

15

DAYS OF PRAYER

fac
ERIE



Dear FAC Family,

Last fall, Pastor Ben invited you to a season of purposeful prayer, using the *27 Days of Prayer* guide. I hope you found it to be an inspiring tool in your prayer life. As a reminder, all of the prayer devotions were written by your church family members, specifically those that are *55 and Better!*

We are re-launching that prayer effort and inviting not only our prayer warriors to participate, but those of you who for one reason or another either didn't or couldn't participate last fall. But I do want to emphasize that this is a *no guilt-trip request*. No one is going to check up on you. No one is going to judge your spiritual life based on whether you used this guide or not. This is a trip into the presence of God, not a guilt-trip.

Whether you find time to participate for a few days or every day - or even if this little booklet encourages you into your own prayer journey, using a different prayer

Day 21 – April 28

“I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me because of their testimony” (John 17:20 NLT).

In John 17, Jesus was praying. He was reminding God that while He was here on earth He did all He was supposed to, physically and spiritually. He prayed for Himself, knowing He would soon be with the Creator. He prayed for the disciples who remained in the world, that they would be able to go where they needed to go to spread the Good News. Finally, Jesus prayed for all believers—even for those who would become believers. He asked that the Father would protect us from the evil one, and He prayed that WE would spread His LOVE. So just as Jesus prayed, we should pray also. How do you do that? Well, I would suggest making Jesus your friend. Spend time each day with your new friend, Jesus. Read the book about Him: the Bible. Then start talking to Him. The more you talk to Him, the deeper the “love-bond” you will form with Him. The more you read the Bible, the more you’ll realize He is actually talking to you through it. As you read and pray, He will become your BFF (Best Friend Forever).

Prayers for Today:

- Rejoice in knowing that Jesus prayed for you.
- Talk to Jesus about all you would tell a friend—health issues, disappointments, joys, hurts, everything. Laugh and cry with Him.
- Pray for others in your life who need to know Jesus as their Savior, Lord, and Best Friend Forever.

Judy Inman

guide, no prayer guide at all, or maybe praying through some of the Psalms - may God bless your spiritual walk.

FAC and your pastors are here to help you grow to be the mirror image of our wonderful Savior. In Romans 8:29, the apostle Paul wrote: “*For those whom [God] foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son [Jesus]...*” That’s our desire for each member of the FAC family.

And just as a little teaser, we are already working on the *next* prayer guide, written by a different (and younger) part of our church family, to be released at the beginning of the school year.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Scott

Day 1 – April 8

“This is what the Lord says: ‘Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls’” (Jeremiah 6:16 NIV).

Jesus taught us how to maneuver through the crossroads of our decision-making. He told us that the narrow way, regardless of how hard and unpopular it may be, leads to eternal life. But the wide road—the easy road, the popular road—leads to eternal destruction (Matthew 7:13–14). Jesus is the ancient path! As we seek His direction and clarity on difficult issues, He will point us in the correct direction. He is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). If we travel the godly way, we will find rest for our souls, knowing that we are in God’s will.

Prayers for Today:

- Confess to God your inability to find the right way on your own.
- Repent of the times you forged ahead in your decision-making without consulting Him, and also for those times you knew His will but went your willful way.
- Ask for God’s direction regarding any decisions you are faced with today, and ask for an understanding of His Word so you can apply it to your decision-making.
- Pray for strength and boldness to follow His leading.
- Praise Him for the rest and peace that comes from knowing you’re in His will.

Vera Bowen

Day 20 – continued

- Ask Him to show you where you need to change, and to cleanse you of sin and fill you with His humble, gentle, and patient Holy Spirit.
- Ask the Lord to give you practical steps to improve your difficult relationship.
- Commit to following through on His guidance.
- Praise Him for His power to mend hurts and heal relationships.

Dave and Sandy Mayle

Day 20 – April 27

“Since God chose you to be the holy people whom he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. You must make allowance for each other’s faults and forgive the person who offends you.

Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. And the most important piece of clothing you must wear is love. Love is what binds us all together in perfect harmony” (Colossians 3:13–14 NLT).

We are all in relationships. God made us for connection with family, friends, coworkers, and fellow believers in Christ. But sometimes these relationships can be difficult. Marriages, friendships, even ministries within the church can hit rough patches. When that happens, we need to take the situation to God, invite Him to search us, reveal any pride, hardness of heart, or anything that grieves Him, and to create in us a clean heart. Then we can seek His counsel and follow it, no matter how trivial-seeming the assignment (big changes often happen one small step at a time). Lastly, we can praise the Lord for every victory, large or small. Let’s improve our relationships through prayer.

Prayers for Today:

- Bring your difficult relationship to the Lord today and seek His perspective.

(continued on next page)

Day 2 – April 9

“You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you” (John 15:16 NKJV).

It is amazing that Jesus chose us and appointed us to go bear fruit by sharing our testimony about the love of Jesus with the unsaved. What an important responsibility Jesus has given us. Jesus goes on to say, “that your fruit should remain.” It is also our responsibility to disciple new Christians until they are also fruit bearers.

Prayers for Today:

- Praise God that He has entrusted us with the great responsibility of bearing fruit and discipling others.
- Pray for the unsaved person God has laid on your heart to be drawn to God the Father (John 6:44).
- Ask God to fill you with His Spirit as you share the message of Jesus with the unsaved (Luke 1:67).
- Pray for God to give the increase of a new Christian to the Family of God as His Spirit works through you to bear fruit (1 Corinthians 3:6–8).

Mike and Cindy McDonald

Day 3 – April 10

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct your paths” (Proverbs 3:5–6 NKJV).

Does the situation you're experiencing seem to be like a mountain that's insurmountable, or the river before you so raging that it threatens to take you under? Listen to God speak to your heart:

"Child, the mountain that you are facing is simply a hill to Me; take My hand and we will climb it together. And the river that's raging before you is simply a babbling brook to Me. If you will listen, you will hear Me sing a love song to you that will bring peace and comfort to your heart and help you in your hour of need. For there has never been a mountain too high or a river too raging that I have not conquered it. I invite you to cast all your care on Me because I care for you. I AM your Heavenly Father and I love you."

Prayers for Today:

- Describe to God the mountain you are facing today, the raging river you fear.
- Ask Him to help you trust Him instead of leaning on your own understanding.
- Listen quietly for His words to you.
- Go in peace, confident in His care.

Phebe Hershelman

Day 19 – continued

- Pray for our leaders in the church, workplace, and government. Pray that God will be their guide and that we will all be good representatives of God's presence.

Diana Mitchell

Day 19 – April 26

“For the word of the Lord is right and true; he is faithful in all he does” (Psalm 33:4 NIV)

We can pray with confidence that God hears and answers our prayers. God has been faithful in the past, He is steadfast in the present, and He will be trustworthy in the future. The confidence we have in His faithfulness is founded in truth. We might not see the answer right away or He might not answer in the way we think is right, but knowing He always has our best in His plan, we pray with surety that our prayers are heard and attended to. We can celebrate His trustworthiness with praise. His promises are forever, and our prayers are to be said with faith.

Prayers for Today:

- Pray for families—young families with children who are bombarded with so much wrong in the world today; middle-aged families who have decisions to make that will affect their lives in ways yet unseen; older families who have health concerns and daily struggles to contend with.
- Pray for young Christians who are still navigating through a life that is changed because of the presence of God in their daily living. Pray for longtime Christians, that their walk with God will be vibrant and new every day and that complacency will not set in.

(continued on next page)

Day 4 – April 11

Read Joshua 4:1-9 ... “then you shall say to them, ‘That the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord; when it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off.’ So these stones shall become a memorial to the sons of Israel forever” (Joshua 4:7 NASB, emphasis added).

The Israelites built a memorial to remember this moment. As one pastor described it, we need to “polish our monuments.” We need to periodically pray and remember with gratitude our key spiritual monuments.

Prayers for Today:

- Remember the key things/events about your spiritual life; for example, when you were saved, healed, found resolution to a problem, etc.
- Remember those people/relationships that helped you and mentored you.
- Remember those times when you have been taught/corrected by the Spirit. What were some sins and idols you had to remove?
- Remember your own personal gifts that God has given you. Ask yourself, “How am I using them? How can I use them in the future?”

(continued on next page)

Day 4 – continued

- Remember that you are called to be a lifelong learner. 2 Peter 3:18 tells us to “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” What has God taught you recently? What are the lessons you have learned that you need to return to? What are you reading/studying?

Tim and Laura Cotton

Day 18 – April 25

“Let me hear in the morning of your steadfast love, for in you I trust. Make me know the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul” (Psalm 143:8 ESV).

I awaken needing soul food. So while still abed, I claim this verse and start reading several devotions and their accompanying Scripture verses. While doing this, the Holy Spirit will convict me in areas I need to grow. He also brings other situations and people to mind who I lift up in prayer. Then time is spent in meditation, pondering God's promises, the riches of his grace, His unfailing love, and His continuous presence. This nourishes my soul. I start the day counting blessings and being thankful as I clothe myself with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayers for Today:

- Thank the Lord for the opportunity to start the day by feasting on the soul food of His presence, prayer, and meditation on the Word.
- Ask the Lord to bring to mind those for whom He wants you to pray.
- Ask the Lord to help you keep your eyes fixed on Him, so that when the unexpected happens with family, health, finances, or circumstances, you willingly yield to His sovereignty.

Anonymous

Day 17 – April 24

“Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine” (John 15:4 NIV).

The two books of Chronicles are filled with stories of kings that didn't seek God's counsel and failed. When we put the Lord into our thoughts and plans for the day, send up “mini” prayers as circumstances arise, speak words of praise, and acknowledge God's glory in the world, we are drawn back to the vine and our relationship with Christ deepens. And as the relationship deepens, our dependence on Him grows, along with our desire to commune with Him. It's then that we can, and must, “carry everything to God in prayer.”

Prayers for Today:

- Thank the Lord for His desire to share in your life.
- Prayerfully consider: What are you doing that draws you back to the vine?
- Ask God to show you new ways to carry everything to Him in prayer throughout the day.
- Ask Him to help you to not rely on your own strength, but draw your power and direction from Him.

Gini Schlosser

Day 5 – April 12

“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” (Psalm 139:23–24 NIV).

Read these verses through several times, then come to prayer in expectation of a blessed time with the Lord. Spend some time asking God to lead your thoughts only to Him. He already knows your every worry and care, so use this time to learn more of what God expects from you. No one knows you like He does. He loves you and wants to be in fellowship with you in everything you think and do. Take a good look at yourself. Be honest, for every angry word or willful action is offensive to Him. Ask for God's help in every area of your life. Ask God to fill you with His Spirit and lead you down the right paths that will lead to your home in heaven. As you wait in prayer, don't rush God. Wait patiently for Him to speak to your heart. He is always there listening to you, calling you to listen to Him.

Prayers for Today:

- Ask the Lord to search your heart and life, then wait quietly before Him.
- What does He reveal? What does He want you to do about it?
- Commit to full repentance and obedience with the help of the Holy Spirit.

(continued on next page)

Day 5 – continued

- Praise God that “Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be shaken but endures forever” (Psalm 125:1 NIV). What a great promise!

Shirley Parker

Day 16 – April 23

“Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain” (Psalm 127:1a ESV).

Our pride and self-sufficiency can cause us to think we can accomplish things for God in our own strength. Even when our goals are godly, we can fall flat because God wants us to recognize our need for Him. Scripture warns us not to rely on our own wisdom and strength, but always to act in cooperation with God. Then our labor will not be in vain.

Prayers for Today:

- Ask God to show you when you are doing your own thing apart from Him.
- Praise God for the privilege of working together with Him to accomplish His purposes.
- Thank Him for the gifts and abilities He has given you.
- Seek His direction and timing.

Elaine Ransil

Day 15 – April 22

“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 . . . This is good and pleases God our Savior, who wants everyone to be saved and to understand the truth” (1 Timothy 2:1–4 NLT).

Most, if not all of us, have people in our lives who we desperately want to be saved. In this passage, Timothy urges us to make it a priority to pray for them, to intercede on their behalf that they may be saved, and to do it with thanksgiving. We can be encouraged knowing that when we pray for our unsaved loved ones, it pleases God. He also wants them to be saved . . . even more than we do! When we know that our prayers please God, we can trust Him with the timing and the results. And while we wait, we can worship God for who He is—whether or not He answers our prayers when, or in the way, that we think He should.

Prayers for Today:

- Ask God to refresh your faith in His desire to see your loved one saved, and in His power to answer your prayers.
- Tell the Lord you trust Him to answer in His time and way.
- Worship this God who desires their salvation, provides for it, and is even now working toward it.

Cindy Shuffield

Day 6 – April 13

“We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express” (Romans 8:26 NIV1984).

Prayer is talking to God. Someone said it’s thinking God’s thoughts back to Him. How is that possible? We could roughly compare ourselves talking to God to a mole conversing with an archangel. How can the mole tell the angel anything the seraph doesn’t already know? That’s not really the point. The mole is on earth—even more, in the trenches. The angel is not. When we pray, we’re reporting to God from the trenches because in our mole-vision we have no clue just what’s going on in the heavenlies. We don’t even know how to pray. But as the above verse says, the Holy Spirit does, and He prays through us. As C. S. Lewis wrote in a poem on his own prayer experience:

“. . . I / Seek in myself the things I hoped to say, / But lo! My wells are dry. / Then, seeing me empty, you forsake / the listener’s role and through / My dumb lips breathe and into utterance wake / The thoughts I never knew.” - “They Tell Me Lord, That When I Seem,” *The Collected Poems of C. S. Lewis*

You don’t know quite how to pray? Just pray! The Holy Spirit will take over. You don’t have to feel it—believe it: “because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with the will of God” (Romans 8:27 NIV).

continued on next page

Day 6 – continued

Prayers for Today:

- As you come before the Lord, acknowledge your inability to know how you should pray.
- Thank the Father for the Helper, His Holy Spirit, who prays the Father's will through you.
- Join the Spirit in interceding for others, and in lifting up your own needs to God.

Anonymous

Day 14 – continued

- Ask Him to help you keep your eyes on your Rescuer and remain confident in His love and care for you and in His ability to keep and protect you.

Elaine Ghazinour

Day 14 – April 21

“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand” (Isaiah 41:10 NIV).

God is for YOU! Not just the pastoral staff, those serving in ministry or those more “spiritual” than you. He is with YOU, for YOU and working on your behalf. Dismayed? Webster’s defines that as being thoroughly disheartened, disillusioned, disappointed, alarmed or suddenly losing your courage. Ever been there? God says not to be dismayed because He is YOUR God! He’ll strengthen you and help you. Strength is defined as the power to resist attack and ability to endure. Help means to rescue, save, remove from difficulty, or give assistance to. The last promise in this verse is that He will uphold us with His hand. Webster’s defines uphold as supporting against an opponent. So . . . He is with us, for us, protecting us, giving us endurance for whatever obstacles we face, rescuing us, AND supporting us against ALL opposition. So, do not fear! You WILL make it through!!

Prayers for Today:

- Thank God that He is with you and for you every day.
- Thank Him that although troubles and circumstances threaten to overwhelm you, He will provide needed endurance, strength, and courage.

(continued on next page)

Day 7 – April 14

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God” (Philippians 4:6 NIV).

Prayer is a wonderful blessing in that we can talk to God the Father and Jesus the Son (our Savior). In the hymn “What a Friend We Have in Jesus” we sing, “What a privilege to carry EVERYTHING to God in prayer.” I suggest two types of praying: 1. Quiet time devotions with prayer and Bible readings. I usually start with giving thanks for my salvation and for specific answered prayer, then confessions, my prayer list, and my current needs. 2. Extemporaneous prayer. First Thessalonians 5:17 suggests ongoing prayer: “Pray continually” (NIV). I practice this as thoughts, needs, problems, or thanks pop into my head, such as thanks for avoiding an accident or medical problem, protection of property during a storm, and many other things. These occur frequently and are usually very short while I am in another activity. In conclusion, if we bring all things to Him, everything will be under His control.

Prayers for Today:

- Thank God for the unbelievable privilege of talking to Him.
- Thank Him for His listening ear, and that He wants you to bring everything to Him.
- Ask Him to help you pray about everything, day or night.
- Learn to send up short prayers throughout your day.

R.C. Willis

Day 8 – April 15

“Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” (1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 NIV).

Startled by a stern-faced meme which chided, “Have you prayed today?” my brain recoiled in confusion. My next thought was, I’m always talking to God about something. Why would you not? The meme implied that you needed to do something specific, but I’m sure that God listens to all the words, worries and worship that I say or think. I’m not sure why, but He is always listening, always eager for relationship with us. When the words pour out, or even when there is only a cry, my relationship with the Father is being developed through the time we spend together.

Prayers for Today:

- Give praise to the God of heaven, our great and wonderful God!
□ Thank Him for always being near and for hearing your stumbling words.
- Thank the Father for wanting to be in relationship, for sharing wisdom, for taking your load.
- Ask the Father to teach you to be like Jesus: a good listener, and one who continually communicates with Him.

Sandy Taylor

Day 13 – April 20

"Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever" (Psalm 118:1 NIV).

Having faith and praying can be a life changer. On those days when life is way out of whack and feels broken, Satan is pleased. For as John 10:10 reminds us, Satan came to steal, kill, and destroy, but Jesus came to give us abundant life. To receive this abundantly full life, pray and ask Jesus to help renew your heart and mind. Praying and reading and studying the Bible gives us strength for each day and hope for the future through faith in God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Jesus is the solid rock and can help us live victoriously every day! Your life can be different . . . brand new! Everything can change. There is hope: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" (2 Corinthians 5:17 NIV). Receive healing, assurance, and deliverance through prayer in Jesus' name.

Prayers for Today:

- Praise God that He makes us a new creation in Christ.
- Thank Him that Jesus came to give you abundant life.
- Commit to prayer and study of the Word, daily renewing your heart and mind so that through the Holy Spirit’s power you can live a victorious Christian life.

Charla Thomas

Day 12 – April 19

"Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13 ESV).

There have been several examples throughout history of somebody sacrificing themselves for others. The greatest example was over 2000 years ago when Jesus suffered agony and shame of the cross as He sacrificed Himself for us. We are called here to practice sacrificial giving, but we do not have to die for another. We can practice sacrificial love by our actions of listening, encouraging, and giving of our time, energy, and resources. John 13:34 says, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another" (ESV). Ask yourself, how do I rate myself on laying down my life for my friends?

Prayers for Today:

Pray like Jesus taught:

- Praise God today for all He has given you and all He has done for you.
- Repent as you think of those opportunities you have missed to practice sacrificial love, and ask for His forgiveness.
- Ask Him to open your eyes to see someone who needs this kind of love today.
- Yield it all to Him as you seek His guidance for the day.

Bill and Kathy Rogerson

Day 9 – April 16

"This is what the Lord says, He who made the earth, the Lord who formed it to create it, He whose name is the Lord: 'Call to Me and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know'" (Jeremiah 33:2–3 NASB).

Speaking with God is a privilege reserved for those who have a personal relationship with Him, those who are called His sons and daughters: "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of a man, but of God" (John 1:12–13 NASB). The quality and intensity of our relationship will further incline His ear to us. Prayer is an invitation from the Living God to be intimate, and commune with Him.

Prayers for Today:

- Confess any sin in your life today.
- Thank Him for all that He has done in your life.
- Ask God for a longing to know Him more deeply.
- Pray that God would lead you to those who need to hear the Gospel.

Rich and Shirley Pustelak

Day 10 – April 17

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths” (Proverbs 3:5–6 ESV).

We live in a world saturated by a multitude of voices each telling us they know the right way and can be trusted. Many of those voices contradict each other. The world collectively cries for one who can be trusted. Who knows the truth? Who can be relied upon to show us the correct way? Studies show a person can be trusted when they can help you, want to help you, and know and speak the truth. In all of history no one is more trustworthy than Christ. As Creator, He is more than capable (John 1:1–5). As Savior, He is ultimately loving (John 15:13). He is the source of all truth and knows the way (John 14:6).

Prayers for Today:

- Pray that the Lord will show you He can be trusted because of His strength and ability.
- Ask Him to show you He can be trusted because of His compassion and love.
- Ask Him to show you He can be trusted because He is ultimate truth and knows the way.
- Pray that He will help you submit yourself to Him today and allow Him to make you into a new creation who is capable of trusting Him more deeply.

(continued on next page)

Day 11 – continued

- Pray for the salvation, healing, and needs of family and friends, and for opportunities to share the gospel with them.
- Ask God to remind you daily to go to Him first and seek His will in all that you do.

Jeff and Sheila Ley

Day 11 – April 18

“Pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

In this verse Paul tells us to “pray continually” (NIV), “never stop praying” (NLT), and “pray all the time” (MSG). Psalm 116:1–2 says, “I love the LORD because he hears my voice and my prayer for mercy. Because he bends down to listen, I will pray as long as I have breath!” (NLT). Colossians 4:2 tells us to “devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful” (NIV). We have found the greatest peace and comfort in our lives comes when we pray throughout the entire day. Praise Him for the sunset while on a walk. Thank Him for his mercies while mowing the lawn. Ask Him to forgive any unconfessed sin that comes to mind while driving. Pray for healing and salvation for a friend while doing the dishes. Ask for God’s will to make the correct decision about a problem before a meeting. Talk to Jesus first—whenever you are afraid, anxious, happy, upset, relieved—anytime and all the time. May we be known as people who pray without ceasing.

Prayers for Today:

- Praise the Lord for who He is and thank Him for all that He has done. (Psalm 103:1–5)
- Ask the Lord to show you any sin in your life so you can repent and ask for forgiveness. (Psalm 139:23–24)

(continued on next page)

Day 10 – continued

- Pray that He will help you see the path He sets before you and give you the strength and determination to follow that path.

Joseph T. Kuvshinikov