

Good Shepherd November 2020 Prayer Engagement

Dear Friends in Jesus,

Prior to the fulfillment of Jesus' promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, Acts 1:14 tells us that the eleven disciples along with the women and Jesus' mother and brothers "all joined together constantly in prayer." Verse 15 tells us that the number of believers totaled about 120. We learn in Acts 2:40 that on the day of Pentecost "about three thousand were added to their number."

According to Luke (Chapter 11), after Jesus taught his disciples how to pray (The Lord's Prayer), he shared with them the story (verses 5-8) of the man who through his persistent request received bread from his neighbor at midnight. "So, I (Jesus) say to you, Ask, and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened." (Luke 11:9-10)

Prayer is gift --- a direct line to God by the power of the Holy Spirit, through which we can discern His will and seek His blessing in our lives and that of our family and friends. It is also a way to express our praise, sorrow, happiness, grief, anger, joy and desires. He wants to hear it all. So it is that we at Good Shepherd are being called to pray - to pray for one another, our church family, our community, our nation, our world during this unprecedented year – 2020....

Genesis 4:26b, "At that time people began to invoke the name of the Lord."

James 5:16b, "The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective."

Hebrews 10:23-25, "Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 "Be joyful always; pray continuously; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you Christ Jesus."

Thank you for taking time to intentionally pray this month for our congregation. Maybe you will take time daily (the 30 days of November) or weekly to pray. Utilize the resources below however it best fits your schedule. An "Ephesians 6 Prayer" is on the very last page of this prayer resource – consider praying it every day!

A few suggestions as you prepare to pray this month:

- Ask God to help you spend this time of prayer wisely with him
- Spend a moment going over with him recent sins that weigh on you. Ask for his forgiveness, accept it by faith and give thanks to the Lord for his grace and mercy.
- Spend a few minutes thanking and praising God for his many blessings.
- Who or what is on your heart today? Release them to the Lord in a time of petition and intercession.

Martin Luther on the Necessity of Prayer

“We ourselves ought to feel how necessary prayer is. For we live in flesh and blood that is crammed full of wickedness of every sort. In addition, the world is always with us and against us, bringing all our misery and sorrow and trouble upon us. Besides, there is the devil everywhere around us, stirring up innumerable sects, factions, and corruptions, and driving us into unbelief and despair. There is never any end to this, and there is no rest for us. We are surrounded by the kind of enemies who will not stop until they have knocked us down, and as individual poor men we are much too weak to withstand so many enemies. For this reason God says to the prophet Zechariah (12:10) that He will give to those who are His own ‘the spirit of grace and supplication’ to preserve them against that wicked and pernicious spirit. Therefore it is the particular work of Christians, who have the Spirit of God, not to be lax and lazy but incessant and constant in their praying.” (*from his exposition on Matthew 6:5-6*)

Beginning Our Prayer Journey

Psalm 63:1, “O God, you are my God, I seek you, my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.”

Jeremiah 2:13, “...says the Lord, ‘for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and dug out cisterns for themselves, cracked cisterns that can hold no water.’”

Sometimes it can seem overwhelming when it comes to the thought of spending time in prayer. What do I say, how do I start, how long do I pray? Maybe, if your being honest, you are not really happy with your prayer life.

These next four exercises will be geared for individual time spent in prayer. Maybe it is in the early morning that you are reading this—or you are a night owl—or maybe you are on a break for lunch in the middle of the day. Whatever time it is and wherever you are, the Lord knows and appreciates that you are taking this time to exercise your prayer life. I want to encourage you to begin/continue a journey of prayer with Jesus. I want this to be a time of encouragement for you—not a burden. Humble yourself before the Lord and say, “Here I am...”

1. If you had to answer the question, “What is Prayer?” - What would you say? What scriptures come to mind or stories from the Bible that would model prayer?
2. Take some time now to, as Psalm 46:10 states, “Be still, and know that I am God.” Begin a time of conversation with the God of the universe. Listen. Wait. Be honest and open. Praise. Confess. Thank. Ask. Be real....Listen. Wait...Be still.
3. Read Isaiah 43:1-21 – maybe even more than once. Insert your name in verse 1 where the Lord says, “he who created you, O _____, he who formed you, O _____.” Reflect on these questions:
 - a. Who am I in the eyes of God? What does it mean that God has called me by name?
 - b. What nurtures me in my life with God?
 - c. When did I realize that God loves me?

d. When did I fall in love with God?

Exercise #1 – Prayer

“Let us never forget to pray, and let us never doubt the success of prayer...Prayer will succeed where all else fails.” ~ Charles H. Spurgeon 1834 – 1892

Reading this “Call to Prayer” from Psalm 67 and take a few moments to reflect on this scripture:

*1 May God be gracious to us and bless us
and make his face shine upon us,*

*2 that your ways may be known on earth,
your salvation among all nations.*

*3 May the peoples praise you, O God;
may all the peoples praise you.*

*4 May the nations be glad and sing for joy,
for you rule the peoples justly
and guide the nations of the earth.*

*5 May the peoples praise you, O God;
may all the peoples praise you.*

*6 Then the land will yield its harvest,
and God, our God, will bless us.*

*7 God will bless us,
and all the ends of the earth will fear him.*

1. When was the first time you ever remember hearing someone pray? Do you remember your first prayer – was it silent, audible?
2. Why should we and why do we pray?
3. Read Deuteronomy 4:1-8 – (notice v.7) – Moses explains that God draws near with blessing and power when His people pray. What can be some real obstacles to our individual and corporate prayer times?
4. How can the lack of prayer hinder the kingdom of God on earth?
5. Take time to reflect on this verse from James 4:8, “Draw near to God and he will draw near to you.” Is this a command or a suggestion?
6. Without the inward conviction that we must have the Lord’s help on a daily basis, we rarely pray. How can we in the Body of Christ encourage one another to feel our need for the Spirit of God in our lives daily?
7. The eleven Apostles in Acts 1, friends and family of Jesus all have experienced so much together in the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus. In the context of the promise of the coming and empowerment of the Holy Spirit for witness and evangelism and Jesus ascending into heaven with the promise to come again in

power and glory---I've discovered verse 14 of Acts chapter 1 such a powerful witness to the Church—"they were constantly devoting themselves to prayer." What might have been some other pressing issues that were on the hearts and minds of Jesus' followers at this point in time? What do you think their prayers "sounded" like?

8. Do you feel the time you spend in prayer is really worthwhile? Read James 5:15. If we take the time to read and digest His promises and commands found in the Bible, they will produce strong faith for powerful breakthrough prayer.

9. Let us follow the example of Jesus and His disciples. Let us pray together! Take time to pray in encouragement and faith for Jesus to give you/us a hunger and desire to pray.

"And without faith it is impossible to please God, for whoever would approach him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him." Hebrews 11:6

Exercise #2 – Prayer Changes Things

God has purposes for our lives, and He wants us to know them. Prayer, talking with God, is one way we come to know His plans and purposes for us. And through prayer He can work out the changes needed in our lives to fulfill His plans and purposes for us. Jesus taught His followers to pray for their heavenly Father's "purpose" over them and their situations. ***"Our father in heaven, (let) Your 'kingship' come" (over us).*** He taught them to seek His will to prevail over their lives and their daily, earthly circumstances. ***"Let Your will be done on earth (in us and for us) as it is in heaven."*** Because we are God's creatures, and our abilities and power are limited, we need the Lord to intervene for us to change what we are unable to change.

1. How has God changed your life? Read Ezekiel 36:25-36. Take time to thank God for the love of Jesus in your life? Intercede for others who need to know and experience the saving love of Jesus....

2. What circumstances in your life right now are causing you stress/pain/anger/anxiety/fear? Read Psalm 107:28. Cry out to Jesus to calm the storm(s) in your life—to build trust and confidence that Jesus never leaves you nor forsakes you.

3. Read Jeremiah 29:11. Do you believe the Lord wants and works His best for you? Remember a time when God's plans were not your plans....

4. Read Jeremiah 33:3 and Luke 11:9-10. Ask the Lord to give you His peace and assurance that He hears and answers your prayers in His ways and His timing. What ways has God answered prayer in your life with a:

- a. "Yes" ...
- b. "No" ...
- c. "Wait" ...

Exercise #3 – Praying the Psalms

In his book, *Answering God*, Pastor Eugene Peterson writes, "the Psalms – all of which listen in order to answer – train us in the conversation." In other words, prayer in its simplest form is you or me having a conversation

with God. We will not always be at our best when we take time to pray, using perfectly proper forms of English. We might even be in a bad mood and be experiencing a pretty tough day at home, school or work when we pray. God will still listen however; and, we need not overwhelm ourselves with the perfect formalities. Instead, we need to open up our hearts and share our thoughts and feelings with God, our Heavenly Father. I have discovered many instances in the Psalms when King David lets God know his praises, fears, thanksgivings, and complaints. You too can feel comfortable with God by speaking your “language of the moment” – knowing that your prayers will be brought to the throne of God through Jesus Christ. For that, you and I can be very grateful!

1. Seek out some of your “favorite” Psalms. Take time to READ them again. Now, take time to PRAY through them. Did you notice any difference?

2. *No Holds Barred: Wrestling with God in Prayer.* Mark D. Roberts. WaterBrook Press, 2005.

- a) Prayer of Asking – Psalm 17
- b) Prayer of Remembering – Psalm 105:1-6; Psalm 106:6-7
- c) Prayer of Silence – Psalm 46:10; Psalm 62:5-8; Psalm 131:1-3
- d) Prayer of Physical Expression – Psalm 47:1-9
- e) Prayer of Desperation and Doubt – Psalm 77:1-15
- f) Prayer of Vengeance – Psalm 69:1-4, 22-28; Psalm 58:6-8
- g) Prayer of Thanksgiving – Psalm 107:1-16
- h) Prayer of Praise – Psalm 145:1-14, 21
- i) Prayer of Confession – Psalm 51; Psalm 32:1-2
- j) Prayer of Worship – Psalm 95:1-7; Psalm 96:1-7, 9-10

[Pray through these Psalms – taking note how you have or are relating to them]

3. *A Call to Prayer based upon Psalm 9:1-14* **{Allow this Psalm to be a guide each day during this month – journal any thoughts or insights the Lord gives you}**

- Open your heart (v.1)
- Let praise roll forth (v.2)
- Review all things that the Lord has done (vv. 3-6)
- Rejoice, be glad and sing (vv. 7-8)
- Acknowledge that the Lord defends you (v.9)
- Go to the Lord for refuge (v.10)

- Talk about what the Lord has done for you (vv.11-12)
- Receive the Lords mercy (v.13)
- Rejoice in the salvation which is the Lords (v.14)

Exercise #4 – Praying with Jesus

Focus on the Lord’s Prayer in what may be for you – a very different way...As you pray the prayer, keep in mind that Jesus is teaching you how to pray. This prayer is really a Disciple’s (i.e. a follower of Jesus) Prayer.

The Lord’s Prayer: “a brief summary of the whole gospel” *Tertullian*

Context

(Do not be like them,...) Matt. 6:9a: “Pray then in this way:...”

(Lord, teach us to pray,...) Luke 11:2a: “**When** you pray, say:...”

Taken from the Book of Common Worship:

Our Father, who art in heaven,
 hallowed be thy name.
 Thy Kingdom come,
 thy will be done,
 on earth as it is in heaven.
 Give us this day our daily bread;
 And forgive us our debts,
 as we forgive our debtors;
 And lead us not into temptation,
 but deliver us from evil.
 For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, forever. Amen

A. Our Father who art in heaven

- “Hey, Dad, can we talk?” “Daddy, are you there?” – defines our relationship
- “Our Father” – recognizes that we are all children of God.
- What will heaven look like someday? (Also, see Jesus’ John 17 prayer)

B. Hallowed be thy name (in the way we live our lives)

- Holy, respected – “not smudging the name of God”
- Thanking vs. asking – each day is a precious and holy gift
- Seeking to be filled with God’s divine presence and power

C. **Thy** (not MY) kingdom come

- God's kingdom is not a place, it's a condition a way of life
- We need to participate in the coming of God's kingdom!!!

D. Thy (not MY) will be done

- "What others meant for evil, God meant for good."
- TRUTH is...the will of God is the hardest thing in the world to figure out.
- We are the ones who fulfill God's will in the world.

E. On earth as it is in heaven

- "as in heaven so also on earth" (starting point is heaven)
- Heaven is not something we have to wait to experience (Incarnational presence) – "little glimpses"
- God brings heaven to earth through us

F. Give us this day OUR daily bread

- Exodus 16:1-6, 13-15; John 6:25-27
- Very, very simple petition
- "the bread of the day, give to us today"
- physical, spiritual, global

G. Forgive US our debts/trespases/sins

- One of the hardest things in the world is to accept the fact that we really are forgiven.
- "to let go of"; "to cancel" – individual & the whole world
- GOOD NEWS in Jesus Christ
- Forgiving others who have wronged me...allows me to receive God's forgiveness

H. Lead us not into temptation (testing)

- James 1:2-4, 12-16; Hebrews 2:18
- God won't tempt us, but God does test us
- "Lead us not into more testing than we can handle"

I. Deliver us from evil (the evil one)

- Evil NOT suffering

- Christ has established systems of goodness

J. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.

- Early church footnote = they added it because God had added something to Jesus' life called the resurrection. If we share in that glory we ought to show it!
- I Chronicles 29:10-11a (liturgical response)
- To believe that God is truly sovereign over all nature and history, and our lives accordingly.

K. AMEN!!! (not trivial business)

- "I agree." "May it be so." Hebrew: "Yes, I agree. I get it and affirm it."

May the Lord's Prayer take on new meaning and power in your worship life and challenge you in your Christian journey each and every time you pray it!!!

Daily, Personal Time of Prayer

Thank you for your willingness to join in this season prayer to praise God and pray for our church and particularly for how Jesus may be leading us to invite all people into a Christ-centered life in God's family. God bless you today and always.

Please use this time to be in prayer as you read God's word and then listen and hear what the Lord is saying to you during this time.

- Call to Worship –

God sent Christ into the world not to condemn the world,

But that the world might be saved through him.

God's love endures forever.

God is our refuge and strength, a present help in trouble.

Therefore we will not fear though the earth should change,

Though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;

Though the waters roar and foam,

though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

God's love endures forever.

- Opening time of personal prayer and reflection
- Scripture Readings –

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

Isaiah 58:1-12

2 Corinthians 5:16-6:10

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

- Invitation to the Observance of a Spiritual Discipline (this time is set in the context of Lent/Easter – but let's engage it even though the season of Advent is only 4 weeks away!!!)

Friends in Christ, every year at the time of the Christian Passover

We celebrate our redemption through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Lent is a time to prepare for this celebration

And to renew our life in this paschal mystery (the full events of Christ's passion, death, resurrection, ascension, and the sending of the Holy Spirit, as these enact God's hidden plan of salvation which is now revealed.)

We begin this holy season by acknowledging our need for repentance, and for the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We begin our journey to Easter remembering Abraham's words to the Lord in Genesis 18, "I who am but dust and ashes." Our humanity in and of itself is frail and holds much uncertainty. Ashes and dust can be signs to us of the penitence of this community of faith (corporate & individual). You are invited, therefore, in the name of Christ to observe a holy Lent

by self-examination and penitence,

by prayer and fasting,

by works of love,

and by reading and meditating on the Word of God.

Let us come/bow/kneel before God, our Creator and Redeemer

And confess our sin...

Spend time praying and reading through **Psalm 51**.

- Prayer and Blessing and Charge

God of compassion, through your Son Jesus Christ

You reconciled your people to yourself.

Following his example of prayer and fasting, may we obey you with willing hearts and serve one another in holy love;

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

May the God of peace make you holy in everyway

And keep your whole being-spirit, soul and body free from every fault

At the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Additional Prayer Guide for Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church

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

Psalm 37:4

- Hunger to spend time with Scripture and be in prayer for God’s guidance and direction in the days ahead of us
- Unity in the Body of Christ, especially as we move forward into the season of Advent/Christmas and then by God’s grace-a New Year – 2021...
- The unchurched around us
- Stewardship of our time, talent and treasure
- Those in need of spiritual, emotional and physical healing
- Spiritual protection over this congregation as we move forward in mission and ministry

The COVID-19 pandemic effects continue to provide challenges to the Church, the economy, and people’s general mental health everywhere. Ongoing prayer for the Church’s impact and outreach as she figures out how to minister in this new environment of social distancing, lockdowns, and meeting restrictions is essential and the recovery of the world’s economy and the people affected.

There is no clear end in sight, so praying for an end for the pandemic and the nations’ recovery is vital.

No matter who wins the 2020 Presidential elections, the United States of America remains divided. The division, polarization, animosity, and outright hostility is creating a hazardous spiritual atmosphere.

No political party has the answer to the problem because it is not a political problem. It is a problem of the heart.

Jesus Christ is the answer to the problem, not just of the USA but of the whole world. However, following the US presidential election results, America will be in a very vulnerable place. Believers, intercessors, and prayer warriors need to stand in the gap for the nation.

A Prayer Guide for Our Nation

[1 Thessalonians 5:17](#) – *Pray without ceasing...*

As Christians we are called to be in a continual state of prayer and communion with our Lord and God. For the Christian, every day is a day of prayer.

[Acts 2:42](#) *And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.*

Remember the model of the early church, frequently gathering together to pray for God's strength and blessing

[2 Chronicles 7:14](#) *If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.*

Remember that this prayer is not for a particular modern nation, but for God's people, the Church. As God's people our first duty in prayer is to humble ourselves before God in repentance, confessing our sin and pleading his grace and mercy which has been poured out upon us through Christ.

[Matthew 6:5-6](#) *And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.*

Prayer ought never to become a public display or grounds for boasting in our own righteousness. Instead, pray fervently and secretly with the knowledge that God hears our prayers and faithfully answers them. Remember Jesus' model of ministry which included much public teaching and much private prayer.

[Ephesians 1:16-21](#) *I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.*

Give Christ a place of centrality in your prayers. Follow Paul's model of prayer, praying that others would know Christ who is supremely exalted and supremely worth knowing. Season your prayer with biblical language and praise to God.

[Colossians 4:3](#) Pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ...

Like Paul, pray for the advancement of the gospel, that the mystery of Christ and his saving work would be made known among the multitudes who do not know him.

[Matthew 9:38](#) *Pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.*

Pray for the lost. Pray for faithful Christian laborers to go into the world to spread the gospel.

[Hebrews 13:18](#) *Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things.*

Pray for your church leaders.

[1 Timothy 2:1-2](#) *I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way...*

Pray for government leaders on every level, that they would honor true justice and rule in submission to the moral law of God. As we pray this month (and indeed, every day!), may God use our prayers for his glory, and may he transform our hearts in such a way that we continually grow in our knowledge of Christ. (*Phil. 3.12ff*)

PUT ON THE FULL ARMOR OF GOD Ephesians 6:10-18

Heavenly Father,

I desire to be obedient by being strong in the Lord and the power of Your might. I recognize that it is essential to put on the armor that you have provided, and I do so now with gratitude, praise and by faith as effective spiritual protection against the spiritual forces of darkness.

I confidently take the belt of truth--I take Jesus who is the Truth as my strength and protection and ask wisdom and discernment to believe, live, speak and know only the truth.

Thank you for the breastplate of righteousness. By faith I appropriate the righteousness of Jesus Christ and ask you, Jesus, to walk in Your holiness in my life today.

Thank you, Lord, for the shoes of peace. I desire that my feet should stand on the solid rock of peace and that as I walk in obedience to you, the God of peace promises to walk with me.

Eagerly, Lord, I lift up the shield of faith. By faith, I trust in you to be a complete and perfect shield.

I recognize that my mind is a target of Satan's deceiving ways and I take the helmet of salvation, recognizing that the Lord Jesus Christ is my salvation. I shield my head with Him and invite His mind to be in me.

With joy I take hold of the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, affirming that it is the infallible word of God. Enable me to use Your word not only to defend me from Satan, but to claim its promises.

Thank You, Dear Lord, for prayer. Help me to keep this armor well oiled with prayer. I desire to pray at all times with depth and intensity as the Holy Spirit leads me. Grant me a burden for others in God's family and enable me to see their needs and assist them through prayer as the enemy attacks them.

All these things I ask in the mighty name of Jesus Christ, my Lord,