



**21**  
**DAYS OF**  
**PRAYER**





# 21 DAYS OF PRAYER

# 01

DAY 01

JANUARY 9, 2023

## Bill Markham

### KEY SCRIPTURES

James 5: 13-16

As we begin a New Year, the question that is foremost in many of our minds is, “What can I do differently this year that will make my life richer?” Our first impulse is usually to think of ways to change our physical environment, like diet and exercise. Or, often we lean toward improving relationships and financial situations.

But the Bible has a very different starting point. In the pages of truth we discover that our first step should always be prayer. The audacious claim is that if we can become effective in this area, things that seem impossible become possible. Here is what we read in James 5:13... “Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. 14 Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. 16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.”

My first impulse on reading this is to fashion prayer into a formula... if you do this, then this will happen. But I don't believe that was the intention of James. When it comes to praying, singing, or having elders pray, all of those are great things. But how do you know when you're supposed to do those things? I think what James is emphasizing is this key point: that it is only God who can truly deliver us. And when we orient our lives with His Will, that's when we find the strength and wisdom to navigate our situation.

The word “righteous” used in verse 16 is not to be interpreted as, “a perfect person”, or “the person who does everything right”, but rather the prayer here pertains to “the person who wants to discover, and is committed to, living in God's Best.”

I want to invite you on a 21 day journey of discovery. During this 21 day journey, our prayer is that by taking intentional time to listen for God's voice, you will find the freedom you need in your trouble, the joy you need in your victory, and the healing you need in your body, mind, and spirit. Welcome to 21 Days of Prayer.





# 21 DAYS OF PRAYER

# 02

DAY 02

JANUARY 10, 2023

## Mike Hicks

KEY SCRIPTURES

1 Samuel 1:9-18

“Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him.”

I love how this story begins in verse one! At this strategic time and place, God began His plan as He almost always does – with a person He will use. God can do His work by Himself, or by angels, or by any number of other means, but His normal method is to find a certain person and work through him/her.

Hannah’s husband had another wife, I’ll call her Penny. There was an intense, competitive relationship between the two wives, Penny (who had children) and Hannah (who had no children). Strife and conflict were the order of the day at Hannah’s home. The conflict between the two wives affected Hannah so that she could not enjoy the display of love and favour from her husband, Elkanah. Hannah was provoked yearly about her “disability”. It was a very heavy weight she carried.

**Q:** Is it possible for problems at home to make your time at the house of God miserable?

Hannah is at the house of the LORD with a blessed double portion in front of her and she can’t enjoy it.

Hannah prayed to the LORD when she was in turmoil. Hannah was in bitterness of soul and great anguish, yet she did the right thing. Hannah took those bitter and anguished feelings to God honestly in prayer.

Hannah was challenged by God’s representative, Eli, but she did not cower under Eli’s accusation, she did not respond in an angry, offensive or arrogant tone. She explained herself, but she did it remembering that he was an authority. She said I have poured out my soul before the LORD. This is exactly what Hannah needed to do. Instead of keeping the bitterness of soul and the anguish in her heart, she poured it out of her soul before the LORD. The God of Israel grant your petition, Eli may have spoken this only as a kind wish, but it was in fact a word from the LORD.

Her face was no longer sad. The change in Hannah’s countenance shows that she received the promise with faith, something necessary if we will inherit the promises of God.

**Q:** What can we learn?

Hannah is a woman in the Bible who dealt with a lot of adversity in her life, yet she was unwavering in seeking out the Lord. We learn about Hannah's story and how she was in conflict, taunted by her adversary, and stressed out! Despite Hannah's challenges, she was determined to surrender and submit her cares before the Lord. She prayed through her pain and resolved to continue to trust God.

Like Hannah, we also face difficult challenges and difficult seasons in life but being diligent in seeking God in prayer will guide, uplift, and encourage us to move forward in faith. Our circumstances may not always yield our desired outcome, but God wants us to continuously pray to Him with courage, boldness, and expectation.

## REFLECTIONS

---

- ▶ Do you consider yourself available to be used by God?
- ▶ Do struggles in your life cause you to run to God?
- ▶ Do you take your worry, hurt and bitterness to God and leave them with Him?

## PRAYER

---

Father thank you, thank you, thank you. Jesus as we come to you today, we want to tell you thank you, thank you, thank you. I don't know any other way to express our gratitude to you. For shedding your blood on the cross. Thank you, Lord, that it represents the forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life. And so, Lord we pray for a spiritual healing, a spiritual cleansing, we pray a prayer of exchange and reject fear and call-in confidence. We reject anxiety and worry right now and speak peace and calm to come into our hearts and minds. We reject division and taking sides and pray for unity. Lord we come to You, and we repent, we are sorry Lord. We pray for a revival in Niagara. Lord we do this remembering what you did, what you are doing while waiting for your return. In Jesus name amen.

---

---

---

---

---

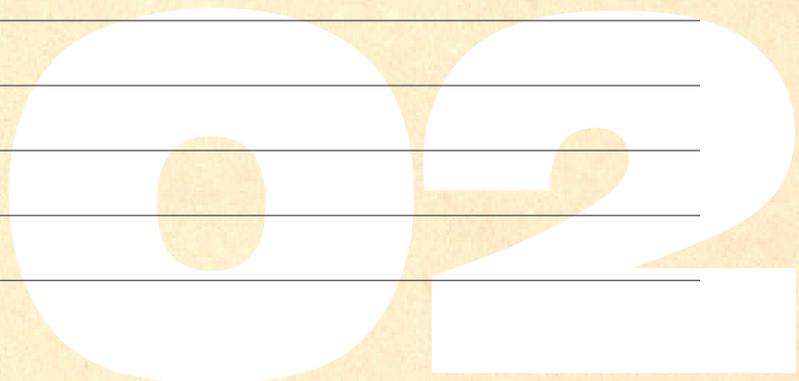
---

---

---

---

---





# 21 DAYS OF PRAYER

# 03

DAY 03

JANUARY 11, 2023

## Jeffrey Tuffour

KEY SCRIPTURES **2 Samuel 7:18–29; Psalm 107:1**

“Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever” (Psalm 107:1, NIV).

In this, people who profess God as Lord of their lives are called and encouraged to give thanks to Him. I ask for what should we be thankful for? The psalmist tells us for his love. King David expands on this by showing what the love of God looked like for him in 2 Samuel 7:18-19. The love of God for him is anchored in his actions to be faithful to him. As I read the passage, it occurs to me that David is thankful in three ways: for the past, for his present, for what God will do in the future. There is an infusion of joy and peace in his words of thankfulness. I find myself invited to express thanksgiving in the same way: for God’s faithfulness in my past, my present realities, and my future endeavours. I stand in agreement with King David as I wonder what I have done to receive this amazing grace which makes me a child of God.

David asks, “Who am I, Sovereign Lord... that you have brought me this far?” (2 Samuel 18b, NIV) Take a moment to think about David’s

life up to this point in time. He was born into a family of low status and was the smallest of his brothers. He tended sheep and fought Goliath the giant with his slingshot and stones. After being surprisingly chosen to be the future king of Israel, Saul, the current king, hunted him down to end his life. For nearly 15 years, he waited for God’s promise to come to pass in his life and faced many obstacles in the process.

Furthermore, King David looks at his current reality and is thankful. He is thankful because God is the one who placed him in the position to lead. He prays “Lord Almighty, God of Israel, you have revealed this to your servant, saying, ‘I will build a house for you.’ So your servant has found courage to pray this prayer to you. Sovereign Lord, you are God! Your covenant is trustworthy, and you have promised these good things to your servant” (2 Samuel 7:27-28, NIV). I have been learning to be thankful for my current reality in life. To do this I see everything around me as a blessing from God for which I can audibly say thank you!

Lastly, King David anticipates future blessings which causes him to be thankful. This anticipation is based on God’s character and past actions. He says, “And now, Lord God,





# 21 DAYS OF PRAYER

# 04

DAY 04

JANUARY 12, 2023

## Les Markham

### KEY SCRIPTURES

**I Kings 8:12–61**

It was a great day of celebration! No expense was spared, all the leaders and all the people were assembled, and the sacrifices offered to God were too numerous to be counted. Solomon's magnificent temple was finished and was being dedicated to the Lord. It was a day to remember.

Have you ever had a day like that – a significant day of accomplishment? How did you celebrate? Solomon offered sacrifices to God, and Solomon prayed. Now, many of the prayers in the Bible are short; this one wasn't. What do we learn about God and about prayer from I Kings 8: 12–61?

Where does God live? Solomon begins his prayer by remembering that when Israel was in the wilderness, God's presence was in a cloud – the cloud on Mount Sinai and the cloud that led them day by day. Now the cloud of God's glory had filled the temple (I Kings 8: 10 & 11), but Solomon realized that God cannot be confined to a building regardless of how beautiful it might be. In verse 27 he declares “the heavens, even the highest heavens, cannot contain God”. Our God is bigger, greater and grander than even our universe. When we pray,

we should remind ourselves of the greatness of our God. Verse 23 reads “ - - there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth below”. Our God is unique. There is no other God worthy even to be compared. Verse 60 says “The Lord is God; there is no other”.

What kind of a God is He? He is a covenant keeping God (Verse 23). He is a promise keeping God (Verse 24). I really like verse 56 which states “Not one word has failed of all the good promises He gave”. One of my favourite portions of Scripture is Romans 4: 20 & 21 “ Abraham did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that what God had promised, He was able also to perform”. Hebrews 10:23 assures us “He who promised is faithful”, so when we pray, let's pray with faith, grounded in the promises of God.

God is great, God is faithful and God is kind. I Kings 8:23 tells us that God's covenant is a covenant of love. Others translate this verse as showing God's mercy or God's loving kindness. God is not only great, He is also good; not only majestic, but also merciful. Our prayers should begin, not with our needs, but with God's character.

But what did Solomon the wisest man in the world, pray for? He asked that God would not leave them. Thankfully, in this regard, we already have God's sure promise in Hebrews 13: 5 which reads "God has said 'I will never leave you, nor will I ever forsake you'". Hebrews is quoting Deuteronomy 31:6: the whole verse says "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified—for the Lord your God goes with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you".

Let's stand strong in the light of His presence!

We also join Solomon in praying for forgiveness when we fail God, for protection from our enemies, and for restoration when the Lord disciplines us. Solomon's real prayer is that God will hear and answer their prayers, and help them walk in the path of righteousness. That's our prayer too.

## REFLECTIONS

---

- ▶ Can you remember a day when you had reason to celebrate?  
How did you celebrate? Did you thank God?
- ▶ What is something that you can celebrate today?
- ▶ What fills you with wonder about the bigness, the majesty and the goodness of God?
- ▶ What are some of the promises of God that are significant to you?
- ▶ Do you have an awareness of God's presence?  
Does knowing that God is with you give you strength and courage?

## PRAYER

---

Dear Heavenly Father, today I worship you for your might and your majesty. You created the heavens and the earth; yet you have sent your Holy Spirit to live in me. Thank you for being present in my life. Please help me to be a show window of your love and your glory to those around me. Please shine your beauty through me. Thank you for being a covenant keeping God. Help me to rest in your promises. Today, I celebrate your goodness to me. Thank you. Amen.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---





# 05

DAY 05

JANUARY 13, 2023

## Yajaira Gomez

KEY SCRIPTURES

**Nehemiah 1:4-11**

### “When others are distressed, how can I pray?”

What do you do when you hear of a person in distress? How do you respond to seeing or reading about another nation that is at war? Can you identify with those that are suffering even if you are not going through the same things?

About 400 years before Jesus was born, God’s chosen people, were in a state of distress: their cultural practices had been threatened, the city of Jerusalem was governed by the Babylonians, and their place of worship (the Temple of Solomon) was destroyed. Yet one of the Jews, Nehemiah was in an important position: he was the chief treasurer, keeper of the Persian King’s signet ring, and he tasted the king’s food to make sure no one had poisoned it. Because of this position of influence, Nehemiah got to live in the king’s fortified palace. Although Nehemiah was about 1300km away from Jerusalem, and living a good life, Nehemiah still inquired of his fellow Israelites and land.

Sadly, the report was very bad. His brother let him know that the walls of the city were broken down and the city gates were burned with fire.

In the ancient world, a city without walls was a city vulnerable to its enemies. The people of Jerusalem were disarmed, having no defense nor protection. The condition of his people broke Nehemiah’s heart. He was very emotional (v. 3) weeping and mourning for many days, and not eating. Yet despite his feelings and Israel’s needy state, Nehemiah chose to respond with prayer to other peoples’ distress. He did not complain, remain defeated in his emotions, nor go find someone else to fix the problem. Instead, he became part of the solution and started with what he knew best to do – pray.

### **(5-7) Nehemiah prays to God in humility.**

- Nehemiah praises God by acknowledging WHO God is (v.5).
- Nehemiah shows dependency (v.6a).
- Nehemiah confesses sin (v.6b).
- Nehemiah identifies with the needy (v.7).
- Nehemiah persevered in prayer (1:1; 2:1) for four months before he did anything.

Nehemiah left his pain and anxiety with God. Getting up a city’s wall in 52 days was miraculous and it could only have been done because of the time prayed into the project. God renewed the team’s strength daily including Nehemiah’s (Isaiah 40:31).

### **(8-10) Nehemiah reminds God of His promises.**

- Nehemiah quoted scripture (Dt 30:1-5).
- Nehemiah pled the promises of God. If they turned back to God then he would give back their land. This was a conditional promise. The people had to return to God and keep His commandments (Dt 9:29).

**(11) Nehemiah prays with a heart ready to do something.**

- Nehemiah understood that he needed favour before the king. Although this king of Persia was very well esteemed before many including nations, Nehemiah understood that the king was just a human being, as God was more powerful. Therefore, Nehemiah asked

God to make him part of the solution. When you ask God to use you, expect that God will work through you.

Nehemiah is a great person to look up to when it comes to praying. This is not because he was very close to a King or government leaders, or because Nehemiah could make some decisions for the nation, nor because he led the rebuilding of a city's wall. Rather, Nehemiah illustrates that he is a person to look up to because he was close to God, and that same God worked through Nehemiah's influence to help those in distress.

## REFLECTIONS

---

- ▶ Acknowledge that you know WHO God is and tell Him that.
- ▶ Tell God you are dependent upon Him and His word.
- ▶ Confess your sins (anything that separates you from God).
- ▶ Identify with those that are suffering and pray for them (starting with your household, extended family, church, workplace, school, other cities, and countries).
- ▶ Present your dreams and goals to God asking for guidance.
- ▶ Nehemiah persevered in prayer as repairing the walls was no easy task. An unwallled city was always vulnerable as the people, their loved ones, and valuables could easily be stolen. Do you fear something or someone of value being taken from you? Pray for walls of faith to be rebuilt.
- ▶ You influence those around you (home, school, work, church). Pray how you can use your influence to help those who are broken and needy.

## PRAYER

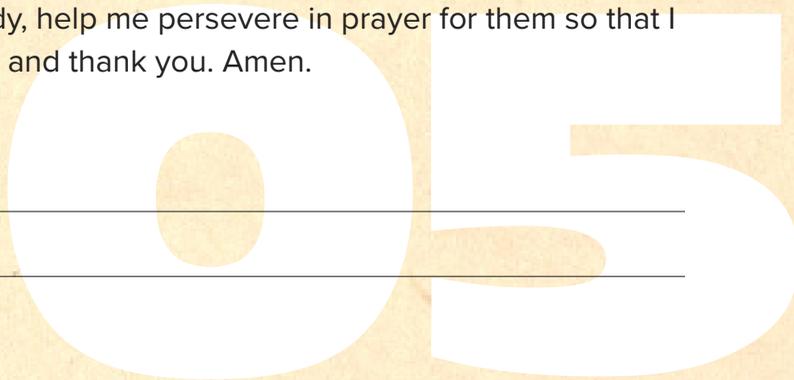
---

Lord, I come to You like Nehemiah acknowledging that I am nothing without You. You are the ONLY true God. Being dependent on You ALWAYS gives me peace. Would You forgive my sins and anything that separates me from You. As I identify with the needy, help me persevere in prayer for them so that I know how and if I can help them. In Jesus name I pray and thank you. Amen.

---



---





# 21 DAYS OF PRAYER

# 06

DAY 06

JANUARY 14, 2023

**Nico DeBruyne**

KEY SCRIPTURES

**Psalm 5**

## David's Cry

God is able to defend us from the lies which are spoken against us.

Whose voice are you going to listen to? David was faced with enemies on all sides. Throughout his life he was fought by both his people, and those he led against. He was barraged with insults, but he was able to continually find his value, and his protection in God.

From his battle with Goliath through to his continually struggle with his predecessor Saul, David faced incredible adversity, but he found a way to carry on through the hardest situations. David recognized that by God's great love, he was welcomed directly into his home. That God would make his way straight, and that God was going to protect him from the lies of those around him. He was protected and uplifted by God, even when it seemed that everything around him was closing in.

God wants to be your safe place. Today, like David did in Psalm 5 we are going to recognize that God hears our request, and lay our requests down and wait expectantly. We are going to set God in the position of protector again, and take time to intentionally trust what He says is true instead of listening to the voices of the world around us.

When we pray we have an amazing opportunity to come into His presence, to rest in His strength, and to hear truth. David was surrounded by enemies and lies, but he knew that when he stepped into the presence of God in prayer, he was covered. That God's truth is greater than the lies of the world, and that God would be his shield.

Today we will take some time to take refuge in God's strength. To recognize that God is our great defender. That God hates the things which come against us, and that he actually desires to keep us anchored in his great love for us. That his great love brings us security, and makes our path straight.



# **IN-PERSON EXPERIENCE**

**Join us In-Person**  
**Central Community Church**  
**9am or 11am**  
**680 York Rd. NOTL**

# **ONLINE EXPERIENCE**

**Join us at home**  
**9am or 11am**  
**[centralcc.ca/watch](http://centralcc.ca/watch)**  
**Facebook, YouTube**





# 21 DAYS OF PRAYER

# 08

DAY 08

JANUARY 16, 2023

## Michael Piett

KEY SCRIPTURES

Daniel 9:2–6

### Daniel's Prayer for His people

What difference can I make?

We often ask the question what difference can I make? Let's face it, if the whole country is heading in one direction, what can I possibly do to change that? There is only one of me! Other times, we reason and rightfully so, it is not in my control. There is nothing in my power to change this. It is easier to give up before we start anything that may fail. And what if the issue has been that way for so long that no one would ever expect it to change. Why bother? What difference can I make.

Around 606 B.C., Daniel could have easily fallen into that trap. Daniel was from Jerusalem and it was besieged by the king of Babylon who destroyed it. Some people that were captive were led back to Babylon approximately 2,700 km away to serve in the king's court. Imagine having your homeland ruined and forced to live in a foreign land where not only you were an outsider, but in reality a slave with no future. What difference could he make?

<sup>2</sup>In the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the Lord given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years. <sup>3</sup>So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes. <sup>4</sup>I prayed to the Lord my God and confessed: "Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and keep his commandments, <sup>5</sup>we have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws. <sup>6</sup>We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes and our ancestors, and to all the people of the land. (Daniel 9:2-6 NIV)

Daniel chose to seek God and pray on behalf of his country.





# 21 DAYS OF PRAYER

# 09

DAY 09

JANUARY 17, 2023

## Mario Caracciolo

### KEY SCRIPTURES

Jonah 2:1-2 (NLT)

Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from inside the fish. <sup>2</sup>He said, “I cried out to the LORD in my great trouble, and he answered me. I called to you from the land of the dead, and LORD, you heard me!  
Jonah 2:1-2 (NLT)

The runaway prophet’s desperate prayer reminds us of the God who loves to rescue. Jonah’s prayer is in fact a compilation of various Psalms, like the ones that King David penned when he experienced life-threatening situations and cried out to God for help.

This is the same God who is willing to save and rescue not only individuals but whole nations... just like the one Jonah had been sent to. However, Jonah had been unwilling to travel to Assyria, Israel’s sworn enemy. Later in chapter 4:2 we find out that the prophet knew that God’s posture has always been to show compassion towards anyone who repents... anyone... regardless of how Jonah felt towards his despised “Ninevites.”

Jonah was blinded by his own self-righteousness. As one notable pastor wrote, “Unless Jonah can see his own sin, and see himself as living wholly by the mercy of God, he will never understand how God can be merciful to evil people and still be just and faithful.” (Tim Keller, The Prodigal Prophet).

Jesus saw himself as a greater Jonah (Matthew 12:40-41). For three days and three nights he too was found in the “land of the dead.” Unlike the former prophet, Jesus was characterized by his obedience to God to the point of death. He willingly embodied God’s message of forgiveness on the cross so that his “enemies” could be reconciled back to God (Romans 5:10).

Jonah prayed (v. 6) “... I was imprisoned in the earth, whose gates lock shut forever. But you, O LORD my God, snatched me from the jaws of death!” Jesus would not remain buried in a tomb, but God would raise him up, verifying all he had said and done. Through Jesus we too can experience God’s love fully and extend it to those around us.





# 21 DAYS OF PRAYER

# 10

DAY 10

JANUARY 18, 2023

## Jeffrey Tuffour

### KEY SCRIPTURES

### Habakkuk 3

“Yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation” (Hab. 3:18, NIV). Reading this beautiful piece of poetry in Habakkuk, I can’t help but be challenged by the confidence of Habakkuk. I am astonished by his reliance on God to show up amidst difficult times. As I read, I am encouraged that the prophet acknowledges the reality of living in difficult times and yet finds a reason to trust in the Lord.

He calls on God to show up because he knows of circumstances where God has done so before. Right from the beginning, I notice an unflinching confidence by the prophet when he acknowledges the work of God among his people in the past, and he invites God to repeat his powerful work again. “Lord, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, Lord. Repeat them in our day, in our time make them known...” (Hab. 3: 2, NIV). The following question comes to mind after reading Habakkuk’s beautiful expression: do I have the patience to wait for God to show up? I find I am always tempted to do things alone and go my own way without trusting the Lord to work on my behalf.

In addition to this unflinching confidence, Habakkuk points out some unsavory things that he and God’s people have faced: invading armies, pestilence, plagues, famine, and even the mountains and hills which serve to protect them collapse. I find it interesting that some of these bad things happen after has God shown up. It shows me, as I take a deep breath, the journey of life is not always smooth or easy, even when God is with us. God shows up and defeats my “invading armies” which are prone to distract and overtake me.

I am astonished that lack does not prevent Habakkuk from worship. How often do we praise God when things are going well, and then only complain when things are not the way we think they should be? Habakkuk shows us how powerful worship is amid desperation. And so, he says “Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines...yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Saviour” (Hab. 3:18, NIV).





# 11

DAY 11

JANUARY 18, 2023

## Les Markham

KEY SCRIPTURES **Matthew 6: 9–13; Luke 11: 1–4**

As followers of Jesus, we know that we should pray. Most of us feel that we should pray more. Surveys reveal that regular, persistent, and prevailing prayer is the exception rather than the rule for most Christians.

Often, behind the lack of this spiritual discipline is a dearth of spiritual desire; so maybe our first prayer should be “Lord, teach us to pray” (Luke 11: 1). Notice that the disciples’ request was NOT “Teach us HOW to pray”. We need the performance of prayer more than just a pattern for prayer; but Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount does give us a model for prayer that is simple but sublime, concise but complete. We notice in Matthew 6:5 that Jesus says “WHEN you pray” not “IF you pray”. He assumes that we will pray, and then He gives us a pattern to follow. It’s fine to say this prayer by rote, but we should also think of the relationships and the principles the prayer teaches us.

“**Our**” | The first word of this model prayer reminds us that we are a spiritual family. God is not just “my” Father or “your” Father, He is “our” Father. Prayer should draw God’s family closer together. In fact family tensions or quarrels drain

prayer of its effectiveness. (See I Peter 3:7). There is power in agreement. (Matthew 18:19).

“**Father**” | Prayer begins, not with a focus on our needs, but on God’s Person. “Father” should remind us to respect God, but it also tells us that God loves and cares for us. We are not God’s slaves, although we delight in serving Him, we are His children, and we reverently can call Him “Daddy” (Romans 8:15).

“**In Heaven**” | We appreciate intimacy with God, but we don’t forget that He is Almighty God, that He is Lord, and His ways are higher than our ways (Isaiah 55:9).

“**Hallowed be your name**” | We approach God on the avenue of praise. We begin our prayer by extolling, and magnifying His holy name – the name above every other name. Worship is a primary part of prayer.

“**Your Kingdom come**” | After honouring God’s Person, we pray for God’s Program. We invite God to be the King of our lives, and we pray that our world will accept His rule. We also pray for the return of Jesus when His Kingship will be fully realized.

**“Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven”** | Heaven’s obedience, which is total and complete, is our standard. May God’s will be fulfilled in our world, in our Church, in our homes and in our lives (where we do have most control). Submission to a higher will and power, is a key component of prayer.

**“Give us daily bread”** | We ask for God’s provision. Bread represents our basic needs, and God provides on a daily basis.

**“Forgive us”** | It is God’s greatest desire, and it should be ours too, is that we keep a clean slate in our relationship to Him. Like the Psalmist, we pray for a “pure heart (Psalm 51:10), therefore, we repent and we confess our sins.

**“Lead us not - and deliver us”** | God is more concerned about our spiritual victory than anything else, and that is our concern too. We pray because we want to be overcomers who walk in victory, maintaining spiritual and moral purity; and for this, we realize that we need God’s Spirit and help.

## REFLECTIONS

---

- ▶ Do you truly believe that prayer makes a difference?
- ▶ What do you find to be your greatest obstacle that keeps you from praying?
- ▶ Has God answered some of your prayers? Take some time right now to thank Him.
- ▶ What part of "The Lord's Prayer" do you find to be the most challenging to believe and to practice?

## PRAYER

---

Our Father in heaven, may your name be honoured today. Please be the king of every area of my life so that your will for my life will be accomplished in and through me. Please provide the basic needs of me and my loved ones, and make us truly grateful. Forgive me for any wrongs that I have done, and give me a spirit of forgiveness towards anyone who has wronged me. Lord, please keep me on the right path, the path of righteousness, for your holy name's sake. Amen.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---





# 21 DAYS OF PRAYER

# 12

DAY 12

JANUARY 19, 2023

## Tammy Palumbo

KEY SCRIPTURES

Luke 18:9-14 (NIV)

### The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector

<sup>9</sup>To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: <sup>10</sup>“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. <sup>11</sup>The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. <sup>12</sup>I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’ <sup>13</sup>“But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’ <sup>14</sup>“I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

We find these verses in the book of Luke, the third Gospel, in between two other parables (teachings) from Jesus to the disciples. This parable or story about the Pharisee and the tax collector needs a bit of an introduction.

The Pharisee represents those who look down on others because they are self-righteous in their observance of Jewish religious practices, and those who consider the tax collector to be someone who represents the opposite of piety. Tax collectors, at that time, would have been considered to be the lowest in society along with anyone who did not meet the strict rules around conduct and practice. In particular, tax collectors made a living exploiting their fellow Jews on behalf of the Roman government. So, why is a tax collector at the temple? Think of people that attend church now: who would fit this description? Who do we think “has no business being here?” This is how they would have viewed the tax collector at the time.

When we focus on how the tax collector prays, instead of who he is in society however, we see a different picture: we find a man who is pleading for forgiveness from a heavenly Father he is too ashamed to look up towards. While the Pharisee brags to others that he is meeting all the requirements of the law, and sets himself apart from others because he is part of the religious elite, the tax collector shows us a different picture. The tax collector understands that he needs Jesus for forgiveness and that even living the life he is—one that others judge

to be not good enough, shameful or sinful—he can still go to his Father in prayer and receive that forgiveness. The tax collector knows that only the grace of God can forgive his sin: not any good works or religious observances.

And here comes the punch line: the tax collector, Jesus states, is the one who is justified—not the Pharisee. What does that mean to be “justified before God”? It means that his sins are forgiven. The Pharisee is not forgiven, for he has received his reward: people on earth view him as elite and special. The tax collector, however, will receive an even better reward in heaven: “For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted” (Luke 9:14).

So, what does this mean for us today? How do

we take the words of Jesus about a Pharisee and a tax collector to heart? We can start simply: when we pray, let us do it humbly. Do not boast of all the good things we have done, instead look to our heavenly Father with humility. Let’s recognize that no matter how many rules we follow on earth, it is through Jesus alone that we are justified, that our sins are forgiven and we are welcomed into the kingdom of heaven. Let’s remember that the one who was rejected (the tax collector) is now the one who is justified: because he has been welcomed into the kingdom by his relationship with Jesus and not by his relationship with other people. And when we are tempted to judge others—either on their public persona, or their job or their piety—that we remember Jesus’ words and the tax collector: “God, have mercy on me, a sinner.”

## REFLECTIONS

---

- ▶ In what areas of my life am I more like the Pharisee? Like the tax collector?
- ▶ In what areas of my life am I prideful? How can I embrace Jesus’ teaching of humility?
- ▶ In what ways can I draw near to God with repentance?

## PRAYER

---

Dear Lord, sometimes I am like the Pharisee, congratulating myself on living an upright and blameless life, forgetting that only You can justify me and that when I exalt myself, I will be humbled. Forgive me for when I’m like the Pharisee. Lord, sometimes I am like the tax collector, so ashamed of my sins that I cannot even look to the heavens in prayer. Remind me that those who humble themselves will receive your rewards in heaven. Lord, help me to always look to you, the pioneer and perfecter of my faith, to fix my eyes on Jesus and to welcome you into my everyday. I ask this in Jesus’ name, Amen.

---

---

---





# 21 DAYS OF PRAYER

# 13

DAY 13

JANUARY 20, 2023

## Jennifer Williams

KEY SCRIPTURES **Psalm 61; 2 Corinthians 4:8-9**

How do we get from being overwhelmed to singing praises, or from insecurity to full assurance? In Psalm 61 we are not sure who David was hiding from. Some say it was his son Absalom, which may have been the case. But whatever brought him to that place, David knew that he was in trouble and recognized the need to actively seek for God to respond.

What is the difference between a cry and a prayer? Martin Luther explains it this way: "The intellect makes the prayer, but the feeling makes the cry". The feeling is the impulse of desire: it is vague or unstructured, but the prayer is formed, directed and instructed. It shows the feeling what it should desire and how and from where.

David's insecurity had gotten the better of him. He felt overwhelmed by his situation. He found himself in a remote place, far from God, which seemed to him like the ends of the earth. He was at the end of human understanding and strength and resources. But even in this, David did not give up hope, he cried out to God for answers to his prayer.

David asked God to lead him to the towering rock of safety. He desired for God to lead him into his presence. He was familiar with God being his Rock, for he was always in a battle! He wanted God to lead him to a place higher than himself (David).

Ultimately, Jesus Christ is the Rock that is higher... David gathered past experiences of how God delivered him and used them as his argument for building confidence whilst in his remote existence. He built his trust on past experiences of God's faithfulness. (V3)

There are times in our lives when circumstances cause us to lose sight of God's promise to be with us, where like David we come to the end of our human strength. When I was walked off my job back in 2014, I realized how easy it was for life as I knew it to fall apart. Being single with no family member close by, I knew that only God could help, so I cried out to him.

Psalm 27:4-6 became my cry, and it is still my cry today! God has a secret place, and we can have full assurance that he offers maximum security in our times of despair. My prayer was not about another job but finding the Rock!

My friends became afraid for me. They believed I was in shock. They encouraged me to sell my home before things got worse, but I waited on God as he miraculously provided for me. I realized the opportunity in that season to reposition my life, and as I continued to pray God made a way for me to relocate to St. Catharines. I have experienced many difficult situations during the last eight years or so, but God had promised to hide me in times of trouble. (Psalm 27:5)

Prayer changes things, it changes you and me. It is a wise decision when we choose to operate in life under God's divine covering. For to those who fear his name have been given an inheritance. David remembered that God had promised him a Royal dynasty. A generation-to-generation kind of blessing that would last forever.

I don't know where you are crying from right now, but there is no place unsuitable for prayer. "Earth has no sorrow that heaven cannot heal". (Thomas Moore)

- You may be pressed on every side, but you will not be crushed,
- perplexed (unsure of finding a way out) but there is no need for despair,
- hunted down but God will not abandon or desert you to stand alone,
- you may get knocked down, but you will not be destroyed.

It is time to pray, the times we are living in demand it. Prayer will strengthen our resolve and energize our hearts. It helps in developing our relationship with God. The benefits of prayer for the believer are endless, and Jesus himself tells us to always pray and never give up.

## REFLECTIONS

---

- ▶ Why is it important to remember and testify of God's goodness towards you?
- ▶ 2023 promises to be a challenging year for many if not all;  
What can you take from Psalm 61 that will help you when trouble comes?
- ▶ Has your prayer life been challenged by David's example in the Psalm? How?

## PRAYER

---

Father God, thank you for your word and the assurance that we can cry out to you in times of trouble. May we take you at your word that you will keep us in perfect peace. Give us the confidence to trust you fully with our lives. Help us to bring hope and light to those who do not know you, that they too will experience your love. Thank you Lord and we ask this in Jesus name. Amen!

---

---

---

---



# IN-PERSON EXPERIENCE

Join us In-Person  
Central Community Church  
9am or 11am  
680 York Rd. NOTL

# ONLINE EXPERIENCE

Join us at home  
9am or 11am  
[centralcc.ca/watch](http://centralcc.ca/watch)  
Facebook, YouTube





# 15

DAY 15

JANUARY 23, 2023

## Jonathan Collins

KEY SCRIPTURES

John 17: 1-19

Have you ever been in a place where you are scared or fearful of the journey ahead? Could be a great journey, a wonderful journey. Like with a lot of things in life there may be challenges that are hard or may even feel impossible. For me I have faced a lot of learning challenges. I was told at a young age that I had a lot of learning challenges. I was told I would not be successful educationally, that I would be lucky to finish high school at all. I also struggled with a lot of social challenges. Being told at a young age that you are different and that you are not going to succeed, makes life at times seem impossible.

The prayer in John 17: 1-19 happens after the Last Supper and before Jesus is arrested. Jesus knew what was coming before Him, while the disciples did not yet have a full understanding. Jesus did what was commonly done in Judaism by a leader or a prophet at that time. He had taught and left his last words with the disciples (John 16). This message would usually end with a public prayer. That is what today's passage is.

To me this prayer is fascinating because it is the longest and most intimate recorded prayer

by Jesus. This is a relational prayer between Jesus, the Father, which included his disciples. In relational terms we get a summary of why Jesus came, what work He had done, and what was yet to come. Which included Jesus going to the Father and the disciples being left on earth. This prayer can seem very theological and it is. But I also want you to see this prayer as a Son talking to his Father, with his friends.

But I do ask myself why this prayer is important now, and how do I apply this to my prayer life? This is a prayer that gives us the truth and tools about overcoming challenges. Jesus is the one whom we look too and sets our example. Because of what He did we can approach the Father and talk to Him freely.

With our faith in Jesus Christ, we have the power to overcome any obstacle even death. We can have hope both that Jesus forgives our past, works on us during the present and gives us our eternal future. So, no matter what happens in our walk, or in our daily lives, we have a God that will help us to overcome anything. The point is we need not be afraid to approach God to ask for help. Jesus also asked for both protection and unity for the disciples. I believe this is an example that we should do as

we serve and walk with God. We should ask for protection from the Evil one.

We should not always pray alone. We should not only pray for each other but with each other. Come and get prayer up front after the service. Pray for each other in your small group. That is one of the purposes of a small group, to support one another. Jesus gave us His word to help us along in our journey. It gives us God's perspective as we journey in this sinful world. When we pray and read God's word

consistently, it is like a pair of glasses that give us the eyes and perspective of Jesus. Which gives us joy, while having the ability to draw closer to the Father. No matter what situation we are in. We are God's children, and through Jesus we have the ability to overcome as Jesus did.

As you pray, I want you to understand how important you are as God's child and the unlimited resources you have through the Holy Spirit because of what Jesus did. You have the ability to overcome so many challenges.

## REFLECTIONS

---

- ▶ Pray and ask God if there are any challenges you are not aware of? Or one that He wants to help you face?
- ▶ Ask for wisdom on how to overcome this challenge? What does overcoming look like to you?
- ▶ What is your first step in overcoming?

## PRAYER

---

Father in heaven, you are the almighty, all powerful God. We are so grateful that you sent your son Jesus so that we could approach you freely like a child coming to a parent, and be in Your presence. There are so many challenges that we need to overcome. We cannot do this without you Lord Jesus. Please give us the wisdom and power that we need to overcome our challenges to draw closer to you and love the world as you would. We ask this through Jesus. Amen!

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---





# 16

DAY 16

JANUARY 24, 2023

## Michael Piett

### KEY SCRIPTURES

John 17:20-26

People have been searching deep into the universe, listening for a message for many years. In fact, almost 60 years ago in 1963 they build the Arecibo Observatory in Puerto Rico at a cost of 9.3 million dollars. The purpose was to listen and observe the farthest possible distance into the universe attempting to hear if anyone or anything was out there trying to send us a message. Is something out there? And if there is, what are they trying to tell us? What is the message?

Spoiler alert! We could have saved them a tonne of money and resources by purchasing a Bible for them. The creator of this universe has come to this earth incarnate, fully human and fully God nearly 2,000 years ago to deliver us that message! This message was recorded from Jesus' prayer found in John 17:20-26 where he actually prays for those who will believe in Him in the future.

What is fascinating about this message is that it was sent to us and it originated even before the creation of this earth. Talk about going deep into space, when at that time, Jesus prayed for those who would someday believe in Him, He was referring to you and me.

What is the key to this message sent to us from the creator of the universe? Jesus talks about the importance for us to experience His glory so that we can be one, just like He is one with His Father in Heaven. One with Christ in us and one with each other, unity experienced like the trinity between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit built on His love for us.

We don't need all that costly technology to hear the message. God allows the message to live in our hearts to allow us to reflect His image to others.

# REFLECTIONS

---

- ▶ Not only did Jesus ‘hand deliver’ this message in person, He paid the price for us to be able to experience it.
  - Take some time to think and reflect about the cost Christ paid for us.
- ▶ God’s relationship with His Son is based on love. Love motivated Christ to die for us.
  - Thank God for His unconditional love for you.
- ▶ What does complete unity look like for all believers?
  - Ask the Lord to search your heart to see if there is anything that needs to be dealt with in your relationship with another believer.
    - ◊ Forgiveness, difference of opinion, hardness of heart.
- ▶ Jesus knew that how others see us interact as believers would have a direct impact on their view of God.
  - Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal anything that needs to be confessed and healed/restored for His glory.
  - Ask for God’s help to be aware of our actions and implications to others.
  - Invite the Holy Spirit to equip you with what is needed in each situation.
    - ◊ Love, patience, kindness, joy, peace, self-control.

# PRAYER

---

Father God, thank you for sending us your Son, Jesus so that we may experience becoming a part of your family. Help us to love one another as you have loved us. Keep us unified in your Spirit that we may reflect to others the grace that we have received. Amen.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



# 17

DAY 17

JANUARY 25, 2023

## Jeffrey Tuffour

KEY SCRIPTURES

Acts 4:23-31

Peter and John, having just been released from prison for preaching about Christ, gather the disciples together to pray. Opposition to the good news lends itself to prayer. Opposition to making Jesus known lends itself to encouragement from and for the community. As I was reading the passage in Acts, I couldn't help but think of the call to go and make disciples. This call begins to work itself out as the community of faith extends themselves outside the boundaries of a physical space. This is not easy to do, but we are called to it. "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." (Matthew 28:19, NIV).

The author of Acts paints for us a picture of the power of praying together as a group. God responds to them by shaking the place where

they were meeting. He filled them with the Holy Spirit, who gives them the boldness to continue with their witness. God hears us when we pray, as he continues to build his church. The prayers of the community for those suffering because of the gospel is powerful. In their prayers, they ask for signs and wonders to be seen as a product of their witness in Jesus' name.

I find myself forgetting to pray for the persecuted until I am reminded. Much like John and Peter gathered the believers to pray, I am challenged to gather us to pray for the persecuted church. The persecuted church are members of the church facing threat to their existence. They are currently found all over the world. I have this confidence that God will continue to protect them. I am reminded "Princes, kings, and other rulers of the world have used all their strength and cunning against the Church, yet it continues to endure and hold its own." (John Foxe).





# 21 DAYS OF PRAYER

# 18

DAY 18

JANUARY 26, 2023

## Janet Collins

KEY SCRIPTURES

Ephesians 1:15-23

### Prayer for Spiritual Wisdom

I love how Paul starts out encouraging the believers with these words: I have heard about your strong faith; I have heard about your love for God's people everywhere. I thank God for you and pray for you constantly. Imagine having someone speak these words to you. How encouraging to hear you are living out your faith in such a way that people notice and lift you up in prayer constantly.

In today's passage Paul prays 3 things for the believers:

#### 1. Spiritual Wisdom and Insight

Paul prays for spiritual wisdom and insight so that the people will grow in their knowledge of God. Truly getting to know someone means spending time with them. It means investing in a two-way relationship. Sharing yourself, being real, but also listening, asking questions, and letting the other person be real. There are no short cuts to getting to know someone, it takes time and investment. There is a big difference between knowing someone and knowing about someone. God wants us to know him.

#### 2. A Heart Flooded with Light

Paul prays that our hearts would be flooded with light. Light brings clarity. It exposes things that are dark and confusing, it enables us to truly see what is real. With this light comes confident hope. We start to clearly see His hand at work in our lives and trust him. We see what He has done in our lives in the past and are confident that He will walk with us through everything in the future - good and bad. We can trust Him.

#### 3. An Understanding of God's Power

Paul prays that we will understand the incredible greatness of God's power. We can so easily get discouraged and feel like things are impossible. However, if we truly have an understanding of God's power, we realize that this same power that raised Christ from the dead is available to us. This is the power that changes us, enables us to love others, and helps us overcome difficulties in our life. It is almost impossible for us to comprehend this type of power, but the more we lean into God, surrender our challenges to Him, the more we experience it. The more we experience it, the more we walk in it with confidence.





# 21 DAYS OF PRAYER

# 19

DAY 19

JANUARY 27, 2023

## Jesse Kataha

KEY SCRIPTURES

**Ephesians 3:16-20**

### Strengthening Your “Inner Being”

In Paul’s writing to the church in Ephesus, he brings remembrance of God’s immeasurable love for us. He reminds us that, according to the riches of God’s glory, we are strengthened in power, grounded in love, and united with the saints to comprehend God’s fullness. It is through this process of God’s work in our lives, we anticipate that He will do “far more abundantly than all that we ask or think”.

You’ll notice that “strength” and “power” are mentioned a few times in Paul’s writings, but what does it mean to be spiritually strong? Why does God care so much about spiritual growth? And how do you strengthen something that you can’t see?

It feels like in today’s day and age, everyone is talking about strengthening your “inner-self”. If you walk into any bookstore right now, you’ll find hundreds of self-help books that are designed to “make you a better version of yourself”. Is this what Paul is talking about?

Well, in a way yes and no... “yes” in the sense that we become better versions of ourselves, but “no” because it’s not done in our own strength. Instead, spiritual maturity requires us to humbly recognize the sovereignty of God in our lives. It makes us a better version of ourselves by making us more like Jesus.

You might ask, well what does that look like? Do I need to sit at the front of the church on a Sunday morning or memorize a certain number of scriptures? Well, the truth is that spiritual maturity does take intentionality, but the importance is to remember why God cares about the state of our spirit. Often, we can get so overwhelmed by the act of spiritual growth that we miss out on God’s heart for spiritual growth.

God wants us to be spiritually strong in Him so that we can understand His love for us better. Although the state of our growth doesn’t determine God’s love for us, God’s desire is that we’d grow in relationship with Him each day by spending time with Him (studying His word, conversing in prayer, getting planted in a church community, etc.) When we grow in relationship with God, we are purposefully positioned to receive from Him beyond our capacity, better

equipped to face difficult days ahead, and prepared to represent His love to those we come in contact with. Spiritual growth depends on our willingness to receive God's work in our lives.

When we are strengthened in power, grounded in love, and united with the saints, God works the impossible in and through our lives. We may not always have the answers to life's toughest questions, but we have the faith to believe that God is good at the end of the day and that His will is greater than our own. What we ask for gets replaced by God's desires and how we think gets corrected by his truth.

- Spiritual maturity does not make God love us more, it simply helps us understand His love better.
- Spiritual maturity encourages us to take ownership of our relationship with Christ.
- Spiritual maturity increases our faith to receive far more abundantly than we can ask or think.
- Spiritual maturity strengthens us to resist temptation in the days ahead.
- Spiritual maturity equips us to be representatives of His love.

## REFLECTIONS

---

- ▶ Why is my spiritual growth important?
- ▶ What are some steps I can take this year to grow in my walk with Christ?
- ▶ Is there someone who can partner with me in my spiritual growth?

## PRAYER

---

Dear God,

Thank you for your unconditional love and for your strength that works in us. You have made yourself accessible through the power of your Holy Spirit and have drawn us closer to your Son Jesus. Give us the hunger to grow daily in your word and the conviction to turn away from our self-absorbed desires. May we mature in you daily, by inclining our ear to your heart and obeying your truth. Strengthen our inner being to step out in faith and to be sensitive to your voice when you call.

In Jesus name, Amen.

---

---

---

---

---



# 21 DAYS OF PRAYER

# 20

DAY 20

JANUARY 28, 2023

## Bill Markham

KEY SCRIPTURES

Colossians 4:2-6

### Be Alert!

It's very easy to become overwhelmed when faced with all the tragedy we experience in our world. This can lead to despair, as we feel hopeless in the face of a brokenness, angry at the injustice we see, and paralyzed by fear. In response, some of us express indignation without the ability or desire to be a part of the solution. Others of us create escape mechanisms so that we don't have to think about, or deal with, the pain we see all around us.

But the Bible offers another option! In Colossians 4:2-6 we read, "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. Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone."

Paul reminds us to be "watchful" and "thankful" in prayer.

What does this mean? The word "watchful" in the Greek means, "to stay awake, to be alert, to be vigilant." It's an image of a soldier who's standing guard on the watch tower, looking earnestly for any threat, so that if one reveals itself, he can sound the alarm.

The second word, "thankful" is more than just an expression of gratitude. It is a response to God's amazing grace. It's a deep understanding that in a world filled with trouble, God has given the solution: His name is Jesus.

So, when we pray, it's our way of allowing God to speak His truth into our situation, so that we know the best way to respond!

That soldier standing guard on the tower does not blindly shoot arrows at the enemy as it approaches, rather, he alerts the king and obediently follows the strategy that is subsequently laid out. And the soldier doesn't need to panic or stress, because he knows that the king has all the resources necessary to defend the city walls.

So, when we pray today, let's remember these two powerful realities:

- Even when we face the darkness, we can do so with confidence, because God is with us.
- God is always good - and He is in control

## **REFLECTIONS**

---

▶ What area of your life needs attention right now?

Have you truly acknowledged it, taken responsibility for it, and surrendered it to God?

▶ What issue/situation in the world is alarming to you right now?

Take a moment to pray for God's power and will to be revealed into that situation.

▶ What specific area do you feel you have been called to sound the alarm on?

Pray for God's wisdom and courage to know what to do about that.

## **PRAYER**

---

God, I am choosing today to trust you with everything in my life, and in this world, that gives me alarm. I know that I do not have the ability, on my own, to fix or change it. So, today, I am trusting in your wisdom to show me what I should and should not do. I am asking for your courage to do what you are asking of me. I am praying for your peace to trust you with everything else.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

20



ENCOUNTER  
○○○○ *NIGHT*

SUNDAY  
JANUARY 29  
6PM

21

# 21 DAYS OF PRAYER