



WEEK 1 REFLECTIONS



Welcome to the first of 21 days of prayer!

Church On Five has a great desire to be a church of prayer and to become people shaped by praise, gratitude, trust and faithfulness. We long to see our city experience renewal and be awakened to the presence of God. We are so glad you are joining us as we dedicate the next 21 days to prayer, intentionally seeking and listening for God's voice and actively participating with him to bring hope and healing to our city.

**The theme of our first week is SEEK. What are we discovering about God?
Let's begin with a prayerful reading of Jeremiah 29:11-14.**

Read this passage 3 times all together. What word or phrase jumps out at you? At the end of each reading, sit for a few moments with it. Ask the Lord why he gave you this particular word or phrase and what kind of action does he want you to take in response to it.

You may find it helpful to keep a journal during these 3 weeks and write out your prayers as well as record what you are hearing from the Lord. You may also want to add other disciplines such as fasting or silence to your journey of prayer... it is up to you!

We enter into this season of prayer with great anticipation and expectation that God will speak, and move and we will discover greater depth in our walk with him.

Thank you for stepping out in faith with us!

Welcome to Day 2 of 21 Days of Prayer!

The theme of our first week is SEEK.

What are we discovering about God?

Today we are looking at Matthew 7:7-11 and Luke 12:27-31

Take a few moments to get yourself comfortable and settle in. Take some deep breaths to relax your body and allow your mind to focus in on spending sacred time with God. Before reading the suggested scripture passages, offer a prayer of praise and thanksgiving to God. What attributes do you love about God? What are you thankful for? Tell him. If you are keeping a journal, write these things down. Finally, ask the Lord to speak to you and trust that he will reveal things as you read scripture.

As you begin to read, try to focus and receive the passages through the lens of God as Father. Pay attention to the words you are reading, but also to how you are receiving them. Do they stir up any emotion? If so, what kind of emotions? Do you perceive God as Father in a positive way or is this difficult for you? Why?

Are you able to entrust God with the things you worry about? Do you feel comfortable about asking God for what you need? Why or why not? What do you think seeking God's kingdom looks like in your life?

It is important to recognize and acknowledge any obstacles that get in the way of experiencing the goodness and love of God. As we become aware of these things, I encourage you to take a step of faith and allow God to speak into your life. Trust that his desire is to offer healing, grace and restoration to you.

End your time with him with a prayer of gratitude... this might be difficult in some cases, but gratitude is something we must practice regularly in order to become grateful people.

Remember... you are blessed!

Thank you for stepping out in faith with us!

Welcome to Day 3 of 21 Days of Prayer!

The theme of our first week is SEEK.

What are we discovering about God?

Today we are looking at Joel 2:12-14

Take a few moments to get yourself comfortable and settle in. Take some deep breaths to relax your body and allow your mind to focus in on spending sacred time with God. Before reading the suggested scripture passage, offer a prayer of praise and thanksgiving to God. What attributes do you love about God? What are you thankful for? Tell him. If you are keeping a journal, write these things down. Finally, ask the Lord to speak to you and trust that he will reveal things as you read scripture.

As you read this passage, what word or phrase strikes you? Read this passage a few times over. Let the words sink into your mind and spirit.

The title at the top of this passage of scripture is "Rend Your Heart". The definition of the word rend is to tear apart. In the Hebrew language, when this text was written, the word rend or the idea of tearing apart was actually a very violent action. As we heard in Sunday's message, in Hebrew culture people would hire people to wail for them in their mourning. People would tear their garments in their grief. It was a desperate, aggressive and forceful move.

With this imagery as your backdrop, re-read the passage of Scripture. How does this shape your thinking of what it means to seek the Lord with all your heart; to return to him wholeheartedly?

The image of Jesus on the cross tells me that God felt so strongly about us that his heart was torn apart with grace and compassion, abounding in love TOWARD US! And in the holiest of holies (the temple), the veil (thick curtain) was symbolically torn to show us that God moved out of the temple and its religious system, giving us free access to his presence.

What would it look like in your life to "rend your heart" toward God? What changes would need to be made in your lifestyle, habits, relationships, attitudes, or even your approach toward God? How strongly do you feel about God?

End your time with him with a prayer of gratitude. Remember... you are blessed.

Thank you for stepping out in faith with us!

Welcome to Day 4 of 21 Days of Prayer!

**The theme of our first week is SEEK. What are we discovering about God?
Today we are looking at Luke 18:1-8 & 1 Corinthians 14:15**

As we settle into day 4 some questions may have begun to arise. One question that has been asked is "Why 21 days?". What is the significance of that number? If this question has crossed your mind, [click here](#) for a good explanation of why we chose 21 days.

Entering into this sacred time with God is sometimes difficult because of distraction and a pressing need to accomplish things. Don't shortchange this time. It will change the trajectory of your day. It will shape how you approach your day and never underestimate what is being accomplished in the spiritual realm as well as in your own life. Use this time to experiment with various things that help you focus. Here are some suggestions: Play worship music, close your eyes, take deep breaths, go for a walk, leave your phone in a different room.

All through the Bible, we see how intentional and persistent God's people were in prayer and seeking him. We cannot ignore the fact that this was the top priority in Jesus' life - spending time with his Father and seeking his will.

As you read today's scripture passages, what do you notice? What words or phrases pop out at you? Does anything resonate with you or cause you to question or wonder? Pay attention to these things and ask the Lord for more clarity.

Is there anything in your life - a cause, a passion, a burden, a relationship - that you pursue with persistence? Is there something that you sense the Lord is laying on your heart right now that you feel the need to explore a little more deeply?

Don't ignore these nudges. Don't be fearful of exploring it further. Reach out to someone you trust and share it with them. It always helps to hear another person's perspective.

End your time with him with a prayer of gratitude. Remember... you are blessed.

Thank you for stepping out in faith with us!

Welcome to Day 5 of 21 Days of Prayer!

**The theme of our first week is SEEK. What are we discovering about God?
Today we are looking at Nehemiah 8:9-10**

As we are nearing the end of the first week, you may have found that it is a little more difficult than anticipated to consistently set aside time each day to pray and reflect. Don't be discouraged by this. It is all part of the journey of discovery - of God, ourselves, and others. Rather than being driven by guilt, rest in the truth that God is gracious and compassionate and abounding in love. Simply step back into the rhythm of prayer and reflection and keep going.

As we have committed ourselves to pray for the renewal and revival of our city, today's scripture verses touch on this exact thing. The background to this story is that it takes place around 100 years after the Israelites had been released from 70 years of captivity. Over the years, they had managed to rebuild the temple and lay a spiritual foundation again, but the walls around the city were still destroyed and lay in ruins. Upon hearing that the Israelites were in great distress about this, Nehemiah had come to help them rebuild the wall. This rebuilding of the wall did not come without opposition and troubles, but it was built in record time. Finally, they had their city back and a place of worship.

As the people gathered together in the town square completely unified, the Holy Spirit was at work. They asked Ezra, the priest and scribe, to read the Book of Law (God's Word) to them. He read from daylight until noon non-stop (around 6 hours!). The people couldn't get enough. They responded with thankfulness to God, they prayed and they worshipped. And then they wept. As they heard the word of God, they had become convicted of their sin and were filled with sadness and remorse.

But these verses today tell us that in our conviction, the Holy Spirit is at work transforming us and therefore we can celebrate. If our sense of conviction is greater than the sense that God is doing a good and holy work in us, then tears are not good. Our knowledge of our sin should never be bigger than our knowledge of Jesus as our Saviour. We are great sinners, but He is a greater Saviour.

Therefore, *the joy of the Lord is your strength* – even when you are being convicted of sin. We can trust that God will forgive and transform us.

Is there something in your life you are being convicted of by the Holy Spirit? Will you take steps to confess this to the Lord and receive his grace, forgiveness and gift of joy? These actions lead to renewal and revival in our lives resulting in joy.

As we continue to pray for the renewal of our city, let us be the people who lead the way in allowing God to transform us and give us new life.

End your time with him with a prayer of gratitude. Remember... you are blessed.

Thank you for stepping out in faith with us!

JOIN US TOMORROW MORNING IN THE PRAYER ROOM AT 9:00AM FOR COMMUNAL PRAYER

Welcome to Day 6 of 21 Days of Prayer!

**The theme of our first week is SEEK. What are we discovering about God?
Today we are looking at Lamentations 3:21-26**

Let's sit in this passage of Scripture for a little bit today and revisit the suggested ways of focusing yourself and settling into this sacred space and time with God. Begin with prayers of praise and thankfulness for who God is and what he has done in both your life and in the world around you.

Once again, prayerfully and slowly read the scripture, asking God to direct you to words or phrases that strike you. Sit for a moment and let the words sink in. Read the passage again slowly, asking the Lord to reveal why he directed you to the particular word or phrase. Again, sit for a moment in this. Read the passage one last time, asking the Lord what action he would like you to take in your life with what he has spoken to you. Let it sink in.

This way of reading scripture is an ancient monastic practice called *Lectio Divina* meaning "divine reading". It is a contemplative approach to reading the Bible, allowing for deeper understanding and a closeness with God.

The book of Lamentations is said to have been written by Jeremiah who was known as the "weeping prophet". As he laments his life and circumstances, it is good to note that firstly... we can come before God with anything. We can bring him our pain, sorrow, anger and disappointment. Secondly, when we are having difficulty feeling the presence of God in our current situation, take note of verse 21..."Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope". Jeremiah reaches back to what he knows to be true about God regardless of what he is experiencing in the moment and there he waits in hope.

The Practice of Seeking:

Are you in a season of struggling with your faith? Are you having difficulty seeing God in your situation? Take a few minutes to *call to mind* where you have seen God in the past whether it's in your own life or his divine imprint in the world around you. Write these things down.

If you are in a season of growth and intimacy with God, write down why. Record what is going on that is transforming you and giving you joy. We do this so that when we hit a darker season, we can come back and read about or *call to mind* better days.

Remember that praise and gratitude are the antidote to doubt and negativity. End your time with him with a prayer of gratitude.

Remember... you are blessed.

Thank you for stepping out in faith with us!

Welcome to Day 7 of 21 Days of Prayer!

The theme of our first week is SEEK.

What are we discovering about God?

Today we are looking at Psalm 27:4-14

Today we enter into our traditional Sabbath - a day of rest and remembrance. When we gather to worship together, we remember and celebrate who God is and what he has done. We tell his Story through song, scripture, prayer and teaching. We hope you will join us. If you are unable to be with us, we encourage you to set aside some time on your own to remember God and celebrate him.

As well, we hope you will take time to receive God's gift of rest today. Set aside chores, shopping, work and anything that is not life-giving to you. Simply rest in the goodness of God. Take a break, do something life-giving and trust that the world will not fall apart while you rest. :-)

May this Psalm be your prayer today. Try to set aside three times today to pause and pray this prayer.

**One thing I ask from the Lord,
this only do I seek:
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life,
to gaze on the beauty of the Lord
and to seek him in his temple.
5 For in the day of trouble
he will keep me safe in his dwelling;
he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent
and set me high upon a rock.**

**6 Then my head will be exalted
above the enemies who surround me;
at his sacred tent I will sacrifice with shouts of joy;
I will sing and make music to the Lord.**

**7 Hear my voice when I call, Lord;
be merciful to me and answer me.**

**8 My heart says of you, "Seek his face!"
Your face, Lord, I will seek.**

**9 Do not hide your face from me,
do not turn your servant away in anger;
you have been my helper.**

**Do not reject me or forsake me,
God my Saviour.**

**10 Though my father and mother forsake me,
the Lord will receive me.**

**11 Teach me your way, Lord;
lead me in a straight path**

because of my oppressors.
12 Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes,
for false witnesses rise up against me,
spouting malicious accusations.

13 I remain confident of this:
I will see the goodness of the Lord
in the land of the living.

14 Wait for the Lord;
be strong and take heart
and wait for the Lord.

Remember... you are blessed.
Thank you for stepping out in faith with us!