

21 Days of Prayer & Fasting



ACTS21DAYS.COM

21 Days of Prayer and Fasting - Acts

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THE PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

What does it mean to *be* The Church?

Maybe what comes to mind is a Sunday service or Gathering. Maybe it looks like attending a small group that meets during the week. Or maybe it looks like sharing your faith.

Jesus offered such an answer to that question just moments before ascending to Heaven:

...you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.¹

To be The Church then, according to Jesus, means we are witnesses. In other words, their call as a rag-tag group of people who had been with Jesus for over three years, who had seen Him die and rise from the grave, were now a family called now to make His Kingdom known throughout the known world. The message was: the King has risen! His Kingdom has come! Repent and believe in the Gospel!

At its heart, these followers of Jesus were sent out to make known the name of Jesus.

And while the call is for us to do the same, many Christians make much of the second half of Acts 1:8 to the neglect of the first half of Acts 1:8. Look at how the passage begins:

you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you

In other words, before His followers could proclaim, they first had to receive His power through the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit, God's active presence and power, working in and

¹ Acts 1:8

through them, nothing could be accomplished.

So what exactly did these budding missionaries do first? They prayed.

And for the next 21 days, that's exactly what we want to do too.

Without prayer, we won't receive power. And without power, mission becomes a fruitless endeavor.

Without power, we can strategize all we want, but the Lord will not build apart from His Spirit.

This means if we want to see people repent of sin and trust in Jesus, we pray.

If we want to see darkness pushed back in our city, we pray.

If we want to see the Kingdom of Heaven breaking into Columbia, it requires us to be on our knees in prayer.

So, we're dedicating the next 21 days to prayer and fasting. As we've taught before:

Fasting is the spiritual practice of refraining from something to focus on something else. Biblically speaking, fasting was about refraining from food... while it's true that fasting can be misused, and misunderstood - Jesus assumes in Matthew 6:16-18 that this is a spiritual practice that His followers will do.²

And one such reason why we fast is that when we do, it drives us to a deeper dependence on God. We need Him more than we need food because He is The Bread of Life.³ Yes, we need food to sustain our bodies, but more than that, we need God's power and presence to sustain our souls - and fasting is the practice by which followers of Jesus see this connection. When we fast we are driven deeper dependence, deeper prayer, and as a result, are able to access more of His Spirit's power and presence in our lives.

² FollowingJesusTogether.com/fasting

³ John 6:35

So here's the plan: for the next 21 days, we're asking you and your LifeGroup to pray and fast.

To do that, we're asking everyone to join us in a few things:

- **Abide.** To drive us into a deeper personal dependency on God, we've provided reading and prayer prompts starting January 10, 2022, and ending on January 30, 2022. For each day our abiding rhythms will be as follows:
 - **Morning:** Meditative reading and prayer through your choice of weekly Selected Readings using the practice of Lectio Divina.⁴
 - **Afternoon:** Praying through either the weekly Guided Prayer or the Lord's Prayer found in Matthew 6:9-13 or in the guide at the end of each week.
 - **Evening:** Examen Prayer found in the guide at the end of each week.⁵
- **Corporate Prayer and Worship.** To help us as a church family grow in further dependence on God, we're asking all LifeGroups to select one night each week (preferably the night you normally meet for LifeGroups) to attend our Nights of Prayer and Worship. More information can be found at: **Acts21Days.com**
- **Fast.** We're asking, bare minimum, you select one day each week to fast - ideally on the day your LifeGroup is planning to attend our Nights of Prayer and Worship. But, feel free to do more. Our recommendation is that you plan to fast from sunrise to sunset for that day and use that time you'd normally eat a meal to spend time praying the Guided Prayer for each week found in the guide or go through the Selected Readings for that week.⁶

⁴ For more on Lectio Divina, go to midtowncolumbia.com/blog/meditating

⁵ For more on Examen Prayer, go to midtowncolumbia.com/blog/what-is-examen-prayer

⁶ For those who have complications with food - whether that's low blood sugar, dietary restrictions, or you've struggled/been diagnosed with an eating disorder - we'd encourage you to process with the Lord and seek wisdom from others as to whether you should fast from food or not. For more ideas about what you could abstain from, consult our Fasting resource at - FollowingJesusTogether.com/fasting

In this guide, at the end of each week, we have reflection questions provided for you to help you further process what the Lord is teaching you through Prayer and Worship Nights, fasting, and daily abiding with Jesus.

More than anything, during this time, we want to create space to more fully live out what it means to be The Church. We want to seek God's face so that He might further pour out His Spirit upon us. We want idolatry in our lives to be broken. We want to be witnesses to the risen King. We want to see the spiritually dead brought to life in Jesus. So in these next 21 days and beyond, across our Family of Churches, may we strive together to encounter the living God that we may make Him known more deeply.

WEEK 1

From the first pages of the Bible, we see that humanity was made to live in God's presence, to behold His glory and radiate His presence to the world. And yet, through sin, God's glory and presence were often seen as a sign of judgment and terror. This begs the question - how on earth could a holy God coexist with sinful humanity? This question is threaded throughout all of Scripture.

But now through Jesus, God has made a way to experience His presence. Through Jesus dealing with sin, we can now behold the glorious face of God through the person of Jesus, able to radiate His presence wherever we go.

One of the primary ways we can experience this is through prayer. Prayer ushers us into His presence. We're invited to speak to the most holy God as a child speaks to their loving father.

This week we're called to reflect on this: God has made a way. We have confidence through Jesus to experience His presence, life to the fullest. So if you find yourself sporadic in your prayer life, in Jesus there is no condemnation, God loves you and loves to hear from you. If you don't know what to pray, spend some time thanking your Heavenly Father that He sent His Son Jesus so that you might see His beauty. Prayer begins, sustains, and ends in delighting in our relationship with God.

See also: **"Temple" by Bible Project**

SELECTED READINGS

Below are a handful of passages connected to the idea of God's presence. So take some time this week to reflect on them during your daily morning rhythm of Scripture and prayer going through the steps below:

- **LECTIO (Read)** What words or phrases stood out to you? Feel free to read the passage out loud and/or paraphrase the passage in your own words.
- **MEDITATIO (Reflect)** Read through the passage a second time. What does this passage reveal to you about God? What does this passage reveal to you about people?
- **ORATIO (Respond)** Read through the passage a third time. Where do you need to obey what the passage is telling? Where are you resistant or want to push back? What do you need to pray for?
- **CONTEMPLATIO (Rest)** Spend some time in prayer thanking God for what He's shown you today in His Word. Resolve today to put what you learned from God's Word today into practice.⁷

Exodus 33:7-11

Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, far off from the camp, and he called it the tent of meeting. And everyone who sought the Lord would go out to the tent of meeting, which was outside the camp. 8

Whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people would rise up, and each would stand at his tent door, and watch Moses until he had gone into the tent. 9 When Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and

⁷ For more on Lectio Divina, go to midtowncolumbia.com/blog/meditating

stand at the entrance of the tent, and the Lord would speak with Moses. ¹⁰ And when all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would rise up and worship, each at his tent door. ¹¹ Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses turned again into the camp, his assistant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent.

Exodus 33:12-23

Moses said to the Lord, "See, you say to me, 'Bring up this people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. Yet you have said, 'I know you by name, and you have also found favor in my sight.' ¹³ Now therefore, if I have found favor in your sight, please show me now your ways, that I may know you in order to find favor in your sight. Consider too that this nation is your people." ¹⁴ And he said, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." ¹⁵ And he said to him, "If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here. ¹⁶ For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? Is it not in your going with us, so that we are distinct, I and your people, from every other people on the face of the earth?" ¹⁷ And the Lord said to Moses, "This very thing that you have spoken I will do, for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name." ¹⁸ Moses said, "Please show me your glory." ¹⁹ And he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name 'The Lord.' And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.

20 But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live." 21 And the Lord said, "Behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock, 22 and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by. 23 Then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen."

Acts 2:25-28

*"I saw the Lord always before me,
for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken;
26 therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced;
my flesh also will dwell in hope.
27 For you will not abandon my soul to Hades,
or let your Holy One see corruption.
28 You have made known to me the paths of life;
you will make me full of gladness with your presence.'*

Psalms 23

*The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
2 He makes me lie down in green pastures.
He leads me beside still waters.
3 He restores my soul.
He leads me in paths of righteousness
for his name's sake.
4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.
5 You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;*

*you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.*

*⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord
forever.*

Exodus 3:7-12

Then the Lord said, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings, ⁸ and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. ⁹ And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. ¹⁰ Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt." ¹¹ But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?" ¹² He said, "But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain."

Isaiah 43:1-7

*But now thus says the Lord,
he who created you, O Jacob,
he who formed you, O Israel:
"Fear not, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name, you are mine.
² When you pass through the waters, I will be*

with you;

*and through the rivers, they shall not
overwhelm you;*

*when you walk through fire you shall not be
burned,*

and the flame shall not consume you.

³ For I am the Lord your God,

the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.

I give Egypt as your ransom,

Cush and Seba in exchange for you.

⁴ Because you are precious in my eyes,

and honored, and I love you,

I give men in return for you,

peoples in exchange for your life.

⁵ Fear not, for I am with you;

I will bring your offspring from the east,

and from the west I will gather you.

⁶ I will say to the north, Give up,

and to the south, Do not withhold;

bring my sons from afar

and my daughters from the end of the earth,

⁷ everyone who is called by my name,

whom I created for my glory,

whom I formed and made.”

John 14:3

*And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will
come again and will take you to myself, that
where I am you may be also.*

John 17:24

*Father, I desire that they also, whom you have
given me, may be with me where I am, to see
my glory that you have given me because you
loved me before the foundation of the world.*

Romans 8:26-30

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness.

For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. ²⁷ And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. ²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

GUIDED PRAYER

BELOW IS A PRAYER BASED ON THIS WEEKS TOPIC
AND SELECTED READINGS. FEEL FREE TO PRAY
OUT LOUD OR SILENTLY DURING YOUR DAILY
AFTERNOON PRAYER TIME.

God, who are we that you would be mindful of us?
Even our best efforts to live faithfully are marred by our sin nature.
We know fully that we could never love you, had you not loved
us first!

All throughout the scriptures, your love for us is ever present,
Woven through time into a tapestry of grace.

God, You have always met your people where they are,
And we ask that You would meet us here now.

In the morning when the sun rises,
Meet us with new mercies, like You have promised.

In the evening when the sun rests,
Meet us in the darkness, and be our Light.

In our comings and our goings,
Give us fresh eyes of awareness so that we may be awakened
to Your presence in us and around us.

God, You made the way for us to approach you in confidence!
You gave your Son, and He willingly gave His life
So that we may be reconciled to your love.
So that we may be one.

Help us to remember, and may we never forget this truth:
We are Your people, and You are for our good always.

Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

BELOW IS BASED OUT OF MATTHEW 6:9-13. YOU CAN PRAY THROUGH IT OUT LOUD OR SILENTLY DURING YOUR DAILY AFTERNOON PRAYER TIME, USING THE PRAYER PROMPTS UNDERNEATH FOR EXTENDED TIME WITH THE LORD.

“Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be your name.”

- Pray for Him to grow your understanding that He is a loving authority, holy and relationally engaged. Pray for our lives and community to focus on God’s glory above any other glory.

“Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”

- Pray for God to bring His kingdom, truth and healing anywhere there’s brokenness and loss.

“Give us today our daily bread.”

- Thank God for all the ways He is meeting your needs: material, financial, spiritual, relational etc. And ask Him to meet your needs.

“And forgive us our debts, as we have also forgiven our debtors.”

- Pray that the Spirit would empower you to forgive anyone you are holding sin against as Christ has forgiven you.

“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”

- Pray for Jesus to reveal to you and deliver you from any and all temptation. Pray for us to fight temptation through confession and repentance.

“For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen”

EXAMEN PRAYER⁸

Psalm 139:23-24

Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

The examen prayer (Latin for “examination”) is meant to be practiced at the end of each day, looking back and discerning God’s activity with an aim to grow in deeper awareness for the next day. By practicing this regularly we’re able to more quickly see God in the ordinary, live in a posture of godward gratitude, and regularly experience His presence. This prayer can be broken down in five steps:

1. RECOGNIZE GOD’S PRESENCE

Take some time to slow your mind down, let your body relax, and as you step into His presence, ask God to give you clarity and understanding as you review your day.

2. RECALL GOD’S GOODNESS

What can you thank God for today?

3. REVIEW THE DAY

When were you most aware of Jesus’ presence today? When were you least aware of Jesus’ presence today?

4. REPENT

What sin(s) do you need to confess to God? What are you struggling to trust God with? How can you give God control of it? Has the Holy Spirit been prompting you to do anything that you’ve been resisting? What step(s) do you need to take to walk in obedience?

5. RESOLVE

Pray that God will empower you tomorrow by His Spirit to walk with Him more closely.

⁸ For more on Examen Prayer, go to midtowncolumbia.com/blog/what-is-examen-prayer

FASTING AND REFLECTING

How did fasting go this week? What was challenging? Where did you find your mind drifting off to? How can you take further advantage of fasting to press into God's presence and power in your life? *(Click to type)*

How did abiding with God through prayer and Scripture go this week? What stood out to you from this week's passages and why? What might the Spirit be calling you to do to experience deeper obedience to God?

If you attended this week's Night of Prayer and Worship, what stood out to you and why? In what ways did you leave feeling encouraged and/or convicted to deeper prayer and worship in your daily life? What are some practical ways you can implement worship and prayer in your daily life?

WEEK 2

Last we explored how prayer brings us into *the presence of God*. This week we explore how prayer empowers us to access *the power of God*.

While the Holy Spirit takes a more prominent role in the formation of the early church, the Spirit is often shy in the Old Testament. We tend to see God pour out His Spirit on select people to showcase God's power. Think of the prophets, filled with the Spirit, communicating on behalf of God.¹ Or, in the time of the judges, the Spirit is seen rushing over them to bring about God's judgment on sin.² Or, in the time of the kings, the Spirit-anointed over a select few as they ushered in God's kingdom vision to Israel.³

Back then, the Spirit was often seen as an external power only able to be tapped into by a select few. But now, the Spirit is an indwelling power that can be accessed through the lives of every believer.

But how? In Acts 2 we see it. This Spirit-power is accessed in and through prayer. By praying we're asking the Father to make His kingdom come on earth as it is in Heaven. In prayer, we're asking God to manifest Himself in and through the Church where His presence and power reside. In prayer we get to partner with God in a deeper way than the prophets and kings of old. We're asking God to fill us more with His Spirit so He can make Himself known more deeply in our lives and those around us.

So where do we start? First, it begins with humbling ourselves before the Lord. If God is to fill us with more of His Spirit, it requires we empty more of ourselves. We take the posture of a servant as we plead, "Lord, I can't do this without you. I surrender myself to you. Fill me with your Spirit." Second, we ask for God's kingdom to

1 2 Samuel 23:2, Ezekiel 2:2

2 Judges 3:10, 6:34, 13:25, 14:6

3 1 Samuel 16:14, Psalm 51

come. Like we said last week, He loves to hear from us *and* God often uses our Kingdom-centered prayers as the means by which He moves the world.

So let's pray with boldness as we ask God to make His name known on Earth as it is in Heaven.

See also: **"Holy Spirit" by Bible Project**

SELECTED READINGS

Below are a handful of passages connected to the idea of God's presence. So take some time this week to reflect on them during your daily rhythm of Scripture and prayer going through the rhythms below⁴:

- **LECTIO (Read)** What words or phrases stood out to you? Feel free to read the passage out loud and/or paraphrase the passage in your own words.
- **MEDITATIO (Reflect)** Read through the passage a second time. What does this passage reveal to you about God? What does this passage reveal to you about people?
- **ORATIO (Respond)** Read through the passage a third time. Where do you need to obey what the passage is telling? Where are you resistant or want to push back? What do you need to pray for?
- **CONTEMPLATIO (Rest)** Spend some time in prayer thanking God for what He's shown you today in His Word. Resolve today to put what you learned from God's Word today into practice.

Ezekiel 36:25-27

I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. ²⁶ And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

⁴ For more on Lectio Divina, go to midtowncolumbia.com/blog/meditating

Ezekiel 37:1-14

The hand of the Lord was upon me, and he brought me out in the Spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of bones. ² And he led me around among them, and behold, there were very many on the surface of the valley, and behold, they were very dry. ³ And he said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" And I answered, "O Lord God, you know." ⁴ Then he said to me, "Prophecy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. ⁵ Thus says the Lord God to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. ⁶ And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the Lord."⁷ So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I prophesied, there was a sound, and behold, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. ⁸ And I looked, and behold, there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them. But there was no breath in them. ⁹ Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath; prophecy, son of man, and say to the breath, Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live."¹⁰ So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army. ¹¹ Then he said to me, "Son of man, these

bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are indeed cut off.' ¹² *Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will bring you into the land of Israel.* ¹³ *And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people.* ¹⁴ *And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the Lord; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the Lord."*

Ezekiel 47:1-12

Then he brought me back to the door of the temple, and behold, water was issuing from below the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east). The water was flowing down from below the south end of the threshold of the temple, south of the altar. ² *Then he brought me out by way of the north gate and led me around on the outside to the outer gate that faces toward the east; and behold, the water was trickling out on the south side.*

³ *Going on eastward with a measuring line in his hand, the man measured a thousand cubits, and then led me through the water, and it was ankle-deep.* ⁴ *Again he measured a thousand, and led me through the water, and it was knee-deep. Again he measured a thousand, and led*

me through the water, and it was waist-deep.

⁵ Again he measured a thousand, and it was a river that I could not pass through, for the water had risen. It was deep enough to swim in, a river that could not be passed through.

⁶ And he said to me, "Son of man, have you seen this?"

Then he led me back to the bank of the river. ⁷

As I went back, I saw on the bank of the river very many trees on the one side and on the other. ⁸ And he said to me, "This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah, and enters the sea; when the water flows into the sea, the water will become fresh.

⁹ And wherever the river goes, every living creature that swarms will live, and there will be very many fish. For this water goes there, that the waters of the sea may become fresh; so everything will live where the river goes.

¹⁰ Fishermen will stand beside the sea. From Engedi to Eneglaim it will be a place for the spreading of nets. Its fish will be of very many kinds, like the fish of the Great Sea. ¹¹ But its swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they are to be left for salt. ¹² And on the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither, nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing."

Joel 2:26-29

*“You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied,
and praise the name of the Lord your God,
who has dealt wondrously with you.*

*And my people shall never again be put to
shame.*

*²⁷ You shall know that I am in the midst of
Israel,*

*and that I am the Lord your God and there is
none else.*

*And my people shall never again be put to
shame.*

*²⁸ “And it shall come to pass afterward,
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh;
your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
your old men shall dream dreams,
and your young men shall see visions.*

*²⁹ Even on the male and female servants
in those days I will pour out my Spirit.*

Matthew 28:18-20

*And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority
in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹
Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father and of
the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them
to observe all that I have commanded you. And
behold, I am with you always, to the end of the
age.”*

Isaiah 29:22-24

*Therefore thus says the Lord, who redeemed
Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob:
“Jacob shall no more be ashamed,*

no more shall his face grow pale.
²³ *For when he sees his children,
the work of my hands, in his midst,
they will sanctify my name;
they will sanctify the Holy One of Jacob
and will stand in awe of the God of Israel.*
²⁴ *And those who go astray in spirit will come
to understanding,
and those who murmur will accept
instruction.”*

Matthew 6:9-13

Pray then like this:

“Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name.

¹⁰ *Your kingdom come,*

your will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ *Give us this day our daily bread,*

¹² *and forgive us our debts,*

as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³ *And lead us not into temptation,*

but deliver us from evil.

GUIDED PRAYER

BELOW IS A PRAYER BASED ON THIS WEEKS TOPIC
AND SELECTED READINGS. FEEL FREE TO PRAY
OUT LOUD OR SILENTLY DURING YOUR DAILY
AFTERNOON PRAYER TIME.

God, be near to us.

We are living in a world whose groans have only increased ever
since Eden.

We are hard pressed on every side,
And the weight of our sorrows feel as though they could
swallow us whole.

But even in the deepest of waters, in the darkest of valleys,
You remain close by our side, our Protector and Defender.

You will keep us, and never leave us.

God, You will never leave us! What a promise.

You have given us Your Spirit, who intercedes on our behalf,
And prays for us when we don't know what to say.

Continue to guide us through Your Spirit, Lord,
for we could never make it without your help.

What a loving Father you must be!

You have adopted us into Your Kingdom, which will never be
shaken.

You have given us a family of believers to walk through life with.
We are never alone.

Lord, we wait patiently for the day when our Faith becomes our
sight.

But until then, we ask that your Kingdom would come on earth,
And that You would use us to show a hurting world Your
redeeming love.

Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

BELOW IS BASED OUT OF MATTHEW 6:9-13. YOU CAN PRAY THROUGH IT OUT LOUD OR SILENTLY DURING YOUR DAILY AFTERNOON PRAYER TIME, USING THE PRAYER PROMPTS UNDERNEATH FOR EXTENDED TIME WITH THE LORD.

“Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be your name.”

- Pray for Him to grow your understanding that He is a loving authority, holy and relationally engaged. Pray for our lives and community to focus on God’s glory above any other glory.

“Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”

- Pray for God to bring His kingdom, truth and healing anywhere there’s brokenness and loss.

“Give us today our daily bread.”

- Thank God for all the ways He is meeting your needs: material, financial, spiritual, relational etc. And ask Him to meet your needs.

“And forgive us our debts, as we have also forgiven our debtors.”

- Pray that the Spirit would empower you to forgive anyone you are holding sin against as Christ has forgiven you.

“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”

- Pray for Jesus to reveal to you and deliver you from any and all temptation. Pray for us to fight temptation through confession and repentance.

“For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen”

EXAMEN PRAYER⁵

Lamentations 3:22-23

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

RECOGNIZE GOD'S PRESENCE

Take some time to slow your mind down, let your body relax, and as you step into His presence, ask God to give you clarity and understanding as you review your day.

RECALL GOD'S GOODNESS

What can you thank God for today?

REVIEW THE DAY

When were you most aware of Jesus' presence today? When were you least aware of Jesus' presence today?

REPENT

What sin(s) do you need to confess to God? What are you struggling to trust God with? How can you give God control of it? Has the Holy Spirit been prompting you to do anything that you've been resisting? What step(s) do you need to take to walk in obedience?

RESOLVE

Pray that God will empower you tomorrow by His Spirit to walk with Him more closely.

⁵ For more on Examen Prayer, go to midtowncolumbia.com/blog/what-is-examen-prayer

FASTING AND REFLECTING

How did fasting go this week? What was challenging? Where did you find your mind drifting off to? How can you take further advantage of fasting to press into God's presence and power in your life? *(Click to type)*

How did abiding with God through prayer and Scripture go this week? What stood out to you from this week's passages and why? What might the Spirit be calling you to do to experience deeper obedience to God?

If you attended this week's Night of Prayer and Worship, what stood out to you and why? In what ways did you leave feeling encouraged and/or convicted to deeper prayer and worship in your daily life? What are some practical ways you can implement worship and prayer in your daily life?

WEEK 3

As we wrap up our 21 days of prayer and fasting, let's do a quick recap. In week one we looked at the *presence of God* and how through prayer, we have confidence that we are loved by God. Last week we explored the *power of God* and how through prayer, we have boldness to ask God to make His Kingdom known. This week we'll look at the *manifestation of God* and how through prayer, we're empowered to do what Jesus did and more.

If that sounds wild, notice Jesus' words in John 14:12. Jesus says that through the Spirit you'll be empowered to do what He did, but so much more. Now note, just in the Gospel of John alone what Jesus did. He preached. He led. He forgave. He prophesied. He healed. *And*, Jesus is pointing back to all of that and says, "By my Spirit, you can do more."

In Acts, the early church we see soon after took these words to heart. Jesus' followers made God's kingdom known through teaching the Scriptures, living on mission, practicing hospitality, serving one another, and giving sacrificially. These acts in and of themselves are extraordinary, something that couldn't be done apart from the Spirit. And yet, God used these seemingly ordinary acts to manifest His extraordinary power. But there's another category of the Spirit's manifestation, as practiced in the life of Jesus, that we often don't notice or apply in our lives: prophecy and healing.

By prophecy, we simply mean speaking on behalf of God. In the Old Testament, this often looked like prophets speaking in light of previous revelation, not a future prediction. In other words, they reflected deeply on what God had already said, they were filled by the Spirit, and they spoke to others to offer at times either a word of encouragement or a word of warning.

By healing, we mean praying over someone who is sick and asking God to heal them. Or, prayers of healing could be praying over someone who is stuck in sin and asking God to bring them

repentance and restoration. In both cases of healing, sometimes God answers such prayers instantly. Other times He answers them through means like medicine, physical therapy, a 12-step program, or Recovery, or LifeGroup.

Through the power of the Spirit, in prayer, we can do this too. To do this, first, still yourself before the Lord away from distractions. Then, meditate on whatever passages help fill your mind on God's love and presence towards you - take as long as you need, there's no rush. (You might consider using the Selected Readings in this guide!) Once you're in a place where your body and soul are calm, rested, and encountering God's presence, simply ask, "God, what might you want me to say to someone or pray over someone?" And then wait. If a person comes to mind, explore that. It could very well be the Spirit prompting you, so ask Him why He brought this person to mind.

- Is there a **Scripture or truth** you feel pressed to **share** with them? Is there something the Lord is leading you to encourage them with, even if you don't really know why? That's okay, approach them and encourage them.
- Is there **something** you feel led to **pray** over someone, even if you don't know why? That's okay too. Go and pray over them, or give them a phone call right away and leave a voicemail if you have to.
- Is there **someone** the Lord showed you that you've had animosity or unforgiveness towards **to be restored to**? The Spirit brought them to mind for a reason, go in the power of the Spirit, approach that person.

The beauty is, the more we step into this, the more the Spirit can use us. So let's continue to strive after this: to quiet our souls to make room to hear the Spirit speak to us moment-by-moment. May we be like Samuel and say wherever we go, "Speak Lord, your servant is listening."¹

See also: "**Pentecost: Acts 1-7**" by Bible Project

¹ 1 Samuel 3:10

SELECTED READINGS

Below are a handful of passages connected to the idea of God's presence. So take some time this week to reflect on them during your daily rhythm of Scripture and prayer going through the rhythms below:²

- **LECTIO (Read)** What words or phrases stood out to you? Feel free to read the passage out loud and/or paraphrase the passage in your own words.
- **MEDITATIO (Reflect)** Read through the passage a second time. What does this passage reveal to you about God? What does this passage reveal to you about people?
- **ORATIO (Respond)** Read through the passage a third time. Where do you need to obey what the passage is telling? Where are you resistant or want to push back? What do you need to pray for?
- **CONTEMPLATIO (Rest)** Spend some time in prayer thanking God for what He's shown you today in His Word. Resolve today to put what you learned from God's Word today into practice.

Acts 2:14-21

But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. ¹⁵ For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. ¹⁶ But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel:

² For more on Lectio Divina, go to midtowncolumbia.com/blog/meditating

*17 “And in the last days it shall be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams;
18 even on my male servants and female servants
in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.
19 And I will show wonders in the heavens above
and signs on the earth below,
blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke;
20 the sun shall be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood,
before the day of the Lord comes, the great
and magnificent day.
21 And it shall come to pass that everyone
who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.’*

John 14:12-14

“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. ¹³ Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.

1 Thessalonians 5:9-11

For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. ¹¹ Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

Acts 2:32-36

This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. ³³ Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. ³⁴ For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, “The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, ³⁵ until I make your enemies your footstool.” ³⁶ Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

Colossians 2:6-7

Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, ⁷ rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

Ephesians 3:14-19

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, ¹⁶ that according to

the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Ephesians 3:20-21

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Revelation 22:16-17, 20-21

“I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.”

¹⁷ The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.

²⁰ He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

²¹ The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.

GUIDED PRAYER

BELOW IS A PRAYER BASED ON THIS WEEKS TOPIC AND SELECTED READINGS. FEEL FREE TO PRAY OUT LOUD OR SILENTLY DURING YOUR DAILY AFTERNOON PRAYER TIME.

God, You alone provide the rest our souls desperately need, For the only peace we could ever know on this earth is found in Your presence.

We quiet ourselves before you now, and lay aside every weight that was never ours to carry.

Speak, Lord - we are listening.

What would You say to Your people?

What steps of obedience can I take this week, to walk in Your light?

Call to mind any unbelief in our hearts that would take root with the intent of pulling us away from You.

Instead, may our roots continue to grow deeper into Your heart, God.

May we learn to love you not just as a friend, but as our holy King.

Strengthen our Faith, Lord.

Strengthen Your church.

As we have been reconciled to Your love, help us to be reconciled to one another, Lord.

May we be slow to anger, and quick to love and forgive.

Lord, You have promised in Your word that You would return for us - You've promised to swallow up death forever and restore all that has been broken.

We wait for that day in hopeful expectation!

Continue to meet us here in the interim, Lord.

Help us keep our eyes fixed on You, so that we may finish our race well and faithfully.

Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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- Pray for Jesus to reveal to you and deliver you from any and all temptation. Pray for us to fight temptation through confession and repentance.

“For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen”

EXAMEN PRAYER³

Psalm 36:5

Your steadfast love, O Lord, extends to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds.

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RESOLVE

Pray that God will empower you tomorrow by His Spirit to walk with Him more closely.

³ For more on Examen Prayer, go to midtowncolumbia.com/blog/what-is-examen-prayer

FASTING AND REFLECTING

Take a look back on what the Lord has taught you over the past three weeks, what stood out to you, and why? Were there any passages you were particularly struck by? *(Click to type)*

As we wrap up these 21 days, how can you take the practice of abiding through Scripture and prayer and make it more sustainable and intentional in your life?

If fasting is a means by which we experience deeper neediness and dependence on God, how might fasting be a regular rhythm in your life?

Over the last few weeks, what stood out to you from the Nights of Prayer and Worship and why? What are some practical ways you can implement worship and prayer in your daily life?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their response to the question above.

EPHESIANS 3:20-21
NOW TO HIM WHO
IS ABLE TO DO FAR
MORE ABUNDANTLY
THAN ALL THAT
WE ASK OR THINK,
ACCORDING TO THE
POWER AT WORK
WITHIN US, ²¹ TO
HIM BE GLORY IN
THE CHURCH AND
IN CHRIST JESUS
THROUGHOUT ALL
GENERATIONS,
FOREVER AND
EVER. AMEN.

