

PRAYER WEEK

6th-12th July
2025

PRAYER WEEK

Introduction

Prayer is such a fundamental part of the Christian life. It is one of the simplest and yet most important expressions of the way we follow Jesus.

Prayer is, in part, our response to our knowledge of God. If we know that God is loving and cares for us, we will want to express that relationship in communicating with him. If we know that God is powerful, we will ask and plead with him to do big and powerful things that we are unable to do ourselves.

Prayer Week is an opportunity for us to renew our focus and dependence on God above all things. It is a time to lift our eyes, hearts and minds to God, his work and mission in the world, and where we find a place in this as his people. A chance to reset our habits, to engage in new practices, or recover old ones. Each year we set aside this week for us to focus on exactly this as a church family.

There is a classic phrase in history that states: “What the church prays is what the church believes”. The sentiment is that prayer reveals the things we truly believe in, the things we believe God is truly capable of and the things he cares about.

Our expression of prayer is often a very good witness to the depth of our faith. We can read many books or memorise many Bible verses, but it is our prayer life—both personal and corporate—that best displays where our heart is with God and his plans and purposes.

My prayer for you this week is that, regardless of your experience so far this year, you might enjoy a chance to reset and refresh your prayer life. To draw near to God and all that he invites us to enjoy.



Luke Thomson

Senior Minister

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DAILY DEVOTION #1

Each day we will read through a Psalm, reflecting on how it might shape our own prayer life.

Bible

Read Psalm 5

Think

1. What does the Psalmist know to be true of God?
2. What does this lead to asking God to do?
3. How could this prayer shape your own prayer life?

"Whenever God determines to do a great work, he first sets his people to pray."
Charles Spurgeon

Pray

1. Praise God for being compassionate and merciful.
2. Thank God for his work of grace and mercy in your life.
3. For brothers and sisters in Christ across our whole church family.
4. For Christians who are persecuted and mistreated for their faith around the world.

In each devotion, we've included a written prayer to help us learn to pray from other Christians across history. You may like to pray these prayers directly, or use them as inspiration for your own prayer each day.

LEARNING TO PRAY

A prayer for God's grace

You, Lord, through your works have revealed the everlasting structure of the world. You, Lord, created the earth. You are faithful throughout all generations, righteous in your judgments, marvelous in strength and majesty, wise in creating and prudent in establishing what exists, good in all that is observed and faithful to those who trust in you, merciful and compassionate; forgive us our sins and our injustices, our transgressions and our shortcomings.

Do not take into account every sin of your servants, but cleanse us with the cleansing of your truth, and "direct our steps to walk in holiness and righteousness and purity of heart," and "to do what is good and pleasing in your sight" and in the sight of our rulers. Yes, Lord, "let your face shine upon us" in peace "for our good," that we may be sheltered "by your mighty hand" and delivered from every sin "by your uplifted arm"; deliver us as well from those who hate us unjustly.

Give harmony and peace to us and to all who dwell on the earth, just as you did to our fathers when they reverently "called upon you in faith and trust," that we may be saved, while we render obedience to your almighty and most excellent name, and give harmony and peace to our rulers and governors on earth.

DAILY DEVOTION #2

Bible

Read Psalm 13

Think

1. What does the Psalmist ask of God?
2. What gives the Psalmist confidence to trust God?
3. How could this prayer shape your own prayer life?

"It is remarkable that in all of his writings Paul's prayers for his friends contain no appeals for changes in their circumstances."

Timothy Keller

Pray

1. Praise God for being strong, powerful and in control of all creation.
2. Thank God for the ability to know him personally, and for the way he speaks to us through the Bible.
3. For those who are in physical, spiritual, mental or emotional need.
4. For those who lead our church (including staff, ministry leaders, Community Group leaders, etc.)

LEARNING TO PRAY

A prayer for church and nation

Show mercy to the whole world, O Father of all;
let the gospel of Your Son run
and be glorified throughout all the earth.
Let it be made known to all unbelievers
and obeyed by all Christians.

Be merciful to Your church and to this nation;
give Your pastors a discerning spirit,
enable all who are ordained to any holy function
to diligently feed their flocks –
instructing them in saving knowledge,
guiding them by their examples,
praying for and blessing them,
exercising spiritual discipline in Your church
and duly administering your holy sacraments.

Multiply Your blessings on our government leaders,
that they may all,
according to the talents they have received,
be faithful instruments of your glory.

Give to our schools and universities,
zeal, prudence, and holiness.
Visit in mercy all the children of affliction;
relieve their necessities,
lighten their burdens,
give them a cheerful submission to Your gracious will,
and at length bring them and us,
with those that already rest from their labors,
into the joy of our Lord,
to whom with You, O Father, and You, O Holy Spirit,
be all praise, now and forever.

A prayer of John Wesley, adapted. (<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/trevin-wax/be-merciful-to-your-church-and-to-this-nation/>)

DAILY DEVOTION #3

Bible

Read Psalm 56

Think

1. What does the Psalmist expect God will do?
2. How does the Psalmist intend on expressing their trust in God?
3. How could this shape your own prayer life?

"Prayer will make a man cease from sin,
or sin will entice a man to cease from prayer."
John Bunyan

Pray

1. Praise God for his goodness and kindness.
2. Thank God for those who personally support and encourage you in following Jesus.
3. For Christians to have the opportunity to display their faith publicly and bear witness to Jesus to the wider world.
4. For those who seek to bring the good news of Jesus to remote areas around Australia.

LEARNING TO PRAY

A prayer to the Holy Spirit

Breathe in me O Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy.

Act in me O Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy.

Draw my heart O Holy Spirit, that I love but what is holy.

Strengthen me O Holy Spirit, to defend all that is holy.

Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit, that I always may be holy. Amen.

A prayer of Saint Augustine.

DAILY DEVOTION #4

Bible

Read Psalm 115

Think

1. Why does the Psalmist want to ensure glory goes to God?
2. What feeds the desire in our own hearts to receive glory for ourselves?
3. How does this Psalm help us reorient our desires?
4. How could this prayer shape your own prayer life?

"Prayer is the open admission that without Christ we can do nothing. And prayer is the turning away from ourselves to God in the confidence that He will provide the help we need. Prayer humbles us as needy and exalts God as wealthy."

John Piper

Pray

1. Praise God for his wisdom in all things.
2. Thank God for the hope we have of God fulfilling his promises for the future.
3. For our church family to grow in our hearts desire to bear witness to the grace of God in Blacktown.
4. For those who seek to bring the good news of Jesus to difficult and dangerous places across the world.

LEARNING TO PRAY

A prayer before a meal

All look unto you, O Lord; and you give them their meat in due season; that you give them they gather: you open your hand, and they are filled with all things in abundance (Ps. 104:27.)

O Lord, in whom is the source and inexhaustible fountain of all good things, pour out your blessing upon us, and sanctify to our use the meat and drink which are the gifts of your kindness toward us, that we, using them soberly and frugally as you enjoin, may eat with a pure conscience.

Grant, also, that we may always both with true heartfelt gratitude *acknowledge*, and with our lips *proclaim*, you our Father and the giver of all good, and, while enjoying bodily nourishment, aspire with special longing of heart after the bread of your doctrine, by which our souls may be nourished in the hope of eternal life, through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

A prayer of John Calvin.

DAILY DEVOTION #5

Bible

Read Psalm 136

Think

1. What is this Psalm expressing?
2. What effect does the repeating line through this Psalm have?
3. How could we increase the praise of God within our own prayers?
4. How could this prayer shape your own prayer life?

"I have so much to do that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer."
Martin Luther

Pray

1. Praise God for the beauty of creation.
2. Thank God for the depth and richness of his love.
3. For the city of Blacktown and its people, that they might come to know Jesus as Saviour and King.
4. For those suffering the effects and implications of war and fighting around the world.

LEARNING TO PRAY

A prayer for understanding God's Word

Blessed Lord,
you have given us your Holy Scriptures for our learning.
May we so hear them,
read, learn, and take them to heart,
that being strengthened and comforted by your holy Word,
we may cling to the blessed hope of everlasting life,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever.

A prayer of Thomas Cranmer.

DAILY DEVOTION #6

Bible

Read Psalm 146

Think

1. What reason does the Psalmist have to put their hope in God?
2. What can lead us to doubt God's trustworthiness?
3. What makes prayer possible? What makes it necessary?

"We do not drift into spiritual life or disciplined prayer.
We will not grow in prayer unless we plan to pray."

D A Carson

Pray

1. Praise God for sending his Son into the world to bring us back to himself.
2. Thank God for the gift of prayer, and the confidence we have that he hears us and cares for us.
3. For leaders, governments and all in authority in Australia and across the world.
4. For those whom you know personally who don't yet know Jesus as their Saviour and King.

LEARNING TO PRAY

A prayer of confession

O my dearest Lord Jesus Christ,
you know my poor soul and my great transgressions,
and I cry out to you alone with an open heart.
I am sorry that I do not have will or intentions as I should and I fall behind daily,
for I am a poor, sick sinner.
You know that I want to have good will and good intentions,
but my foe strikes and leads me captive.
Redeem me,
a poor sinner,
according to your divine will.
Deliver me from all evil and all afflictions.
Strengthen and increase in me true Christian faith.
Give me grace to faithfully love my neighbor as myself with all my heart,
and to love him as a brother.
Give me patience and perseverance in all persecution and trouble.
You told St. Peter not to forgive only seven times,
and you have called us to come to you for consolation.
So I come with the assurance of what you have pledged,
and I cry to you as my true Pastor and Bishop of my soul in all my needs.
You alone know how and when I need your help.
Your will be done, and your name be praised forever.
Amen.

BIBLE STUDY

Praying for one another

Have you ever been encouraged by hearing the prayers of others? How can it encourage us?

What might people find challenging about praying aloud in a group?

Read Colossians 1:3-14

In all of Paul's letters in the New testament, he begins by expressing the content of his prayers for those Christians, and how he intends to continue praying for them.

1. Why does Paul give thanks to God for the Colossian Christians? (vv. 3-4)
2. Paul particularly notes the love that they have for one another (vv. 4, 8). Why do you think he highlights this as the key expression of their faith?
3. Make a list of all the things Paul is praying for the Colossian Christians (vv. 9-12). Does anything stand out about this list?

4. In what ways might Paul's prayers differ from how we typically hear Christians pray for one another (or how we might pray for one another in Community Group)?

5. What encouragement do you think the Colossian church felt by hearing Paul articulate exactly *what* he was praying for them?

6. In your experience, how common is it for Christians to express *what* they are praying for you (as opposed to simply letting you know they are praying)? How might it be an encouragement to hear *what* others are praying for you?

7. How might this prayer of Paul's help us reshape *what* we pray for others?

Pray

1. Thank God for the gift of praying for others.
2. Pray that our prayers would be shaped by godly desire and concern.
3. You might like to rewrite Paul's prayer in your own words, and use it to pray for the other members of your group.

A THEOLOGY OF PRAYER IN THREE MINUTES

*By John Piper. The follow is an adaptation from an article can be found online at:
<https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/a-theology-of-prayer-in-three-minutes>*

John Piper was asked to summarise a talk on prayer he gave at a conference. The following is a transcript of his answer.

Jesus calls us to pray first and foremost for his name to be hallowed, his kingdom to come, his will to be done, and then as a support and a means to those things, that we would have our daily bread and that we would be protected from the devil and that we would be led in paths of righteousness and so on.

And so clearly the heart of our prayer life is to be, “Father, cause your name in this world to be revered and loved and praised and honored, and start right here in my heart this morning. And then advance your kingdom, O God, and cause your will to be done the way the angels do it in heaven. In other words, wrap up and bring your kingdom in and do everything you need to get us to that goal.”

The Pleasing Aroma of Prayer

And I said that in the book of Revelation, prayer is being gathered into bowls (Revelation 5:8; 8:3–5), and those bowls have two functions. First, they are censers, and our prayers are like incense in the presence of God, and that incense is really pleasing to him. God loves the aroma of the prayers of his people, which means that if you are on your face crying out for a lost loved one or for some difficulty in your church, that very act is pleasing to God. It is not wasted.

And God could answer that prayer now or ten years from now or respond to in a totally unexpected way. But quite apart from how he eventually answers it, the prayer itself is precious to God. That is the first meaning of the bowls and that incense.

A Cause of the Coming Kingdom

The second meaning is in chapter eight. There is going to come a day when those bowls are full. In other words, the billions upon billions of prayers that have been prayed — “Hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come” — the last one is going to be prayed, and God is going to look at that angel and say, “Pour it out on the earth.” And he is going to take the bowl of prayers, like fire, and throw it on the earth, and the final purposes of God are going to be achieved.

And I think we need to preach to ourselves that our prayers are part of the causality of the final victory of God. He wouldn't have asked us to pray that his kingdom come if he didn't mean for our prayers to be an instrument in the coming of the kingdom.

So it is simply astonishing that when you think of the billions of times the Lord's prayer has been uttered, all of those times when it has been uttered in faith God has put it in the bowl there and filling up and filling up, and the day is going to come when that bowl will be poured out as the consummation of the age. So none of those prayers is wasted.

PRAYING WITH AND FOR OTHERS

*By Renee Zou. This article can be found online at:
<https://au.thegospelcoalition.org/article/praying-others-others/>*

Praying with fellow believers has served to preserve my faith on countless occasions. However, when I pray with others for others, my perspective does a double-transformation: it is shifted first towards Christ and then outwards towards God's world. I am remind to look beyond my own needs – past my own circumstances. Through this discipline, my capacity to love God's people is increased. God has used it in my life to fight the sins of self-pity, pride and faithlessness.

In this world, God has given us his prayer agenda as we wait upon him to finish his redemptive plan. It includes many people—far more than just us and those whom we know and love personally. It includes the leaders of our world, country and church (1 Timothy 2:2), the sick (James 5:14), the suffering, the unsaved (Luke 10:2).

Praying for and with others adds to our spiritual lives in at least three other ways too:

1. It increases our sense of unity.

I recall our church praying for Christians in Sri Lanka during the terrible Easter bombings. As I bowed my head in prayer, it did not matter that I had not met any of the victims personally; nor did it matter that I was largely ignorant of the circumstances in Sri Lanka. When we pray for others, it reminds us that we are part of a global movement; that we belong to a large, universal family of God. It may be tempting to confine our prayers to those whom we care for, citing the fact that we know their personal circumstances and can therefore pray tailored prayers. I find that we can pray for very similar things for Christians whom we have not met! For instance, we can pray for:

- a faith that endures hardship;
- a life that is increasing in Christlikeness;
- a heart that is soft towards God's word; and
- churches around the world to faithfully preach the Gospel.

Through corporate intercessory prayer, we enlarge our vision of God's church. Praying with others in church for other Christians helps to unite us. It confirms who we are as the people of God as we ask for his kingdom to come, and for his will to be done.

2. It deepens our relationships.

When we pray with others, we get a window into their hearts. We hear about issues that gnaw at them, and circumstances that might test their faith in Jesus. Praying with others helps us to break through the veneer of superficiality that might keep us distant. Through corporate prayer, we are reminding ourselves and each other that we are approaching a high priest who listens to and intercedes for us. We confidently take our concerns to him together.

Because prayers of this kind require a certain degree of vulnerability, we might first choose to pray with people close to us. If we do have friends and family with whom we can share this with, praise the Lord! If we do not, may we seek to develop such relationships. They will prove invaluable in helping us to live out the content of our prayers.

3. It refines our desires.

As we articulate our prayer needs, we are faced with the desires of our heart. After all, the mouth speaks what the heart is full of (Luke 6:45). Do our thanksgiving prayers reflect a self-centeredness or a Christ-centeredness? Do our prayer requests reflect kingdom priorities? Maybe in Sunday school we used to pray for (nothing greater than) a good day at school or for the rain to stop ruining our soccer games. But are we still praying such limited prayers years later?

When we journey with other Christians, rub shoulders and huddle together in prayer, we will see growth in ourselves and each other. We will learn to pray for needs deeper than our material ones. We will pray prayers that sound like they come from the early church; prayers that beg God to teach us how to forgive our enemies; prayers for joy amidst tribulations; prayers for a faith that remains steadfast until Jesus comes again.

Dear friends, my prayer for you today is that you will experience God's grace in the form of corporate prayer. Share the load with a friend or two, and may these prayers serve to build up not only the church but yourselves too.

PERSEVERE IN PRAYER: BECAUSE NO, IT'S NOT EASY

By Trevin Wax. This article can be found online at:

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/trevin-wax/persevere-prayer-not-easy/>

You need to persevere in munching your way through that bag of chips. You need to persevere through another episode of that show you love. You need to persevere in taking a nap on a Sunday afternoon. These instructions sound odd, don't they? It's because we reserve the word "perseverance" for difficult tasks—something that doesn't come easy yet brings great reward.

Why Prayer Is Hard

One of the best ways to introduce people to spiritual practices like prayer, Bible reading, and churchgoing is not by overselling how easy it is to adopt these habits but by reminding people of just how challenging they can be. Spiritual habits are hard. They require effort and discipline.

The New Testament urges us to persevere in prayer because it's so easy not to pray. When Jesus told us to "pray always and not give up" (Luke 18:1), he implied that giving up would be the easier path. He told the disciples to watch and pray in Gethsemane because he knew how easily they could fail in their attention and fall asleep (22:40, 46).

When Paul echoed these commands—calling us to "be persistent in prayer" (Rom. 12:12) or to "devote" ourselves to prayer, staying "alert" in it "with thanksgiving" (Col. 4:2)—it was because he knew how easy it'd be to slacken the rope, to drift from attentiveness, to diminish our devotion. In the face of struggle, we're reminded to "pray constantly" (1 Thess. 5:17), to press on in faith, even when the answers seem delayed.

These aren't the commands of a cheerless moralist instructing us to eat our oatmeal just because it's good for us. They're more like the encouragement we get from a coach guiding us through a grueling game or a captain leading the charge when we're tempted to give up the fight. That's important: Prayer is part of the battle—an essential aspect of the Christian life, not a prelude to whatever we envision as real ministry. As Vance Pitman puts it, "We don't pray before we work. Prayer is the work, and then God works."

When Prayer Feels Pointless

The problem, all too often, is that we don't see the results of our prayers—not the immediate workings of the Spirit groaning in and through us nor the future outcomes our prayers may be a means of accomplishing. We talk to God and wonder if we're just talking to the walls, like someone muttering in the cell of an asylum.

Life often provides good reasons to question prayer's power. N. T. Wright points to the bleakness of R. S. Thomas's poem "Folk Tale," which describes prayer as someone

standing outside a house, trying to attract attention by flinging gravel at a high window. The whole effort seems pointless, and you'd stop throwing the stones if not for the occasional twitch of a curtain. That's not what prayer is really like, of course, but it's an honest portrayal of how it sometimes feels. It reminds me of the searing pain C. S. Lewis described after the death of his wife, Joy:

Go to Him when your need is desperate, when all other help is vain, and what do you find? A door slammed in your face, and a sound of bolting and double bolting on the inside. After that, silence. You may as well turn away. The longer you wait, the more emphatic the silence will become. There are no lights in the windows. It might be an empty house.

Everyone who perseveres in prayer will at some point feel the palpable presence of God's absence. The saints of old speak of times when it felt as if God had withdrawn from them, even if later they believed this apparent absence was a divine beckoning—to come closer to the real God, not the illusions we often settle for.

Prayer isn't meant to be comfortable. As Kyle Strobel often says, in prayer we draw near to the purifying fire of God, and that's when all our impurities leak out. We're not doing something wrong when we feel inadequate or when our minds wander in a thousand directions. The priorities and desires of our hearts are being exposed to the refining fire that shapes us.

Why Persevere?

We're called to persevere in prayer because it's important to stay awake, to remain attentive, to keep watch over our souls as we yearn for God's presence in our daily lives.

If we think prayer is easy, like a tasty treat to indulge in before or after a long day, we'll likely drift from the practice when it doesn't seem enjoyable. We miss the deeper truth that prayer is more like strapping a sword to our side, readying ourselves for spiritual war. We don't know what role our prayers play in the ongoing spiritual battle around us, but we believe—even when we can't see—that prayer changes things, that more is happening in us and around us than we can imagine.

So we persist in knocking. We push through the dullness. We press on through the weariness. We stoke the embers of our often cooling hearts, reengaging our affections for the God who promises to meet us in those quiet moments. As Lewis wrote in his last year of life,

One of the purposes for which God instituted prayer may have been to bear witness that the course of events is not governed like a state but created like a work of art to which every being makes its contribution and (in prayer) a conscious contribution, and in which every being is both an end and a means.

God is painting a masterpiece. Prayer is our contribution as Christians. Prayer is our duty as disciples. Prayer is to be our delight as lovers of God.

BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

Do you ever find yourself uncertain of what to pray? Or perhaps you feel limited to praying for the same things in the same way all the time?

This little series of books, “5 things to pray” is a wonderful collection of short, punchy reflections in the form of offering you 5 things to pray each day.

Each day provides you with 5 items for prayer, along with a short Bible verse, and a sentence or two for reflection.

It will allow you to grow the depth and breadth of your prayer in very manageable and simple steps.

This series covers a great range of topics, including 5 things to pray for: your city; your spouse; your kids; our world; in a global crisis; your church; the people you love; your parents.

No matter how well you feel your prayer life is, this whole series will provide freshness in guiding you to a deeper engagement in prayer. Highly recommended!





PRAYING

Simply Start Praying is an opportunity to kick start your prayer life.

You may have never prayed before. Or perhaps never found a good, consistent habit. Maybe you struggle knowing exactly what to pray, or how to pray.

1



REFLECT

2



REMIND

3



RESOURCE

Simply Start Praying will help grow your prayer life in three ways:

1. Reflect on the Bible's teaching on prayer
2. Remind yourself to pray through the Prayer Mate app
3. Resource your prayer life with pre-set prayers and informed updates

Check it out on our website: <https://bac.org.au/prayer/>



