us to make our requests, wishes, and worries known to Him. But prayer is much more than a list of requests. It is not to be used only for special occasions. Prayer is above all staying connected with God, our Great Creator, regardless of our requests or how we feel or in what situation we find ourselves.

Prayer is essential if we want to stay spiritually healthy. It can be compared with the internal nerve system that keeps our heart beating. Just as a healthy, pumping heart is responsible for circulating blood, oxygen, and nutrients around the body, in the same way prayer provides our often spiritually depleted lives with new vigour, new life, and a renewed spirit.

So Paul urges us to pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. It's essential for our spiritual health. 'And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.' (Ephesians 6:18)

Maarten Lecompte

‘Jesus said, ‘When you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.’

Matthew 6:7-8

Today I prayed for...

A continually renewed commitment to prayer both individually and together, and for a culture of prayer and seeking God to underpin all we do.

Other concerns:

Pray:

Lord, help us to encourage each other to be ‘constant’, prayerful people.
Amen

The church after Pentecost:

‘They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.’

Acts 2:42

Today I prayed for...

Revival and renewal in our lives and our communities, asking God to move by His Spirit to draw people to Himself, to see disciples made and lives changed.

Other concerns:

Pray:

Lord, we thank you that you have given us the gift of prayer, a way of communicating with you in, and through, all circumstances. Amen.

Jesus said, ‘This, then, is how you should pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.’

Matthew 6:9-13

Today I prayed for...

Intentional growth and development of leaders in my church and across our movement, and that God would raise up workers for the harvest both locally and overseas (Matthew 9:38)

Other concerns:

Pray:

Lord, we thank you for listening to us even when we are often lost for words. Amen.

John prays for Gaius:

‘Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, ever as your soul is getting along well.’

3 John 2

Today I prayed for...

New churches to be formed as we move towards our Gen1K vision of 1000 healthy churches in our Association in a generation, with provision of resources.

Other concerns:

Pray:

Dear God, thank you for this day and for all you have made. Thank you for sustaining everything until this day. Help me to delight in you today. Amen.

‘When we depend upon organisations, we get what organisations can do; when we depend upon education, we get what education can do; when we depend upon man, we get what man can do; but when we depend upon prayer, we get what God can do.’

A.C. Dixon

Today I prayed for...

God’s Kingdom to come in justice and compassion in my church, community and our wider society (Micah 6:8).

Other concerns:

Pray:

Dear God, thank you for another day to serve you and delight in you. Help me to honour you with my words, thoughts, and actions today. Amen.

‘Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.’

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Today I prayed for...

Relational strength and unity amongst the churches and affiliated groups in our movement as we seek to fulfil God’s mission together

Other concerns:

Pray:

Maker of heaven and earth, thank you that you have heard my prayers! Nothing is impossible for you! I commit all these things into your hands. May you do with each of them as you please. Amen.

‘Prayer is the most important tool for your mission in the world. People may refuse our love or reject our message, but they are defenseless against our prayers. Like an intercontinental missile, you can aim prayer at a person’s heart whether you are ten feet or 10,000 miles away.’

Rick Warren

Today I prayed for...

My church and all churches in our movement to be continually renewed

Other concerns:

Pray:

Gracious Father, thank you for your love that sent your Son to the cross for me! Help me love those I see today with your same love. Amen

1. Spend some time reflecting on the last two weeks. How have you grown so far in your prayer life?
2. What keeps you from prayer? How could you integrate prayer throughout your day? (Ephesians 6:18)
3. How often do you incorporate Bible verses into your prayer life? Is there one verse/passage that you find particularly useful in helping you pray?
4. Think about how our Church incorporates prayer into its culture. Are there some new ways we could grow our culture of prayer to underpin all that we do?
5. Are there any issues you are not praying about because of discouragement or a sense there is no hope in relation to those issues? Ask someone to pray with you about this.

Devotion Week 3

Praying in Pain

James 1:2-5

“I’m suffering! Yippee!”

Is this what James was talking about when he wrote “*Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds...*” (James 1:2)?

Should we be happy when suffering comes our way? Am I befalling James’ command when I give in to grief? And how do I pray, then, amidst (or in expectation of) suffering?

If we continue reading verse 3, we see that our joy is not to be found in suffering itself – it is right to grieve amidst trials and suffering – our joy is directed towards the maturing of our faith that happens as we persevere through suffering; “*...because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.*”

So should we pray for suffering, so that our faith may mature? I don’t believe the Bible encourages us to pray for suffering. What it does say, however, is to pray for wisdom. It is no tangent that James goes on to warn against lacking wisdom, for it is the key to persevering through suffering!

Verse 5: “*If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God*”.

What is wisdom? Wisdom is seeing the world through God’s lenses. It is seeing things with a heavenly perspective, not an earthly one. Only as we pray for wisdom and receive it, will we begin to look at the world and our immediate circumstances through God’s lenses. Only then can we begin to have any kind of joy in suffering, for then we will desire the maturity of our faith above anything on earth!

Lord, I pray for wisdom – that you would allow me to see my world through your lenses.

I pray that should trials and suffering come my way, you will use these to mature my faith. I pray I would have such a heavenly perspective that I will be able to have joy in this refining process, amidst the grief and pain. Amen.

Jade Chong

Paul's Prayer Request:

'Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly as I should.'

Ephesians 6:18-20

Today I prayed for...

A continually renewed commitment to prayer both individually and together, and for a culture of prayer and seeking God to underpin all we do.

Other concerns:

Pray:

Dear Father, thank you that you call me your child. Help me to understand fully what it means to call you 'Father'. May I be pleasing to you and find joy in being your child. Amen.

A Prayer of David:

‘I call on you, O God, for you will answer me, give ear to me and hear my prayer. Show me the wonder of your great love, you who save by your right hand those who take refuge in you from their foes. Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings.’

Psalm 17:6-8

Today I prayed for...

Revival and renewal in our lives and our communities, asking God to move by His Spirit to draw people to Himself, to see disciples made and lives changed.

Other concerns:

Pray:

Father God, thank you that you are our Father. Thank you that you know all things. Thank you that you are in complete control of all things. Help us to trust you completely. Amen.

‘The important thing about prayer is that it connects us to God. Prayer is getting close to God and finding out what he wants us to do and asking for strength to do it. God is absolutely wonderful and the more knowledge we have about him, the more we will want to pray.’

Cliff Perriam

Today I prayed for...

Intentional growth and development of leaders in my church and across our movement, and that God would raise up workers for the harvest both locally and overseas (Matthew 9:38)

Other concerns:

Pray:

Father God, help us to focus totally on who you are! Help us not to be distracted by our own circumstances but help us to keep our eyes on Jesus, who lived and died for us. Amen.

‘Blessed are those who trust in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes, its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.’

Jeremiah 17:7-8

Today I prayed for...

New churches to be formed as we move towards our Gen1K vision of 1000 healthy churches in our Association in a generation, with provision of resources

Other concerns:

Pray:

Father God, we pray for those in difficult situations. Father we ask that you would be their strength, their wisdom at all times and in all the difficulties of life. Amen.

A Psalm of David:

'Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer. From the ends of the earth I call to you, I call as my heart grows faint; lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For you have been my refuge, a strong tower against the foe.'

Psalm 61:1-3

Today I prayed for...

God's Kingdom to come in justice and compassion in my church, community and our wider society. (Micah 6:8)

Other concerns:

Pray:

Father God, help us to be so totally devoted to you that nothing and no one turns us away from completely serving you with all that we have and all that we are! Amen.

A Prayer of Daniel:

‘Now, our God, hear the prayers and petitions of your servant. For your sake, O Lord, look with favour on your desolate sanctuary... We do not make requests of you because we are righteous, but because of your great mercy. O Lord, listen! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hear and act!’

Daniel 9:17-19

Today I prayed for...

Relational strength and unity amongst the churches and affiliated groups in our movement as we seek to fulfil God’s mission together

Other concerns:

Pray:

Father God, help us to live our lives in your service, wherever you take us, whatever you give us to do. May we always serve you and may we always be in touch with you by prayer. Amen.

‘Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.’

Acts 14:23

Today I prayed for...

My church and all churches in our movement to be continually renewed

Other concerns:

Pray:

Father, now that you have heard me, give me the grace and peace to accept your will and to rejoice in what you will give. Amen.

1. What has God said to you during these last 21 days of prayer?
2. How do you/could you incorporate a prayer of confession into your prayer time?
3. Thinking of the Week 3 Devotion on James 1:2-5, how do you pray in the midst of suffering?
4. What answers to prayer have you received? Were these what you expected?
5. What are you asking God for wisdom in?

Devotion Week 4

Praying at all times and in all situations

Daniel 3:1-30

At the time of this story the Jews were in captivity in Babylon. Among them were 3 young men: Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. King Nebuchadnezzar was on the throne. He decided to make a gold statue of himself and he issued a decree that all people were to bow to the ground to worship this statue when they heard the sound of musical instruments. Failure to do so would result in death in a blazing furnace!

However, despite the warning, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were committed to the one true God and they refused to bow down to this statue. Word of their disobedience got back to the King. He was furious and ordered them to be thrown into the blazing furnace. Before he did so, he gave them one last opportunity to obey his command. Their response was simply amazing: ‘...if we are thrown into the blazing furnace the God whom we serve is able to save us. He will rescue us from your power...but even if he doesn’t, we want to make it clear to you... that we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue!’ The result was that God did save them from the furnace... God received the glory and these 3 young men were promoted!

These young men had been in a life-threatening situation.

Did they pray? I am sure they did! Did they know their God? I am sure they did! They had no doubt that God could save them! And they had no doubt that even if he didn’t, he had a better plan! We may not always be in life-threatening situations, but I am sure that we often ask God to save us from the daily problems and stresses of life! Do you know your God? Can you trust him so completely that whenever you pray you too can say, ‘Father, I know you can, but even if you don’t, I will still worship you, I will still serve you!’ One thing is certain; our God wants us to pray at all times and in all situations! We need to know the One to whom we pray and we need to remember that he is the Almighty God!

Joy Atkinson

We only learn to pray by praying. Although reading books and attending conferences can be helpful, we must consistently show up for practice in our prayer closet alone with God’.

Gregory Frizzell

Today I prayed for...

A continually renewed commitment to prayer both individually and together, and for a culture of prayer and seeking God to underpin all we do.

Other concerns:

Pray:

Father, teach me to be content with what you have given me. Help me to remember that all of life is a gift from you, and to be thankful. Amen.

‘Israel was helped in fighting them, and God delivered the Hagrites and all their allies into their hands, because they cried out to him during the battle. He answered their prayers, because they trusted in him.’

1 Chronicles 5:20

Today I prayed for...

Revival and renewal in our lives and our communities, asking God to move by His Spirit to draw people to Himself, to see disciples made and lives changed.

Other concerns:

Pray:

Father, help me to trust you today, especially amongst the busyness, the temptations, and the choices I need to make; let me choose what honours you. Amen.

‘For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.’

Hebrews 4:15-16

Today I prayed for...

Intentional growth and development of leaders in my church and across our movement, and that God would raise up workers for the harvest both locally and overseas (Matthew 9:38).

Other concerns:

Pray:

Father, we pray that Jesus would come soon and bring in the fullness of your Kingdom; that all would see you are Lord and worship. Amen.

**'I cry to you for help, O Lord;
in the morning my prayer comes before you.**

Psalm 88:13

Today I prayed for...

New churches to be formed as we move towards our Gen1K vision of 1000 healthy churches in our Association in a generation, with provision of resources

Other concerns:

Pray:

Father, give me the strength to do the things you've given me to do. And help me to be faithful. Amen.

‘Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.’

Romans 12:11-12

Today I Prayed for...

God’s Kingdom to come in justice and compassion in my church, community and our wider society (Micah 6:8)

Other concerns:

Pray:

Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for the loving forgiveness you have shown to me for the sins I have committed. Please help me to love you and be forgiving like you. Amen.

'I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone – for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.'

1 Timothy 2:1-2

Today I prayed for...

Relational strength and unity amongst the churches and affiliated groups in our movement as we seek to fulfil God's mission together

Other concerns:

Pray:

Lord, help me to be honest and true in whatever I say and do today. I pray for your Holy Spirit to give me the strength and courage to stand for what is right and to walk in your light. Amen.

Ezra's Prayer of Confession for the sins of Israel:

'At the evening sacrifice, I rose from my self-abasement, with my tunic and cloak torn, and fell on my knees with my hands spread out to the Lord my God and prayed: "O my God, I am too ashamed and disgraced to lift up my face to you, my God, because our sins are higher than our heads and our guilt has reached to the heavens..."

Ezra 9:5-6

(Read the rest in Ezra 9:6-15)

Today I prayed for...

My church and all churches in our movement to be continually renewed

Other concerns:

Pray:

Lord, we acknowledge you as our Creator God who knows our every need and is in control of every area of our lives. Help us to be joyful and thankful in all circumstances. Amen.

1. How does prayer give you hope and assurance when you are facing troubled times?
2. Do you find yourself thinking/saying/praying “God is in control” in both good and bad times?
3. Have you been able to find your ‘Rhythm of Praying’ during these past 4 weeks? What time of the day works best for you eg. early morning, lunch time, late evening?
4. Would you describe yourself as being ‘faithful in prayer’? (Romans 12:12)?
5. If you are participating in the final 20 days with the time of ‘Prayer & Fasting’ how are you managing? What have been the struggles with doing this? What have been the joys of doing this?

Devotion Week 5

WHAT CAN WE ASK FOR?

Matthew 6:8

In principle, there's nothing that the Christian can't ask for in prayer. Christian asking is built on the foundation of the generosity of God our Father, who already knows what we need before we ask (Matthew 6:8) and who loves to give to those who ask. Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for bread, will give a stone? Or if the child asks for a fish, will give a snake? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him! Asking God is much better than violently wrestling for things with others (see James 4:2-3).

We pray not only because of God's general providence, but also according to his special providence. We learn to pray for God's will to be done – not because this is some inevitable and impersonal force, but because we recognise his wisdom and sovereignty as well as his Fatherly care of us. And we are also permitted to wrestle with God in our prayers. We see this most clearly in the Psalms that express real human doubts. Perhaps the most remarkable instance of this is Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane. The pleading of Jesus – that it be some other way – clearly doesn't fall outside of the bounds of what is righteous behaviour for one of God's creatures. At the same time he acknowledges the priority of the Father's will – which is done, and revealed to us, by the crucifixion of the Messiah.

Remember that our prayers are heard by our Father, who wants our good; one who has provided for us in Christ. Remember that he loves to use and respond to our prayers; in fact God responds to our prayers in 'real time', not just by chance when our prayers coincide with what he's decided beforehand. And we should expect to receive counsel and the knowledge of God's will that the Holy Spirit gives as we pray.

Jonny Lam

'Is prayer your steering wheel or your spare tyre?'

Corrie Ten Boom

Today I prayed for...

A continually renewed commitment to prayer both individually and together, and for a culture of prayer and seeking God to underpin all we do.

Other concerns:

Pray:

Dear Lord Jesus, we thank you for the example you have set in words and deeds while you were on earth. Help us we pray to serve and care for one another with humility by seeking only the other's interests. Amen.

**'O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!
You have set your glory above the heavens. From the lips of
children and infants you have ordained praise because
of your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger.'**

Psalm 8:1-2

Today I Prayed For...

Revival and renewal in our lives and our communities, asking God to move by His Spirit to draw people to Himself, to see disciples made and lives changed.

Other concerns:

Pray:

Thank you Lord for your Word. Fill our hearts with words that will be a blessing to others today. Amen.

Paul's Prayer for the Ephesians:

'I kneel before the Father from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.'

Ephesians 3:14-17a

Today I prayed for...

Intentional growth and development of leaders in my church and across our movement, and that God would raise up workers for the harvest both locally and overseas (Matthew 9:38)

Other concerns:

Pray:

Our Father in Heaven, thank you for being a good God who cares for me. I pray that I may remember that I can trust you with all things in my life. Amen

‘God loves the guileless soul even when in his ignorance he is actually guilty of rashness in prayer. The Lord can soon cure his ignorance, but for insincerity no cure is known.’

A. W. Tozer

Today I prayed for...

New churches to be formed as we move towards our Gen1K vision of 1000 healthy churches in our Association in a generation, with provision of resources

Other concerns:

Pray:

Dear Lord, thank you for the mercy you show to the world by sustaining it and continuing to give us the opportunity to make you known. I pray that I might take every opportunity to show your love to others around me and to tell the gospel to them. Amen.

Paul's Prayer for the Ephesians continued:

'And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.'

Ephesians 3:17b-19

Today I prayed for...

God's Kingdom to come in justice and compassion in my church, community and our wider society (Micah 6:8).

Other concerns:

Pray:

Dear Lord, thank you for the sacrifice of your Son on the cross. I pray that I will not take this gift for granted but will strive to live a life that is glorifying to you. Amen.

**‘What a man is alone on his knees before
God, that he is, and no more.’**

Robert Murray M’Cheyne

Today I prayed for...

Relational strength and unity amongst the churches and affiliated groups in our movement as we seek to fulfil God’s mission together.

Other concerns:

Pray:

Our Father in heaven, I pray that you will reveal yourself more and more to me, make your will known and give me the strength and courage to follow you. Amen.

Paul's Prayer for the Ephesians continued:

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

Ephesians 3:20-21

Today I prayed for...

My church and all churches in our movement to be continually renewed.

Other concerns:

Pray:

Thank you Lord for the food we have to eat, for the homes we have to live in and for the peaceful country that Australia is. Give us generous and compassionate hearts for the poor and the hungry so we can be your true ambassadors. Amen.

1. Looking back to the Week 5 Devotion, do you feel comfortable to wrestle with God in your prayers?
2. Has there been a time that you have prayed for God's will to be done, and He has answered it in a way different to what you would have liked?
3. *"Is prayer your steering wheel or your spare tyre?"*
Corrie Ten Boom
4. Who are the people in your life that you can call on to ask to pray for you? Spend time thanking God for them.
5. Is there someone that God has been prompting you to offer to be a prayer support to, or to be part of a prayer group with? Reach out to them today.

Devotion Week 6

INTERCESSION, CHILDBIRTH & THE WILL OF GOD

Romans 8:22-27

'We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.'

(Romans 8:22-27)

This is a most interesting passage that gives us a glimpse of the Holy Spirit's work in us as we pray. It is a great comfort to know that when we do not know what we ought to pray for, it doesn't really make a difference to the outcome because the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.

I am struck by the sentence that begins, "In the same way". I understand this to be a reference to the previous verses where it is referring to the whole creation groaning as in the pains of childbirth. So the groaning that is being referred to when the Spirit intercedes for us is like the groaning of creation which is compared to the pains of childbirth. In childbirth, we are awaiting the birth of the child which will bring the pains of childbirth to an end. So in prayer, when we pray about something our mind cannot understand, the Holy Spirit's work brings about the answer to prayer which is like the birth of a child. Also when God searches our hearts he knows the mind of the Spirit. This is clearly because the Spirit lives within us –

Continued...

INTERCESSION, CHILDBIRTH & THE WILL OF GOD.

..continued

as our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). Also the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will. Therefore we don't have to worry about whether or not we know what God's will is in our minds, what this passage seems to say is that God's Spirit knows what the will of God is in a particular situation, yet he chooses to use our hearts in this process of interceding for other people (the saints).

So to conclude, all we need to do is be in the presence of God and pray. It doesn't matter if we don't know what to pray for or how to pray. God is not limited by my lack of knowledge or wisdom about a particular matter, yet he chooses to search my heart when I pray and in so doing he understands miraculously the mind of the Spirit who intercedes for the saints according to God's will.

Ruby Chandraraj

‘Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again; Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.’

Philippians 4:4-7

Today I prayed for...

A continually renewed commitment to prayer both individually and together, and for a culture of prayer and seeking God to underpin all we do.

Other concerns:

Pray:

Thank you Lord for all your provisions each day. Help me to see past the desire for worldly goods and look only unto Jesus for my needs. Amen.

*'I want people everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer,
without anger or disputing.'*

2 Timothy 2:8

Today I prayed for...

Revival and renewal in our lives and our communities, asking God to move by His Spirit to draw people to Himself, to see disciples made and lives changed.

Other concerns:

Pray:

Help me to pray effectively for those I meet with day by day. Help me to be a “fisher of men”. Amen. (Matt 4:19)

Jesus said to his disciples,
*“The harvest is plentiful but the labourers are few;
therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest
to send out labourers into his harvest.”*

Matthew 9:37-38

Today I prayed for...

Intentional growth and development of leaders in my church and across our movement, and that God would raise up workers for the harvest both locally and overseas (Matthew 9:38)

Other concerns:

Pray:

Thank you for lifting me up each day and giving me strength to walk with you. Let the sun shine into my life and the dark clouds roll away. Amen. (1 John 1:7)

'I believe that prayer is the measure of the man, spiritually, in a way that nothing else is, so that how we pray is as important a question as we can ever face.'

J. I. Packer

Today I prayed for...

New churches to be formed as we move towards our Gen1K vision of 1000 healthy churches in our Association in a generation, with provision of resources.

Other concerns:

Pray:

Help me in giving support to those around me who are heavy in heart. Enable opportunities for me to show your love. Amen. (Matthew 11:28)

Jesus' teaching on prayer:

*“One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.” He said to them, “When you pray, say:
'Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come.
Give us each day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins,
for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.
And lead us not into temptation..”*

Luke 11:1-4

Today I prayed for...

God's Kingdom to come in justice and compassion in my church, community and our wider society (Micah 6:8)

Other concerns:

Pray:

Help me to continue to learn more about Jesus. Open up opportunities for me to serve and encourage others. Amen. (Romans 12:8)

Time to Reflect

1. Having now completed '40 Days of Prayer' what has changed in your relationship with God? What has changed in your life or understanding of prayer?

2. How have you seen God work in response to your prayers? Perhaps you could write a short note of encouragement to someone you have prayed for regularly over the past 40 days.

Time to Reflect

3. How would you rate your faithfulness in adhering to the structure of 40 Days of Prayer? How will you maintain your commitment to have prayed for regularly over the past 40 days.

4. Is there a new person, ministry, or circumstance that you are now prepared to pray for regularly? Perhaps you could write a short note to let them know of your commitment to pray for them.

Time to Reflect

5. What matters do you need to continue to persevere in prayer about?



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