

J A N U A R Y - M A R C H 2 0 2 3

PRAYER guide

For those of you who are here for the first time, and for those of you who've been here for a while- welcome :)

We want to help you get and stay connected with God and each other.

Regular connection with God happens through prayer and scripture, and we need set aside time to slow down and hear from God. The first section of this booklet is devoted to that, to help you slow down in prayer and scripture reading. We've put together a prayer guide and scripture reading for you. You can use this daily. The prayers and scriptures will connect us with the joy, hope, peace and love of Advent.

When I use this prayer and scripture guide, I usually pray and read out loud. It helps me to be more focused.

I pray you will always remember that you are an image bearer of Jesus Christ. You possess his Love and his Spirit within you. Don't you dare hold back in sharing that love and Holy Spirit power with others, especially at Christmas.

Pastor Nate

WE PRAY TO BE FORMED BY GOD. TAKE A MOMENT AND QUIET YOUR HEAD, HEART AND SPIRIT. OPEN YOURSELF TO HEARING FROM GOD AND THEN BEGIN WITH THESE PRAYERS EACH DAY. THIS IS THE WORK OF SLOWING DOWN AND POSTURING YOURSELF TO HEAR FROM GOD.

FIRST WORDS IN PRAYER

Eternal God, you are always with us- You are here, Now.
Father God, creator of heaven and earth.
God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,
God of Israel,
God and Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,
True and living God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
Have mercy and hear our prayers.

CONFESSION AND DECLARATION

Most merciful God, We confess that we have sinned against You in thought, word and deed, By what we have done, And by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your son Jesus Christ, Have mercy on us and forgive us; That we may delight in your will, And walk in your ways, To the glory of your name, Amen.

JESUS PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, Have mercy on me [a sinner].

When we open God's word, it's like we're opening his mouth— take some time each day to immerse yourself in God's word. As you read the daily Psalm, imagine the feelings you encounter as your own. As you read in the Old Testament, work to discover what it has to do with the Good News of Jesus Christ. As you read in the New Testament, imagine you are present with Jesus or with the early church.

Week of January 1

Psalm 1-7
Jeremiah 31:7-14
Ephesians 1:3-6, 15-19

Week of February 5

Psalm 36-42
Isaiah 58:1-12
Matthew 5:13-20

Week of March 12

Psalm 71-77
Exodus 17:1-7
Romans 5:1-11

Week of January 8

Psalm 8-14
Isaiah 42:1-9
Matthew 3:13-17

Week of February 12

Psalm 43-49
Deuteronomy 30:15-20
Matthew 5:21-37

Week of March 19

Psalm 78-84
I Samuel 16:1-13
Ephesians 5:8-14

Week of January 15

Psalm 15-21
Isaiah 49:1-7
John 1:29-42

Week of February 19

Psalm 50-56
Leviticus 19:9-18
Matthew 5:38-48

Week of March 26

Psalm 85-91
Ezekiel 37:1-14
Romans 8:6-11

Week of January 22

Psalm 22-28
Isaiah 9:1-4
Matthew 4:12-23

Week of February 26

Psalm 57-63
Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7
Matthew 4:1-11

Week of January 29

Psalm 29-35
Micah 6:1-8
Matthew 5:1-12

Week of March 5

Psalm 64-70
Genesis 12:1-4
Romans 4:1-5, 13-17

BIBLE READING QUARTER 1

Psalms: one each day

Old and New Testament: same each day

PRAYER FOR FAMILY AND NEEDS

This next section is all about bringing our requests to God. Before you begin this specific time of prayer, read **Psalm 23** and **Psalm 91:1-2**.

Pray for your immediate family by name.

Pray the Lord's Prayer.

Pray for these weekly needs:

SUNDAY: *the church gathered*

All of Albemarle's worship gatherings today; clear gospel!

All of our network churches: AFA, Sandhills Assembly, Restoration City Church.

MONDAY: *the church scattered in mission*

Wisdom in reaching out with God's love through our various vocations, local businesses and medical missions.

Business owners in the community, doctors, nurses, civil servants.

TUESDAY: *the church at home and at school*

For homes and schools. All of our county schools, charter and private schools, college and universities.

WEDNESDAY: *the church serving the needy*

The people who reach out regularly, for the needs of the community.

All of our local and regional outreach partnerships: Pregnancy Resource Center, Stanly Christian Ministry, Convoy of Hope.

THURSDAY: *the church in our nation and world*

Guidance for those who govern and those who are governed. For peace and justice. Local, state and national officials and servants.

FRIDAY: *AFA's own fellowship*

For the growth and deep rooted cultivation of unity and hospitality at AFA.

For our pastor, board, leadership team.

SATURDAY: *the witness of Christians*

That the church may grow inwardly in discipleship and outwardly through evangelism of the lost.

All of our 60+ supported missionaries, our church plants and partners.

Pray for your personal requests and needs.

Use this time to pray for whatever is on your heart. Employ your spiritual gift and pray in tongues to edify yourself before the Lord.

SITTING WITH JESUS

Take several minutes to sit in silence. If you need to say something, or think something, then say or think on the name of Jesus. Maybe set a timer or an alarm, but take several minutes to be still, be silent, breathe and just BE with Jesus.

AN HONEST PRAYER OF RESPONSE*

Lord Jesus, I love you. I love you. I love you.

I know you love me. and I love you.

I don't have any big things to say, here.

I don't have any profound words to express, but I am here and I want you to be with me and I want to be with you. I am often distracted. I am often not fully here. I am not always fully trusting. I am still all over the place.

But I want to be here more because I know that you, God, are here. I know that all I need is here. Thank you for being here with me. Thank you for your spirit, which dwells in me- I don't feel it all the time, but I know it.

(Henri Nouwen)

CLOSING PRAYERS

These prayers are an appropriate ascent from the slower, more contemplative prayer that we've just prayed. Pray these as you wrap up this time of prayer.

BENEDICTION PRAYER

We are image bearers of the most high God,
We are covered by the love of Jesus,
We have the power of the Holy Spirit within us.

Because of the Holy Spirit's power within us,
We will freely and recklessly give away this love of Jesus
We won't hold back.

Amen.

THE LORD BLESS US

(may be sung)

The Lord bless us and keep us
Make his face to shine upon us
Show us favor, give us peace
In the name of the Father,
in the name of the Son,
In the name of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

CONFESSION OF THE MYSTERY

Christ has died.
Christ has risen.
Christ will come again.

JESUS PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, Have mercy on me [a sinner].



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