

BETHESDA CHRISTIAN
CHURCH

Lenten Season

7 Week Prayer Guide





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We who are many are one body.

1 Cor. 10:17

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Prayer is an essential part of the life of every Christian. The bible is full of invitations to draw closer to the Lord in prayer, including many practical examples as models for the people of God to emulate. The New Testament letters include notable prayers for local churches. One such example is Paul's letter to the church in the city of Colossae. At the open of that letter, Paul shared how he and his protégé Timothy had been praying for the church. They prayed continually, asking God to fill the people with knowledge, wisdom and understanding through the Holy Spirit to live lives "worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God." I share Paul's desire for our local church.

As we enter the Lenten season, I invite you to join with the entire body of Bethesda Christian Church in prayer. Prayer might be a regular and vibrant part of your life, or it may be that prayer is an infrequent habit. In either case, join with your fellow brothers and sisters in unified prayer and add to your prayer life. Let's petition God together in the spirit of Paul and Timothy's prayer for the Colossian church. As you pray and as you are led, consider adding fasting to some of your prayer times. Jesus said, "when you fast," implying there are times as individuals when we will set aside our own comfort and concentrate on prayer.

This little guide has been prepared to remind us to pray and to assist us in our united purpose. It is organized with weekly prayer focuses for the seven weeks preceding Easter. As you pray each week, take time to journal your thoughts or write down prayers of your own. The first week begins with you, a week of self-examination and seeking the Lord for building yourself spiritually. The remaining weeks center on praying together for the many aspects of our local church. The final week centers on prayers for the lost outside our walls. May we all be imploring God through Jesus Christ with expectation for increase of souls into His kingdom.

On Jesus Christ we have set our hope that He will continue to help us as a church by all our prayers. We will be sure to give thanks for the gracious favor He grants us in answer to the prayers of many!

With gratitude yours sincerely,

- Pastor Pat

Week 1 – February 23–29
Prayer focus: Self Examination

Jesus is the supreme model of selflessness. He gave up the glory of heaven to become a man and He sacrificed His life to pay the debt of sin for all. He once said, “I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,” and He practiced what He preached. Does it follow that praying for yourself contradicts Jesus’ teaching and example? Not at all. Putting your needs and desires before the Lord might seem contradictory to the principle of selflessness, yet the Bible records that Jesus prayed for Himself: “Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son... glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.” And, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me.” God’s Word also gives ample record of individuals pleading their cause before the Lord. Jacob prayed for deliverance from Esau, David prayed for his personal deliverance and protection from his enemies, Hannah prayed for a son, and many more examples could be cited. A common thread exists in the many examples of prayers for oneself: humility. Jacob said, “I am not worthy,” David pleaded for forgiveness, Hannah wept. Praying for yourself is not a selfish act when it is preceded by self-examination and then seeking God with humility.

Meditate on Romans 12:1 - *Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.*

Prayer: Lord, reveal to me any areas of my life that aren’t pleasing to you.

Meditate on Proverbs 21:2 - *A person may think their own ways are right, but the LORD weighs the heart.*

Prayer: Lord, I acknowledge that nothing in my life is hidden from your sight. Show me the ways in which my thinking needs to change.

Meditate on Galatians 5:19-23a - ¹⁹*The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness and self-control.*

Prayer: Lord, show me where my choices and behavior don’t reflect the fruit of your Spirit.

Week 2 – March 1-7
Prayer Focus: Church Leaders

Paul the Apostle asked the church in Thessalonica to pray for him and his fellow workers. To the Romans he made this request, “join me in my struggle by praying to God for me.” To the church in Colossae, he wrote, “Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.” The writer to the Hebrews, after calling his readers to obey their leaders and submit to them wrote, “Pray for us.” It was that same writer to the Hebrews who also wrote, “Remember your leaders, who spoke the Word of God to you... they keep watch over you as those who must give an account.” God has entrusted your spiritual care to the leaders of the local church, and for those leaders it is an awesome responsibility. To carry out their calling to its fullest, the leadership of the church needs your prayers.

Church Leadership: Pastors Patrick and Julie Visger, Rev. Barry Allen (wife Linda), Rev. Rob Susan (wife Peggy), Noah Allen (wife Taylor), Trustees and Church Council.

Meditate on Galatians 6:9 - *Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.*

Prayer: Lord, I ask that my church leaders will not become weary in serving your people. Give them strength, health, rest, and perseverance as they carry out what you’ve called them to do. Give them your help in balancing the duties of leadership with personal and family life. Bless all those who help and assist them.

Meditate on 2 Timothy 2:15 - *Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the Word of truth.*

Prayer: Lord, I ask that you give my church leaders your wisdom in accurately interpreting scripture. May they lead, preach, teach, and advise according to your Word of Truth.

Meditate on Ephesians 6:10-12 - *¹⁰Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. ¹²For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.*

Prayer: Lord, I ask your protection over my church leaders and their families. Keep them strong in you and give them discernment to recognize and stand against the devil’s schemes.

Week 3 – March 8-14
Prayer Focus: Ministries

The ministries of the church are made up of groups of believers like you, committed to investing their time talent and resources for strengthening and advancing the kingdom of God on earth. The New Testament commends ministry workers, and even likens their efforts to that of a soldier. Paul the Apostle honored Tychicus as a “fellow servant in the Lord,” and Aristarchus, Mark and Justus as “coworkers for the Kingdom of God.” Paul prayed for Philemon, “a coworker” and for Archippus whom he called a “fellow soldier” and encouraged to “complete the ministry you have received in the Lord.” Paul recognized that the ministries of the church required many faithful servants, for whom he prayed. Praying for the ministries is a ministry itself. Paul commended Epaphras for his prayer ministry noting, “He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in the will of God, mature and fully assured.” Pray with the same spirit for the ministries of Bethesda.

Ministries: Nurseries, Kids, Students, Young Adults, Singles, Men, Women, Married, Adult Education, Care/Outreach, Missions, Parkway Christian School (Note: Worship Ministries and prayer meetings are the prayer focus of week 4, Support teams and ministries of support are the prayer focus of week 5.)

Meditate on Colossians 3:23-24 - ²³*Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, ²⁴since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.*

Prayer: Lord, I thank you for the many people who serve in our ministries. I ask you to send encouragement their way. As each looks forward to their eternal reward, may they experience the joy of serving you. Allow them to see your hand at work in their personal lives and in their area of service. Give each your strength, joy, peace, provision, protection, and wisdom as they minister for you.

Meditate on Psalm 100:5 - *For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.*

Prayer: Lord, thank you for your faithfulness to each of our ministries. I ask your continued provision and protection over them. May each stay strong in the truth of your Word. Use these ministries to raise up and strengthen disciples for Jesus Christ.

Meditate on Ephesians 5:1-2 - ¹*Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly loved children ²and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*

Prayer: Lord, I ask that each of our ministries would be used to teach and exemplify your love. Continue to provide loving servants who look to you for their example in ministering to those you send their way.

Meditate on Colossians 2:6-8 - ⁶*So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, ⁷rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. ⁸See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.*

Prayer: Lord, I thank you for all who teach throughout our ministries. I pray you protect our ministries from the hollow and deceptive philosophy of the world. Give each leader, teacher, and student discernment to recognize teachings that aren’t from you. Bless these ministries that students will continue to be rooted, built up, and strengthened in the Christian faith.

Week 4 – March 15-21

Prayer Focus: Worship Ministry, Services, and Prayer Meetings

When King Solomon dedicated the house he built for the Lord, the first temple, he prayed a prayer of dedication. Solomon prayed for those who would repent, turn to God, and “give praise to your name, praying and making supplication before you in this temple.” He closed his prayer saying, “Now, my God, may your eyes be open and your ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place. Now arise, Lord God, and come to your resting place, you and the ark of your might.” Solomon’s prayer was for God’s abiding presence to be in His house as a “resting place” where those gathering were offering praise and their own prayers, and that the Lord would “be attentive to the prayers offered in this place.” What an example to inspire us to pray and offer prayers of dedication for our worship and services. The earliest record of the Church’s gatherings after the resurrection of Jesus and the outpouring of His Holy Spirit show us that worship and prayer were integral elements of believers meeting together. When we gather as a church body, where the Lord is worshipped and the Word of God is preached, we desire God’s presence to be evident and receptive to our worship and prayers.

Meditate on Psalm 100:1-2 and Romans 15:5-6 - ¹*Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.* ²*Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.* --- ⁵*May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had,* ⁶*so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Prayer: Lord, I thank you for all who serve in our worship ministry. As worship teams lead our congregation to worship you in song, may you lead them by your Spirit. May each come prepared with a heart of humility and a desire to please you. I pray you grant them discernment in song selection, unity in vision, and inspiration for services across all departments of the church. Unite the team by the love of Christ and protect them from attacks of the enemy. Bless them with health and times of refreshing that they would not become complacent or burned out. I pray for unity among the generations as we worship you as one through your Spirit.

Meditate on Hebrews 4:12 - *For the Word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*

Prayer: Lord, I thank you for every service in my church that your Word is preached. I pray through the preaching that hearts would be pierced by the power of your Word. May you use the message of each minister in the pulpit to yield hearts to you and your ways.

Meditate on Acts 2:42-43 - ⁴²*They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.* ⁴³*Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles.*

Prayer: Lord I thank you for the power of unified prayer. I pray that you would add to the number of those who attend prayer meetings in my church. As your people gather in prayer, may you bless in such a way that many will be filled with awe.

Week 5 – March 22-28
Prayer Focus: Support Teams

At the close of his letter to the church in Rome, the Apostle Paul acknowledged many helpers who supported his efforts. He recognized Phoebe as a “a helper of many and of myself;” Priscilla and Aquila who “risked their own necks for my life;” Mary, “who labored much for us;” Urbanus, “our fellow worker in Christ;” Tryphena and Tryphosa, “who labor in the Lord;” Tertius, “who wrote this epistle;” Gaius, “who is host to me;” and others. There were many assisting Paul in his ministry, he noted their hard work, what they risked, and even some specific tasks like writing his letter and providing him a room. In our church today we have many hard-working servants supporting the mission of the church. Like those who supported Paul, their efforts are necessary and appreciated, for without them the church would not function as it does. Let’s cover their efforts with prayer.

Support Teams: Buildings and Grounds, Communication, Events/Kitchen, First Impressions Team/Safety, Office staff, Production.

Meditate on Hebrews 6:10 - *God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.*

Prayer: Lord, I thank you for the staff and many volunteers who help in my church. I ask you to bless each personally and in their service to you and your people. May you sustain and refresh them, that they may not grow weary. Give each guidance, wisdom, protection, provision, strength, and health. Thank you for the difference they make in my church.

Meditate on John 13:34-35 - ³⁴*“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”*

Prayer: Lord, I pray for all who are involved in the support areas of my church. Thank you that each has experienced the love of Jesus in their lives. As they serve with others for your purpose, may your love be the center of their relationships. Use these teams to be witnesses of the love of Jesus working through His disciples.

Meditate on Psalm 5:11 - *But let all who take refuge in you be glad; let them ever sing for joy. Spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may rejoice in you.*

Prayer: Lord, I ask your protection over my church. Please command your angels to guard our building, grounds, and all who enter. I thank you for all the men and women who serve on our safety team. Bless them for putting others above themselves. Grant them keen senses, wisdom and protection as they serve to keep those in my church safe.

Week 6 – March 29-April 4
Prayer Focus: Giving and Finances

The church is not just spiritual, it is physical. God has ordained that for the church to function in the physical world, each member of the Church should consecrate a part of their resources to the service of God, if we are to see the kingdom of Christ spread with power and great glory. As funds are given to the church, those who steward the finances of God’s house have a great responsibility. When Ezra set out from Babylon to travel to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple of God, he set stewards over the freewill offerings of gold and silver to “guard them carefully... everything was accounted for by number and weight.” Jesus once said, “Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won’t you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it?” In God’s house today the finances which are freely given are carefully accounted for, and before decisions for their use are made costs are considered with prayer and deliberation. Be guided by the scriptures and prayer points below to pray about giving and the finances of the church.

Meditate on Malachi 3:10-11 - ¹⁰*Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it. ¹¹I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe,” says the LORD Almighty.*

Prayer: Lord, I acknowledge my financial responsibility to you and my church. Thank you for the faithful givers who enable my church to function and carry out your mission. I ask that you bless each giver. Give our pastors, trustees, officers, and specifically Todd Carley (treasurer), your wisdom in handling the finances of my church.

Meditate on Matthew 6:19-21 - ¹⁹*“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*

Prayer: Lord, give me insight to know where my heart is in the area of treasures. Help me to focus my thoughts, actions, and heart on things eternal. As I look to you for treasure in heaven, give me your peace and guidance in the area of giving.

Meditate on 1 Chronicles 29:11-13 - ¹¹*Yours, LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. ¹²Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all. ¹³Now, our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name.*

Prayer: Lord, I thank you for your provision in my life. I confess that all I have comes from you. As I give to the work and ministry of your church, please accept my giving as an act of worship unto you my Lord and Savior.

Week 7 – April 5-11
Prayer Focus: Loving the Lost

There is no better summation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ than John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” When Jesus offered his life by death on a cross, He opened the door to eternal life. Sharing this great gift of eternal life with the lost and hurting world is something all Christians are called to do. We are surrounded by a community that needs Jesus. The church began with those who heard the gospel and were moved in their hearts to believe. Those new believers devoted themselves to prayer and the Lord responded with favor adding to their number daily those who were being saved. Let’s pray for a move of God on our surrounding community and the adding to His kingdom of those who need eternal life.

Household Prayer – Wednesday April 8: On Wednesday April 8 there will not be an evening service. In lieu of the service, make it a priority for your household to pray from 7pm-8:30pm. Use the prayers included here, and pray specifically for the Good Friday (include Good Friday for Kids) and Easter services.

Meditate on Matthew 9:36-38 - ³⁶*When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. ³⁸Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”*

Prayer: Lord, give me compassion for those who don’t know you as their Shepherd and Savior. Open my eyes to the harvest field of people around me, that I may be used in their lives. By your Spirit, draw lost souls in our communities and around the world, that many would be added to the Kingdom of God. Equip my church to love and disciple those you would bring in.

Meditate on 1 Timothy 1:12-16 – ¹²*I (the apostle Paul) thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me trustworthy, appointing me to his service. ¹³Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. ¹⁴The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. ¹⁶But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life.*

Prayer: Lord, thank you for coming to this world to save sinners. Help me to see the worst of sinners aren’t beyond your reach and can be used powerfully for your purpose. Forgive me if I’ve given up believing and praying for the lost in my life. I ask you to fill my heart with your love for those who are acting in *ignorance and unbelief*.

Meditate on 2 Corinthians 4:4 – *The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

Prayer: Lord, I thank you for the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Nothing in this world can compare to eternal salvation that is found through faith in you. So many around me are blinded from the light of your gospel. They are believing the lies of this world and living in darkness. I pray for a move of your Spirit to open the eyes of those who are blinded. As I encounter those in the dark, help me to be a light for you.
