

CityLife Church - 14 Days of Prayer

February 7-20th, 2011

Prayer is simply conversation with God. It is as important to spiritual life as breathing is to human life. It is an amazing thing that the God of the universe invites us to know him and even to become his friend. Friendship is built through time together and through sharing with each other. God has revealed himself to us – through creation, through the sacred Scriptures, in the person of Jesus Christ, and through his Holy Spirit to those who seek him.

For fourteen days, beginning on Monday February 7th, we are encouraging everyone in our church community to invest in some extended time of prayer each day. Prayer is not so much about getting God to do what we want him to do as it is about us becoming the people he desires us to be and then positioning ourselves to love and serve him each day. Following are some thoughts and ideas for you to include in your time of prayer each day. Spend time alone with God or gather with some family members or friends or with your Life Group.

May these promises be an encouragement to you as you pray ...

“Have you never heard? Have you never understood? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of all the earth. He never grows weak or weary. No one can measure the depths of his understanding. He gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless. Even youths will become weak and tired, and young men will fall in exhaustion. But those who trust in the Lord will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.” [Isa 40:28-31. NLT]

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.” [Proverbs 3:5-6. NLT]

“Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.” [James 5:16-17. NLT]

Day 1 (February 7th) – Adoration

The word ‘ACTS’ is a simple pattern for prayer. A is for Adoration, C is for Confession, T is for Thanksgiving and S is for Supplication.

The greatest commandment is that we love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength (Matt.22:36-38). Spend some time expressing your love to God. Think about him – who he is, what he is like, and what he is doing. Reflect on his character qualities – love, mercy, faithfulness, grace, goodness, justice, and holiness. Worship and adore him. Praise him.

Then the Lord came down in a cloud and stood there with [Moses]; and he called out his own name, Yahweh. The Lord passed in front of Moses, calling out, "Yahweh! The Lord! The God of compassion and mercy! I am slow to anger and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness. I lavish unfailing love to a thousand generations. I forgive iniquity, rebellion, and sin. [Exodus 34:5-7. NLT]

Day 2 (February 8th) – Confession

Sin is disobedience to the commands that God has given us for life. It dishonours God and it causes damage to our lives. Thankfully, God is a God of forgiveness and grace. Ask the Holy Spirit to search your heart and see if there is any thought, word, or action that you need to repent of. Bring it before the Lord. Is there any person you have a negative attitude towards or unresolved conflict with? What can you do today to deal with this (Matt.5:23-24)? Like Paul, seek to maintain a clear conscience without any unresolved issue – with either God or people (Acts 24:16).

What destructive habits or patterns of life have taken a hold of your life? What inner needs might these reflect that you are seeking to meet in ways that do not satisfy? Ask God to heal your heart and set you free from anything and everything that is keeping you back from the life God desires for you. Who could you speak to about this – a safe friend, counsellor, or leader?

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.” [Psalm 139:23-24. NLT]

“If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness. If we claim we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar and showing that his word has no place in our hearts. My dear children, I am writing this to you so that you will not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate who pleads our case before the Father. He is Jesus Christ, the one who is truly righteous. He himself is the sacrifice that atones for our sins — and not only our sins but the sins of all the world.” [1 John 1:8 – 2:2. NLT]

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Day 3 (February 9th) – Thanksgiving

Worship is more of a focus on loving God for who he is while praise is thanking him for all he has done. Make a list of things you are thankful to God for and take the time to express your thanks to him. Endeavour to cultivate an attitude of gratitude each day. Express your gratitude to other people in your life too.

“Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good! His faithful love endures forever.” [Psalm 107:1. NLT]

“Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.” [1 Thess.5:18. NLT]

Day 4 (February 10th) – Supplication

God is interested in the details of our lives. We can bring our needs and concerns to him. He hears us and takes an interest in our lives. Pray for yourself, as well as your family and friends. Pray for others in need at this time. Think of those recently affected by natural disasters here in our own country of Australia. Be specific and ask in faith, believing that God will answer and do what is best.

“Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.” [Matthew 7:7-8. NLT]

“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.” [1 John 5:14. NLT]

“So then, since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we believe. This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.” [Hebrews 4:14-16. NLT]

Day 5 (February 11th) – Our Holy Calling

As followers of Christ, we are ‘saved’ and ‘called’ with a holy calling (2 Timothy 1:9). God has a mission and a task for us to fulfil – in our families, in the church, and in the world. He has given us spiritual gifts and natural abilities that are ways for us to serve others and make the world a better place. Have you discovered your gifts? Are you developing them and deploying them for the benefit of God’s kingdom?

Take some time to reflect on why you are here on earth. What is your purpose and the contribution God has designed you to make? What is your role in the church – the body of Christ (see 1 Corinthians 12-14. Romans 12:1-13. 1 Peter 4:7-11)? How does your career or studies fit into God's calling for your life?

God has called us to a life of growth and progress (see 1 Timothy 4:14-15). What can you do this year to further develop the potential God has given you? Pray for favour, grace, and opportunities to serve.

"I remember your genuine faith, for you share the faith that first filled your grandmother Lois and your mother, Eunice. And I know that same faith continues strong in you. This is why I remind you to fan into flames the spiritual gift God gave you when I laid my hands on you. For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline. So never be ashamed to tell others about our Lord. And don't be ashamed of me, either, even though I'm in prison for him. With the strength God gives you, be ready to suffer with me for the sake of the Good News. For God saved us and called us to live a holy life. He did this, not because we deserved it, but because that was his plan from before the beginning of time — to show us his grace through Christ Jesus." [2 Tim 1:5-10. NLT]

Day 6 (February 12th) – Money Money

We are stewards or managers of all that God has given us – our talents, our time, and our resources, including our money. God will hold us accountable for how we use what he has given us. He desires a return on his investment in our lives (Matthew 25:14-30. Romans 14:12. 1 Corinthians 3:10-15).

How we handle our money is a measure of our maturity (Luke 16:1-13). Money is a good servant but a terrible master. It can be a benefit in our lives and be used for great good OR it can cause a lot of damage if we let it get out of control.

Reflect on your financial situation. God has ordained good old-fashioned hard work as the means for gaining income. How is the income side going for you? Pray for God's favour and blessing on you as you work faithfully. How is the spending side going for you? Ask God for wisdom and restraint to live within your means and to avoid destructive debt. How is the giving side going for you? Are you honouring God by investing him the first part of all of your income in his work on earth? How can you be a greater help to the poor and needy in our world?

Pray for the church and other kingdom-minded ministries and organisations. Pray that they will have all the resources they need to fulfil vision God has given them.

"Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the best part of everything you produce. Then he will fill your barns with grain, and your vats will overflow with good wine." [Proverbs 3:9-10. NLT]

"Remember this — a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. For God loves a person who gives cheerfully. And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others." [2 Corinthians 9:6-9. NLT]

Day 7 (February 13th) – Sharing the Good News

Jesus gave his followers two great commandments (love God and love your neighbour) and a great commission – to tell others everywhere the good news of his love and of God's kingdom (Matthew 28:18-20). We are called to BE and SHARE good news wherever we go.

Think about the people God has positioned you near who don't yet know him personally. Pray for them by name. Pray for wisdom and courage to be a witness for Christ to them. Consider how you can show God's love to them in practical ways. Pray about inviting them to your home or to an appropriate Christian gathering.

"You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless. "You are the light of the world — like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father. [Matthew 5:13-16. NLT]

"Live wisely among those who are not believers, and make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone." [Colossians 4:5-6. NLT]

Day 8 (February 14th) – The Family

God ordained the family as the cornerstone of society. Fathers and mothers play important roles in bringing up the next generation (Deuteronomy 6:1-9). Pray for marriages – that husbands and wives would love and respect each other (Ephesians 5:21-33). Pray for single people that they would find a sense of identity, value, connection, and contribution. Pray for parents that God would give them wisdom and insight into bringing out the best in each of their children. Pray especially for single parents for grace and strength. Pray for families where there has been conflict and a breakdown of relationships. Pray for healing and forgiveness to flow.

"Children, obey your parents because you belong to the Lord, for this is the right thing to do. Honor your father and mother. This is the first commandment with a promise: If you honor your father and mother, things will go well for you, and you will have a long life on the earth. Fathers (parents), do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord." [Ephesians 6:1-4. NLT]

Day 9 (February 15th) – The Next Generation

Each generation has a responsibility to serve God's purpose for their time in history (see Acts 13:36) and pass on the knowledge of God to the next generation (Psalm 71:18; 78:4-7). That is why children's and youth ministry are so important within each church community. Pray for our young people – that they will come to know God for themselves, that they will see that God's ways are best, and that they will discover a sense of purpose for their lives. Pray for parents. Pray for children's and youth workers, as well as school teachers – for wisdom, grace and insight into each young person's heart.

"Let each generation tell its children of your mighty acts; let them proclaim your power." [Psalm 145:4. NLT]

Day 10 (February 16th) – Communities

God has called each church to have a positive impact on its local community. The church is God's people called out of the world and then sent back into the world to influence it for God. Consider your local neighbourhood and community. Pray for its leaders and influencers. Pray for the needs you see. Consider in what way you can be God's hands and feet. Seek to bring God's blessing. Build relationships. Meet needs. Then share about Jesus (see Luke 10:1-9).

Pray for organisations and ministries, such as our own CityLife Community Care, that they will be able to continue to meet many needs and heal many of the hurts that people carry in their lives.

"God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. Then Jesus went around doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him." [Acts 10:38. NLT]

Day 11 (February 17th) – Cities

God calls us to pray for the peace of the city in which we live and to seek to be a blessing to it, wherever that may be and no matter how 'evil' that city may be. Let's be more like Abram who even prayed for Sodom that God would preserve it from judgment than Jonah who wanted God to judge Nineveh rather than show it mercy.

Pray for your city – its leaders, its influencers, and its people. Pray for the churches in our city – large and small, traditional and contemporary, evangelical and Pentecostal. Pray for church leaders – for wisdom, grace, courage

and protection. Pray for our various congregations throughout Melbourne – at Knox, Casey, Manningham, Williamstown, Point Cook, and our Spanish and Chinese congregations. Pray for all followers of Christ – that we may be salt and light in our city (Matthew 5:13-16).

“Work for the peace and prosperity of the city where I sent you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, for its welfare will determine your welfare.” [Jeremiah 29:7. NLT]

Day 12 (February 18th) – Nations

God sends us not only to our community and our cities but also to the far reaches of the earth (Acts 1:8). God’s heart is for every people group, and there are still many who have never even heard the name of Jesus. God’s heart is for every sector of society. We have a cultural mandate to go into all the ‘world’, which is the Greek word ‘cosmos’ and which refers to the social order that exists. Business, government, media, and education all need the influence of people who know and love God.

Pray for mission workers. Pray for more church planters to emerge. Pray that more people will respond to God’s call to ‘go.’ Pray for those who have never heard - that the gospel will go out in power, even to the ends of the earth. Pray for more resources to be raised to finance God’s kingdom work. Consider going on a short-term mission trip yourself. What about this year?

Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” [Matthew 28:18-20. NLT]

Day 13 (February 19th) – Leaders

In many ways, homes, business, organisations, governments and even churches rise and fall on the quality their leadership. Leaders are important because they influence many others. That’s why leaders are often the target of the enemies attack (Matthew 26:31). That is also why praying for leaders is so important.

Take some time to pray for our political and community leaders, for church leaders, for leaders or authorities in your own life. See them as God’s representatives and seek to encourage, support and assist them in their important role serving the greater good (see Romans 13:1-7).

“I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them. Pray this way for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity. This is good and pleases God our Savior, who wants everyone to be saved and to understand the truth. For there is only one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and humanity — the man Christ Jesus. He gave his life to purchase freedom for everyone. This is the message God gave to the world at just the right time.” [1 Timothy 2:1-7. NLT]

Day 14 (February 20th) – Our World

As followers of Christ, we are here on this earth to be ambassadors of His kingdom. We are here to bring His rule and reign into every area and arena of life. Take some time to consider and reflect on the issues facing our world right now. Think about poverty, crime, terrorism, war, and the environment for starters. Pray for God’s will to be done – as in heaven so on earth. Pray about what contribution or difference you could make to see our world become what God intended it to be.

Pray like this: “Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy. May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us today the food we need, and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us. And don’t let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one. [For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever. Amen.] If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.” [Matthew 6:4-14. NLT]