



Introduction:

Maybe you've heard it said that prayer changes things. We believe it does. Sometimes it changes our circumstances, but it always changes us. We believe God wants to speak to us. That his Word has something to say to us and that when we make space to listen to his voice, he will speak.

We want to invite you to make space to pray in the first 21 days of 2023. To **read** God's Word, to **reflect** on how the Scriptures are speaking, to **listen** for his invitations, and to **pray** in response to what you hear.

Our prayer for you is that at the end of these 21 days, you will see God's presence and hear his voice in a new way. While it's not magical, it is supernatural – beyond our understanding. May the voice of God be louder than any other "voice" you may hear. May his Word transform you. May you have courage to step into his invitations. May you be honest and vulnerable before our Father in heaven. "We pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being" (Ephesians 3:16).

Day 1

*Take time today to **read** God's Word, to **reflect** on how the Scriptures are speaking, to **listen** for his invitations, and to **pray** in response to what you hear.*

Read: John 15:1-5

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

Reflect: What do you notice in this passage? Where are you disconnected from Jesus or doing something "apart from him" right now?

Listen: Take a moment to ask God what needs pruned in your life? Who would God invite you to pray for who needs to be connected to him or needs encouragement to *remain* in him?

Pray: Pray for the courage to *remain in him*. Ask God to show you what that would look like. Spend a few moments in prayer for the names God brought to mind as you listened to him.

Day 2

Take time today to **read** God's Word, to **reflect** on how the Scriptures are speaking, to **listen** for his invitations, and to **pray** in response to what you hear.

Read: Luke 15:20

So he got up and went to his father.

"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

Reflect: Recall when you came to know Jesus. When have you felt this kind of welcome from God? What does it look like to be loved by God in this way?

Listen: What keeps you from experiencing God's unconditional love? Who do you know who is "still a long way off?"

Pray: Pray a prayer of thanksgiving for God's unconditional love for you. Ask him to help you to live from it and not for it. Take some time to pray for those names who are "still a long way off."

Day 3

Take time today to **read** God's Word, to **reflect** on how the Scriptures are speaking, to **listen** for his invitations, and to **pray** in response to what you hear.

Read: Colossians 3:17

And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Reflect: What does it look like to "do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus"? How is that different from doing things in your own strength or for your own recognition, building your own kingdom? How does that lead to deeper gratitude?

Listen: Ask God to reveal where you can do things in his name and for his glory. Invite him to show you where you may be seeking your own recognition or building your own kingdom.

Pray: Pray a prayer of thanksgiving to God for the gifts and work he has given you. Pray for courage and guidance in how to live this scripture out today. Pray for our church to collectively live into this Scripture and for Jesus to be known because of the way we live.

Day 4

Take time today to **read** God's Word, to **reflect** on how the Scriptures are speaking, to **listen** for his invitations, and to **pray** in response to what you hear.

Read: Mark 2:1-5

A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

Reflect: Take a few moments to imagine what this scene would have been like. What would it have been like to be in the crowd? What would it have been like to be the friend of the paralyzed man? What would it have been like to be so desperate to see Jesus for your healing?

Listen: As you imagine this scene, where are you? What does God have to say about that? Who do you know who desperately needs to be healed?

Pray: Take some time to carry those needing healing into the presence of Jesus. Pray for their healing – both physically and spiritually. Ask God how you can encourage them today.

Day 5

*Take time today to **read** God's Word, to **reflect** on how the Scriptures are speaking, to **listen** for his invitations, and to **pray** in response to what you hear.*

Read: Colossians 3:1-4

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Reflect: Read this Scripture line by line. What is your heart set on? What is your mind set on? Where do you need to die to self and be hidden with Christ in God? How is Christ currently "your life?" What are you hoping for as you wait to "appear with him in glory?"

Listen: Take your time with the questions for reflection today. What are God's invitations in light of this passage? Who in your life needs to be reminded that they are "raised with Christ?"

Pray: Pray for direction in how to respond to these invitations. Pray for those who need encouragement and to be reminded to live out this Scripture. Pray for our whole church to live out these words faithfully.

Day 6

*Take time today to **read** God's Word, to **reflect** on how the Scriptures are speaking, to **listen** for his invitations, and to **pray** in response to what you hear.*

Read: Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

Reflect: What stands out to you in this passage? How do you view God's commandments? What would it look like to love his word this much and how might that change your life and family?

Listen: Ask God to show you what living out this passage looks like in your life and the life of your family. Where are you not loving him with *all* your heart, *all* your soul, and *all* your strength? What families do you know who need the love and guidance of God?

Pray: Take some time today to pray over your family and the families of The Creek. Ask God to help us to live out this Scripture in our lives – for a deep love for God's Word in each of us from birth to death. Pray for those families who need God's love.

Day 7

*Take time today to **read** God's Word, to **reflect** on how the Scriptures are speaking, to **listen** for his invitations, and to **pray** in response to what you hear.*

Read: Hebrews 12:1-3

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Reflect: Read through the text once more. What do you notice? What word or phrase stands out to you today? What does it mean to fix your eyes on Jesus? What is your response to the way Jesus endured the cross for you? Where are you weary and losing heart?

Listen: As you sit with this passage today, what does God want to say to you? How is he inviting you to respond? Ask him to reveal anything that is hindering you or any sin entangling you.

Pray: Express your gratitude for Jesus for enduring the cross for you. Express your gratitude for your "great cloud of witnesses" – those who have prayed for you and pointed you to Jesus. Take time to express where you are weary and losing heart and ask the Holy Spirit to encourage you. Confess your sin to Jesus, asking for forgiveness. Receive God's love. Pray for others who are caught in strongholds of sin and need breakthrough and deliverance.

Day 8

Take time today to **read** God's Word, to **reflect** on how the Scriptures are speaking, to **listen** for His invitations, and to **pray** in response to what you hear.

Read: Matthew 22:34-38

Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment.

Reflect: Read through the text once more. How do you imagine Jesus might have spoken these words? Powerfully? Quietly? With a smile? How might that image impact how you hear this command? What does it mean to love the Lord with all your heart, soul, and mind? Which of those three piques your curiosity most?

Listen: This complete love Jesus is describing is a continual relationship with Him that affects everything we do. How is Jesus calling you to love Him more completely? In what area of your relationship do you sense God inviting you to grow?

Pray: Pray that God would help you realize a continual relationship with God for yourself and for those close to you. Pray for a culture of continual relationship in our church family. Pray that all we do would flow from our love of God.

Day 9

Take time today to **read** God's Word, to **reflect** on how the Scriptures are speaking, to **listen** for His invitations, and to **pray** in response to what you hear.

Read: Romans 5:8

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Reflect: What does it mean to you that Christ's death was a demonstration of God's love? What does that demonstration say to you about the kind of love God has for us as sinners? Describe the kind of love God demonstrated through Jesus.

Listen: Take a moment to sit quietly and receive His love. You might feel drawn to respond to that love by journaling, writing, creating, or worshiping in some way.

Pray: Ask God to grow your love for Him and for others. Pray for Him to show you ways you can sacrificially love someone you know.

Day 10

Take time today to **read** God's Word, to **reflect** on how the Scriptures are speaking, to **listen** for His invitations, and to **pray** in response to what you hear.

Read: 1 John 4:17-19

This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

We love because he first loved us.

Reflect: Read the text slowly once again. What does it mean that love is made complete among us? How does the confidence of complete love combat fear in your life? Is fear currently winning the battle for your heart and mind? How can a God-first love make a difference in your approach to life and to those around you?

Listen: Take a moment to think about a fear or point of anxiety you currently have. Imagine handing that to God (you might want to hold your hands open, palms up, in front of you). Allow His perfect love to speak to that fear. Listen for how He might want to meet you in your anxiety.

Pray: Pray for those you know who are struggling with fear and anxiety. Ask God to meet them in their fears with His love. Pray that we would be like Jesus in this world, spreading His love to those who are coping with the realities of life.

Day 11

*Take time today to **read** God's Word, to **reflect** on how the Scriptures are speaking, to **listen** for His invitations, and to **pray** in response to what you hear.*

Read: Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Psalm 37:4; Psalm 40:8

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.

I desire to do your will, my God; your law is within my heart."

Reflect: Look back through these verses and take note of the words "heart" and "desire." Now consider your response to obeying God or doing His will in the past. What do you notice about the difference or similarities between scripture and your own response? Share what you've noticed with God.

Listen: Allow God to meet you in what you've noticed. Perhaps you obey out of a sense of duty or obligation. Listen to how God might want to grow desire in your heart to do His will. Dream with God about how that desire might grow and change your approach to obedience.

Pray: Thank God that He gives us a sense of meaning and purpose in Kingdom work. Ask that He would grow your desire for Him and that the increased desire for Him would spill over into the ways you share with others. Pray for this increase for other Christ followers as well.

Day 12

*Take time today to **read** God's Word, to **reflect** on how the Scriptures are speaking, to **listen** for His invitations, and to **pray** in response to what you hear.*

Read: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Reflect: What are your thoughts about rejoicing, praying, and giving thanks being God's will for you? What emotions do you feel when you read that list? How is that list the same or different from your own list of what you think God's will is?

Listen: What might God want to say to you through this text and what's your response to it? Share your own list of the "requirements" of doing His will. Listen for what He wants to share with you about your list.

Pray: Take time to do these things right now! Grab a piece of paper and fill in these blanks: I praise you because _____. I am grateful for _____. Spend a few minutes with each statement. When you're finished, spend another moment with God, reading over the list again and praising Him for who He is.

Day 13

*Take time today to **read** God's Word, to **reflect** on how the Scriptures are speaking, to **listen** for His invitations, and to **pray** in response to what you hear.*

Read: Mark 6:31

Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest."

Reflect: The disciples must've been exhausted when Jesus gave them this invitation. How exhausted are you today? Where do you feel exhaustion in your body? Where do you feel it in your thoughts? Where do you feel it in your emotions and relationships? Tell Jesus how tired you are. Celebrate with Him if you feel rested.

Listen: Find some space where you can be in solitude for 5 to 10 minutes. That space can be anywhere as long as you can focus on being alone with God. Read the text again and hear Jesus' invitation spoken to you. Sit in the quiet and enjoy the moment of rest He gives you.

Pray: Pray that God would afford you more opportunities to get away with Him to rest, whether that's a few minutes, a few hours, or a few days. Pray that you would be open to the invitation to rest in the midst of what might feel like a busy and chaotic life. Think about those in your life that need rest; pray that they would be able to find it as well.

Day 14

*Take time today to **read** God's Word, to **reflect** on how the Scriptures are speaking, to **listen** for His invitations, and to **pray** in response to what you hear.*

Read: Matthew 22:37-40

Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself." All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Reflect: Pick a few commands you know from scripture – they could be from the 10 Commandments, or maybe from the New Testament. Now think about those commands “hanging on” the first and second greatest commandments. How does that change the way you hear those commandments? Now that you’ve done that for a few, reflect on all of scripture’s commands hanging on those two. What do you notice?

Listen: Ask Jesus to help you understand how integral loving God and loving people is to *everything* we do as Jesus followers. Watch and listen for what He might share with you.

Pray: Spend time repenting for the times when you have tried to follow or share Jesus with any other motivation than love. Thank Him for redeeming those times when your motives were less than love. Pray that we, as a church, would be overcome by the desires to love God and love people.

Day 15

Take time today to **read** God’s Word, to **reflect** on how the Scriptures are speaking, to **listen** for His invitations, and to **pray** in response to what you hear.

Read: Philippians 2:1-11

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

Who, being in very nature God,

did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

rather, he made himself nothing

by taking the very nature of a servant,

being made in human likeness.

And being found in appearance as a man,

he humbled himself

by becoming obedient to death—

even death on a cross!

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place

and gave him the name that is above every name,

that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,

in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,

to the glory of God the Father.

Reflect: This passage commands us to adopt a posture of cruciform love in our relationships with others. “Cruciform” literally means “cross-shaped” and in this context, means conformed to the cross. What does it look like to pursue a life that resembles Jesus’ sacrificial posture?

Listen: Ask God to show you the relationships in your life where you fall short in exhibiting cruciform love. Ask Him to show you what needs to shift in your own heart so that you can adopt a mindset of Christ.

Pray: Read the passage again as a prayer, asking the Lord to work in your heart, making you more like Christ. Ask the Lord to grant you a humble heart and a willingness to look at the ways

He's inviting you to change. Pray for the relationships God brought to mind, asking Him to show you how to see them as He sees them.

Day 16

Take time today to **read** God's Word, to **reflect** on how the Scriptures are speaking, to **listen** for His invitations, and to **pray** in response to what you hear.

Read: Galatians 5:22-23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Reflect: Which fruits of the Spirit do you need to grow in the most? What relationships in your life are most impacted by your failure to cultivate some of these fruits?

Listen: Quietly meditate on each of these individual fruits of the spirit. Ask God to show you any conditions you have put on loving others and how cultivating the fruits of the Spirit will break down those walls.

Pray: Ask God to give you opportunities to grow in the fruits of the Spirit you struggle to live out.

Day 17

Take time today to **read** God's Word, to **reflect** on how the Scriptures are speaking, to **listen** for His invitations, and to **pray** in response to what you hear

Read: Matthew 5:46-48

If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Reflect: God commands us to love difficult people. When we love difficult people, it's a sign that we understand how much God loves us. But it's not easy. Who in your life is difficult to love? What makes you want to avoid that individual or community?

Listen: Ask God to show you how to love "like your Father in heaven". Listen to how He may be inviting you to understand the difficult people in your life and meet them with compassion.

Pray: Pray for God to soften your heart towards those in your life who are difficult to love. Pray for those individuals and ask God to transform the way you think of them and how you treat them.

Day 18

Take time today to **read** God's Word, to **reflect** on how the Scriptures are speaking, to **listen** for His invitations, and to **pray** in response to what you hear

Read: Luke 7:36-50

When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume. As she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them.

When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, “If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner.”

Jesus answered him, “Simon, I have something to tell you.”

“Tell me, teacher,” he said.

“Two people owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?”

Simon replied, “I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven.”

“You have judged correctly,” Jesus said.

Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little.”

Then Jesus said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.”

The other guests began to say among themselves, “Who is this who even forgives sins?”

Jesus said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”

Reflect: There are two important facts here. 1. While the religious people were passing judgment on the woman, Jesus forgave her sins. 2. Those who claimed to know God saw her with judgment, but Jesus saw her for who she truly was – **a child of God** in need of hope and forgiveness. Imagine the scene of this passage while recognizing these truths.

Listen: Take your time to reflect on this scene and ask God to bring to mind the “pre-judgments” you make of other people. Ask God to remind you of a time you pre-judged someone and were proven wrong about your judgment.

Pray: Pray that you would see all people, particularly those you have pre-judged, like God sees them. Confess them knowing God will forgive you.

Day 19

*Take time today to **read** God’s Word, to **reflect** on how the Scriptures are speaking, to **listen** for His invitations, and to **pray** in response to what you hear*

Read: Matthew 28:19-20

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

Reflect: In order to make disciples, we need to be disciples who practice being with Jesus, becoming like Jesus, and doing what Jesus did. What does this mean to you? Which aspect of being a disciple are you most naturally drawn to?

Listen: Who are the people in your circle of influence who need to hear about Jesus? Where are the unreached people groups in your community? Ask God to reveal how you need to lean into your own discipleship in order to effectively reach these people and share the love and hope of the gospel with them.

Pray: Pray for the people God has brought to mind – those who don't know Him and need to hear about Jesus. Spend some of this time in silence, being with Jesus, thanking Him for who He is.

Day 20

*Take time today to **read** God's Word, to **reflect** on how the Scriptures are speaking, to **listen** for His invitations, and to **pray** in response to what you hear*

Read: Matthew 6:6

But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Reflect: How can you take time to be alone with God? Would you say you live your life “with God”? What does that look like? What's missing?

Listen: Take a moment to imagine how you would make space to be with God if you had all the time in the world. How might God be inviting you to create space to be with Him?

Pray: Identify the things in your life you've prioritized over being with God and confess these to Him, knowing He will forgive you. Invite Him to deepen your desire for intimacy and love for Him.

Day 21

*Take time today to **read** God's Word, to **reflect** on how the Scriptures are speaking, to **listen** for his invitations, and to **pray** in response to what you hear*

Read: Matthew 4:23-25

Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed; and he healed them. Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed him.

Reflect: Jesus connects sharing the gospel with tangible acts of love. His life was characterized by preaching the gospel and loving the broken. We are called to do what Jesus did. Read

through the passage again and imagine Jesus doing these things in our city. What would that look like?

Listen: In what ways do you feel inadequate when it comes to “doing what Jesus did”? Where in your life might there be opportunities to step outside your comfort zone in sharing the gospel and practicing tangible acts of love?

Pray: Ask God to create a sense of urgency in your heart to live a life of effective evangelism. Invite Him to show you how to become more like Jesus so that others may know Him through you.