

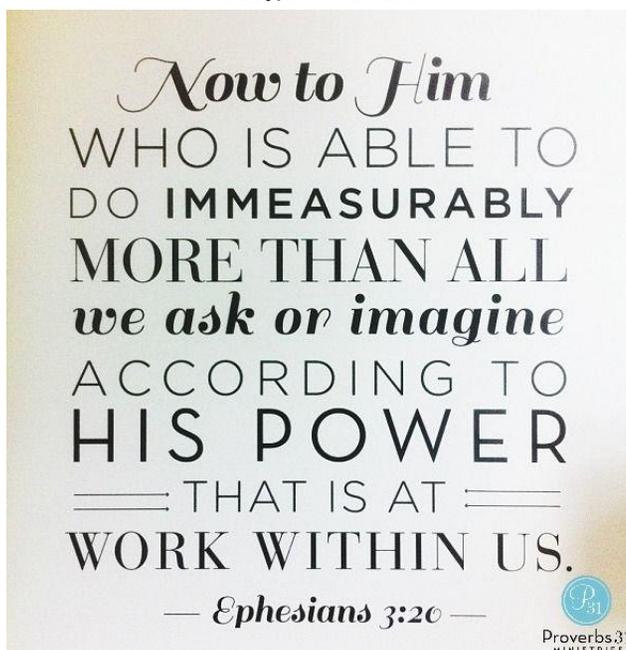
A 40 Day Call to Pray

Encouragement & help in prayer

The Chicago International E. Free
Church
March 6 – April 20

(Lent – with Sunday rest)

Theme Verse –



Pastor Martin Stidham stidmart@outlook.com

Welcome to the 11th edition of our Lent devotional! This is an attempt to have us as a church family to be having Biblical input during each day of Lent and especially that we might join together in daily prayer for one another and the workers we support. We will not count Sundays as part of the 40 days – they are days of celebration. Read each verse/passage of Scripture prayerfully and make it a matter of prayer to God. If you don't know the suggested song you might be able to listen to it on www.youtube.com. Another great resource is: <http://www.lifewayworship.com/findAndBuy/alpha?searchAlpha=A> The electronic version has a HYPERLINK you can click on. Or you can make up your own melody or sing something entirely different. You can also just ponder the words. This guide is meant to be a **HELP** in seeking the Lord during the 40 days **not** something to constrain you in your seeking Him. If you are already having a regular devotional time with the Lord, then you can skip to the prayer requests. The main task in the 40 days is to spend time in prayer seeking God. Perhaps this guide will help you but make your aim to have intimate time with the Lord. Lent has been a time in the regular calendar of the church (in history) to renew devotion, seek the Lord in a more focused way, and to prepare our hearts for Good Friday & Resurrection Sunday. You **MAY** want to make a few special commitments during the 40 days and see what God does in your life as you seek Him.

During a 40 Day Call to Maturity, I commit myself, with the help of the Holy Spirit to:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

These may be things from which you will fast (for example – I commit to **FASTING** every Thursday or fasting lunch and dinner on Monday – or I will abstain from watching TV/surfing the internet on Mondays and Fridays during the 40 days and spend that time in prayer or Bible study) or **THINGS THAT YOU ARE COMMITTED TO DO** (I commit to go through this guide each day during the 40 days – or I commit to getting up each day at ____ a.m. so that I can spend 15 minutes in prayer). You can include some personal discipline areas such as exercise and diet if you want. If you miss a day or fail to keep something you committed to doing, just start up again the next day! We want to **ENJOY** this time of focusing on growing in prayer with Jesus **not** be self-condemned during it. It is important, however, to **ASK THE HOLY SPIRIT'S HELP** in keeping your commitments because Satan will not be pleased as we seek to draw near to God. (James 4:7-10). A great promise for seeking the Lord: Isaiah 66:2 **But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.**

May the Lord of life bless you abundantly over these 40 days of seeking Him afresh!!

Day 0 – before March 6

This 40-day guide will NOT be an exhaustive, systematic, or carefully ordered instruction on prayer but rather short encouragements to hopefully inspire us in/for prayer. I will draw from many sources to seek to bring insight, focus, and inspiration but we want to mainly hear what God's word says about this all-important subject. I am NOT an expert in prayer at all but, since I want to grow in my seeking of the Lord in prayer, I thought having a 40-day focus on it might help us all in some small way. Be forewarned, **GOD ANSWERS**

PRAYER! As a matter of fact, He **DELIGHTS** to do so! Jesus said in John 15:7-8 *“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.”* (NAS) Some of the fruit we bear as Jesus' disciples is in asking of the Father (as we abide in Jesus & His word abides in us) and then seeing Him answer! How simple is that?!! He does not always answer, of course, just as we desire but rather according to His perfect wisdom, love, knowledge, and plan. However, IF you give yourself, even for a short time each day, to seeking Him in prayer, you may experience some of those great and mighty things that you didn't anticipate, even beyond what you can ask or imagine!

Have faith! Believe God! Spend time before His throne!

Trust His promises! Know that you have access right into His almighty, holy presence because of the blood of Jesus!! Know that the Holy Spirit intercedes for us and through us!

Write down some of the things that are on your heart as we enter this Lent season for which you would like to see God answer. They may be for another person, for some growth in your life (like overcoming a troubling habit/sin), large things or small things (like – “Lord, teach me to draw near to you in prayer.”)

Review the list often during Lent.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Now begin to think on God's greatness, power, & ability to answer.

Thank Him for His willingness to open His throne room for you!

Remind yourself that you do NOT earn your way in because you are trying very hard but because of His grace in Christ Jesus. Praise Him that His power is at work IN you!

The Message *God can do anything, you know—far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams! He does it not by pushing us around but by working within us, his Spirit deeply and gently within us. Glory to God in the church! Glory to God in the Messiah, in Jesus! Glory down all the generations! Glory through all millennia! Oh, yes!*

Day 1 Wed. March 6 Eph. 3:14-16 Strengthened with Power through Prayer

For this reason I kneel before the Father...¹⁶ I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being.

Here's a great prayer request that Paul prayed, and we can pray during our 40-days & beyond. As we seek the Father in prayer, we know that it is out of His GLORIOUS RICHES that He answers us. He NEVER runs short or out, nor is He ever too busy to answer us. He has unlimited and glorious resources of which He is willing to use as we pray to Him. Need strength (word means: *to fortify, to brace, to invigorate*)? Ask Him! Short on spiritual power to live for His glory or just make it through the day? Ask Him! We need such power for self-control, patience with people, contentment with what God has already given us, the ability to love even difficult people! His Holy Spirit is already at work...WITHIN us! Hallelujah!! His source of blessing, power, and presence is dwelling in us already and we are His temple. Think of the day that the Tabernacle in the wilderness or the Jerusalem Temple was first invested with God's presence. Those nearby had to move back because of the awesome presence of God. This same Spirit of God inhabits US! Ask today to be empowered afresh by the Holy Spirit of God as you enter this Lent season. Anticipate & “see” God reaching into His inexhaustible riches and strengthening you for the days ahead. Think through the verses as you kneel before the Father and then...ASK! Ask for someone else as well.

Quote: Phillip Yancey writes about “Showing Up” in prayer each day: “I learned early on never to ask myself, “Do you feel like running today?” I just do it. Why? I can think of many reasons. Regular exercise allows me to eat what I want without worrying about weight gain. It does long-term good for my heart and lungs. It allows me to do other activities, such as skiing and mountain climbing. All these benefits represent a kind of “deferred gratification.” As with physical exercise, much of the benefit of prayer comes as a result of consistency, the simple act of showing up. I approach prayer the same way. Many days I would be hard-pressed to describe a direct benefit. I keep on, though, whether it feels like I am profiting or not. I show up in hopes of getting to know God better, and perhaps hearing from God in ways accessible only through quiet and solitude. For years I resisted a regular routine of prayer, believing that communication with God should be spontaneous and free. As a result, I prayed infrequently and with little satisfaction. Eventually I learned that spontaneity often flows from discipline. Likewise, athletes and musicians never become great without regular practice. I found that I needed the discipline of regularity to make possible those exceptional times of free communication with God. My prayers seem like a kind of rehearsal. I go over basic notes (the Lord's Prayer), practice familiar pieces (the Psalms), and try out a few new tunes. Mainly, I show up. Yancey, Philip; Yancey, Philip. Grace Notes: Daily Readings with Philip Yancey (Kindle Locations 618-619). Zondervan. Kindle Edition. What is the best time of day for you to “show up” for prayer?

CIEFC Prayer: Pray for our church family that we will all grow in this area of prayer during Lent. Pray that some will be able to encourage others as they share answers to prayer and experiences of encountering the Lord in prayer.

SONG: He is Able

He is able, more than able, to accomplish what concerns me today.

He is able, more than able, to handle anything that comes my way.

He is able, more than able, to do much more than I could ever dream.

He is able, more than able, To make me what He wants me to be.

©Copyright 1988 and this arr. Copyright 1990 by Maranatha! Music Words and Music by Rory Noland and Greg Ferguson Used by permission CCL# 377598

Day 2 Thur. Mar. 7 Eph. 3:17-18 Christ at home in our hearts

...so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.

Paul continues on praying for the greatest of treasures that we need but usually do not ask for. We know that Christ enters our lives 'through/by faith' but the verb "DWEELL" = to live in, settle down. It indicates a permanent habitation not just stopping in for a short visit. Paul is praying that our hearts would be places in which Christ would really "BE AT HOME" – that we would be always aware of His abiding presence so that we would ever keep enthroning Him as Lord of our lives. Our trouble is that as the year goes by, we allow so many other things to grab our attention – absorb us, take priority-things like worries, issues, troubles, desires so that we lose our focus on Christ. But, BY FAITH we must keep going back to Him and yielding ourselves to Him – focusing on Him, remembering His promised presence. It is CHRIST IN YOU, the hope of Glory! (Col. 1:27) Pray that you would realize afresh, by faith, the presence of Christ and you would be strengthened with the power of this presence. Pray this daily and see what God might do in your life. Ask Him if there is anything that is keeping Him from feeling at home in your life or anything that would block you from a fresh experience of His presence. Spend time listening to His answer and then write down what He shows you:

QUOTE: "The root of all prayer, and indeed all life itself, is desire for God. All things are made to desire God." Roberta Bondi

CIEFC Prayer – The Webbs have been living abroad for many years but are now back in our area since they cannot return to Egypt. Pray that they would all 'be at home' here as they seek to rest in the place the Lord has them for now. Mary has applied for a graduate counseling program that only admits about ten percent of those who apply. Pray for an open door. Pray for Lukas & Jennah that they'd enjoy their new surroundings. Pray for Brendan as he works at Lawndale as a doctor. Finally, they want to reach out to the M's in their area. Pray for some good connections.

Hymn: Jesus, the very thought of Thee

Jesus, the very thought of Thee; With sweetness fills my breast;
But sweeter far Thy face to see, And in Thy presence rest.
2. Nor voice can sing, nor heart can frame, Nor can the memory find
A sweeter sound than Thy blest name, O Savior of mankind!
3. O hope of every contrite heart, O joy of all the meek,
To those who fall, how kind Thou art! How good to those who seek!
4. But what to those who find? Ah, this, Nor tongue nor pen can show; The
love of Jesus, what it is, None but His loved ones know.
5. Abide with us, and let Thy light Shine, Lord, on every heart;
Dispel the darkness of our night; And joy to all impart.
6. Jesus, may all confess Thy name, Thy wondrous love adore,
And, seeking Thee, themselves inflame, To seek Thee more and more.

Day 3 Friday Mar. 8 Eph. 3:17b-18 To more fully experience His love

And I pray that you, having been rooted and grounded in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ...

Paul uses two perfect, passive participles – Perfect = it has been done and the results are lasting, PASSIVE = it has been done to us not by us. One has to do with things that grow – HAVE BEEN ROOTED – Picture a large tree with an extensive root system – we have been rooted once and for all in God's love. GROUNDED – this is more of a building term having to do with a foundation that has been established once and for all. A strong building that cannot be moved. We HAVE BEEN rooted and grounded in God's love through Christ – because of this...Paul prays that they would have the ABILITY – BE FULLY ABLE to COMPREHEND – to mentally grasp/lay hold of that love. People who have not been rooted and grounded in God's love in Christ do NOT have this ability – they cannot comprehend the dimensions of God's love for us in Christ. But Paul prays that believers would more fully grasp that which cannot completely be known. He gives four dimensions: breadth, length, height, depth because he wants them to know that the extent of God's love for us in Christ is much more than we can wrap our minds around – but we need to try to wrap our minds around it! How do we do this? Through prayer – asking! No matter where you are in your Christian life, there's more of Christ's love to experience!! How much have you experienced? One can usually tell by how that person loves others. The more you experience of God's overwhelming, powerful love in Christ, the more difficult it is to contain it. John Stott: "Broad enough to encompass all of mankind (Jew & Gentile). Long enough to last for eternity. Deep enough to reach the worst sinner. High enough to exalt us to heaven." THE MESSAGE: *Reach out and experience the breadth! Test its length! Plumb the depths! Rise to the heights!*

Spend some time in quiet thinking about this great love in Christ that you have. Pray for the POWER to GRASP/comprehend it more and more.

QUOTE: Our problem is that we assume prayer is something to master the way we master algebra or auto mechanics. That puts us in the "on-top" position, where we are competent and in control. But when praying, we come "underneath," where we calmly and deliberately surrender control and become incompetent. "To pray," writes Emilie Griffin, "means to be willing to be naive." Richard Foster *Prayer* p. 12.

CIEFC Prayer: The above prayer in Eph. 3 tells us that this love of Christ is to be grasped "together with all the saints." We NEED each other to most fully grow in our comprehension of Christ's love. Pray that we will all grow together in seeking out the depths of His love and experience it among us!

HYMN: I Stand Amazed

I stand amazed in the presence, Of Jesus the Nazarene,
And wonder how He could love me, A sinner, condemned, unclean.

O how marvelous! O how wonderful! And my song shall ever be:
O how marvelous! O how wonderful! Is my Savior's love for me!

2. For me it was in the garden He prayed: "Not My will, but Thine."

He had no tears for His own griefs, But sweat drops of blood for mine.

3. He took my sins and my sorrows, He made them His very own;
He bore the burden to Calvary, And suffered and died alone.

Day 4 Sat. Mar. 9 Eph. 3:19 Love beyond knowledge

...and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

The challenge of this prayer is NOT just the knowledge of what God has done for us in Christ but to experience it – to go on exploring the breadth, length, height, & depth of it. DON'T STOP with just a small taste, it is MUCH deeper, higher, broader than whatever you have known so far – PRAY that you'll know & experience more and more and more and more of the riches of His grace of His kindness for us in Christ. Don't stop where you are or have been - go beyond! Be an explorer like Columbus who risked much believing there was more to discover! Do you believe that the Heavenly Father truly loves you with an everlasting love that has sure foundations and rooting in Christ? Are you convinced that this great love is for YOU? No, you did not earn this love by your effort, education, niceness, family of birth, knowledge, or any other means. "In love, ⁵ he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves." (Eph. 1:5-6 NIV) WOW!! This is the truth of the depths of God's love for us that we can KNOW! The result: "That you may be FILLED to the measure of ALL the FULLNESS of God!" God wants to fill us up with His presence, the knowledge and experience of His love in Christ, with the power of the Holy Spirit, and please know that He "gives the Spirit without measure" (John 3:34). "Keep on asking and it will be given to you!" (Matt. 7:7 a command).

QUOTE: "A praying man can never be very miserable, whatever his condition be, for he has the ear of God: The Spirit within to indict, a Friend in heaven to present, and God himself to receive his desires as a Father. It is a mercy to pray, even if I never received the mercy prayed." William Bridge

CIEFC Prayer: Think of a person or two in our church family and pray the above prayer for them. Thank the Lord for their life and ask that they'd have a deeper desire to experience this fullness of God. Who did you pray for?

Hymn: [Breathe on me Breath of God](#)

Breathe on me, Breath of God, fill me with life anew,
that I may love what thou dost love, and do what thou wouldst do.
2. Breathe on me, Breath of God, until my heart is pure,
until with thee I will one will, to do and to endure.
3. Breathe on me, Breath of God, till I am wholly thine,
till all this earthly part of me glows with thy fire divine.
4. Breathe on me, Breath of God, so shall I never die,
but live with thee the perfect life of thine eternity. for all eternity.

Sunday March 10

Sundays are days of rest, celebration, worship, & reflection. Look over the verses from the first four days and make any notes here as you reflect:

Pray again over the prayer requests you wrote down on day 0. Have you seen God at work in these? If so, how?

Spend some time in quiet seeking to listen to the Lord

Sing: [Love Divine all loves excelling](#) – Charles Wesley

(meaning: God's love excels/is far greater than all other loves)

Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heaven to earth come down;
Fix in us Thy humble dwelling; All Thy faithful mercies crown!
Jesus, Thou art all compassion,
Pure unbounded love Thou art;
Visit us with Thy salvation; Enter every trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe Thy loving Spirit,
Into every troubled breast!
Let us all in Thee inherit; Let us find Thy perfect rest.
Take away our bent to sinning; Alpha and Omega be;
End of faith, as its Beginning, Set our hearts at liberty.

Come, Almighty to deliver, Let us all Thy life receive;
Suddenly return and never, Never more Thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
Serve Thee as Thy hosts above,
Pray and praise Thee without ceasing,
Glory in Thy perfect love.

Finish, then, Thy new creation; Pure and spotless let us be.
Let us see Thy great salvation Perfectly restored in Thee;
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in heaven we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before Thee,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise.

Day 5 Mon. Mar. 11 Eph. 3:20 Asking & Imagining

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us,

This is our theme verse for the Lent guide. This is Paul's benediction to his prayer – how he wraps it up in a praise to God. Whatever we pray or ask, God is able to do WAYYYY beyond that. We are always to keep in mind just who we are asking – the same Almighty, Omnipotent, Gracious, Holy, and Magnificent One who created all things. His power, what is so far beyond our asking or imagination, is at work IN US! What does He want to accomplish in your life? The greatest work is our becoming like Jesus in all that we do and are – in our thoughts, attitudes, behavior, desires, and action. Try to imagine genuinely and purely loving people as Jesus does! Imagine His kindness and compassion for people flowing through you. Imagine God bringing people across your path like He did for Jesus so that they might come to know His great lovingkindness! A Zacchaeus (a greedy taxman), a Mary Magdalene (once demon-possessed), a woman at the well (rejected by 5 husbands and living with a 6th man), an impoverished woman with an incurable bleeding problem, or a Nicodemus (elder religious person with questions)! God's power is at work within us to overflow onto such lives! There are people in need of Christ all around us. Imagine being used of God as you pray, talk, smile, minister, witness, & touch others! Imagine His Spirit working through you to encourage, bring healing, touch deeply, lift depression, carry burdens, open eyes, or bring joy to brothers and sisters! Spend some time ASKING & IMAGINING before His throne. Thank Him that His power is at work within you. Ask Him to help you become much more aware of what He wants to do in and through you each day. Believe His word as to His ability to DO/WORK – nothing is too difficult for Him, not even you or me!! What is He saying to you?

QUOTE: John Stott "Our confidence is not in our love for Him, which is frail, fickle, and faltering, but in His love for us, which is steadfast, faithful, and persevering."

CIEFC Prayer: What might God want to do in and through CIEFC this year? He is able to do... Spend some time asking the Lord to show us, to lead us, and to empower us in doing His work beyond what we can ask or imagine.

Hymn: Fill Thou my life

Fill Thou my life, O Lord my God, In every part with praise,
That my whole being may proclaim Thy being and Thy ways.
2. Not for the lip of praise alone, Nor e'en the praising heart,
I ask, but for a life made up Of praise in every part:
3. Praise in the common things of life, Its goings out and in;
Praise in each duty and each deed, However small and mean.
4. Fill every part of me with praise; Let all my being speak
Of Thee and of Thy love, O Lord, Poor though I be and weak.
5. So shall no part of day or night From sacredness be free,
But all my life, in every step, Be fellowship with Thee.

Day 6 Tues. Mar. 12 Eph. 3:21 Glorifying in God

²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

The end of all prayer is this: that God would be glorified in us as the church through the name & person of Christ (as we represent Him) now and forevermore. This is a "worship prayer." "The focus of worship prayer is God and God's glory & light. The focus is not on our needs, though, after worship we often pray for our needs. The primary purpose is to glorify God and remember His promises. It involves praise, giving glory to God, and thanksgiving to God for what He has done. Worship prayer helps us reorient ourselves to love God." (p. 78 *A Guidebook to Prayer* by MaryKate Moss IVP)
Today, spend time in seeking to glorify and honor the Lord through:
*Praising His name for who He is (faithful, true, merciful...) keep going until nothing else comes to your mind and you let yourself be caught up in praising Him. If songs/hymns come to mind, sing them.
*Thanking Him or blessing Him for specific things He has done for you, in you, through you (Psalm 103:1-5 is a good example) – especially His work of salvation in Christ.
*Seeking to be quiet and at awe of Him in His presence when you can say no more.

QUOTE: "Let us thank God heartily as often as we pray that we have His Spirit in us to teach us to pray. Thanksgiving will draw our hearts out to God and keep us engaged with Him: it will take our attention from ourselves and give the Spirit room in our hearts." Andrew Murray

CIEFC Prayer: Pray that our times of worship on Sundays would be truly focused on exalting God, lifting up the name of Jesus, and led by the Holy Spirit. Pray that as we exalt Him, people will be drawn to Him.

HYMN: [Rejoice the Lord is King!](#) Listen to the link for an upbeat version!

Rejoice, the Lord is King! Your Lord and King adore;
Mortals give thanks and sing, and triumph evermore;
(chorus) **Lift up your heart, lift up your voice;**
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

2. Jesus, the Savior, reigns, The God of truth and love;
When He had purged our stains He took His seat above;
3. His kingdom cannot fail, He rules o'er earth and heaven,
The keys of death and hell are to our Jesus given;
4. He sits at God's right hand Till all His foes submit,
And bow to His command, And fall beneath His feet:
5. Rejoice in glorious hope! Jesus the Judge shall come,
And take His servants up to their eternal home

Day 7 Wed. Mar. 13 – Ps. 5:1-3 Prayer as Expression of need

Give ear to my words, O LORD, consider my sighing.

² *Listen to my cry for help, my King and my God, for to you I pray.* ³
In the morning, O LORD, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation.

We do not know of David's situation when he wrote these words, but he was in great need. The psalms use a lot of parallelism as in: Give ear/Consider – Listen to my cry/To You I pray. Words/sighing/cry Voice/requests. LORD/King/my God/You. So, there is similarity in the parallels of words but also great shades of meaning. Part of his request is just that God would hear him, listen to his cry. Often, especially when things are more desperate, we lack a sense of assurance that the LORD is listening to us and so when this is your feeling, go ahead and ask afresh – 'O LORD please hear me today!' We, of course, do have assurance as those who belong to Jesus that He does hear us (1 John 5:14-15) as we ask "according to His will." But, at the same time, we remember that we are approaching the King of the universe, God Almighty, Yahweh – the LORD. In Christ we both approach confidently (Eph. 3:12, Heb. 4:16) yet, at the same time, with reverential fear (Isa. 66:2; 1 Pet. 2:17). David uses words, sighs, cries, prayer, and his voice to express himself before God. All of this and much more constitutes prayer. It's perfectly fine to just sigh before Him, cry out loudly, weep in His presence, sing to Him, call out His name, or...just be silent. Try not to limit yourself to one style of prayer – EXPRESS your emotions/feelings. Lay out what is truly on your heart. David surely did this, but he also would lay his requests before the LORD (you can write them down and see yourself leaving them at the foot of His throne) in both surrender and expectation of God's answer. The last phrase is likely the one we do the least but can be most important: I "wait in expectation." More on waiting later but what are we expecting from our great King when we ask of Him?

QUOTE: "Yesterday God helped me, and today He'll do the same. How long will this continue? Forever—praise His name!" —Warren Wiersbe

CIEFC Request: Ask that we, as a church family, would be the kind of people who really do effectively seek God in prayer.

HYMN: [Prayer is the soul's sincere desire](#), Uttered or unexpressed

The motion of a hidden fire, That trembles in the breast

2. Prayer is the burden of a sigh, The falling of a tear

The upward glancing of an eye, When none but God is near

3. Prayer is the Christian's vital breath, The Christian's native air
His watchword at the gates of death, He enters heav'n with prayer

4. Prayer is the contrite sinner's voice, Returning from his ways
While angels in their songs rejoice, And cry, "Behold! He prays!"

5. Nor prayer is made on earth alone, The Holy Spirit pleads
And Jesus at the Father's throne, For sinners intercedes

6. O thou by whom we come to God, The Life, the Truth, the Way
The path of prayer Thyself hast trod, Lord, teach us how to pray

Day 8 Thurs. Mar. 14 Psalm 130:3-4 Prayer is waiting

I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in His word I put my hope. My soul waits for the Lord more than the watchmen wait for the morning, more than the watchmen wait for the morning.

In ancient times, a watchman's job was to: KEEP WATCH! Standing on the wall he would make sure that no enemies were creeping up and trying to scale the wall. Most of the time, although it was a very important job, it wasn't very exciting. What did he wait for? The MORNING! What could he do to make the morning come? Nothing! He could wish it was morning time, he can grit his teeth and try to make time pass more quickly but the truth is that the dawning of the sun was completely out of his control. There was a natural rhythm involved, instituted by the Creator at the beginning.

When we pray, we don't want to have to wait for God to answer. We want Him to respond, NOW! Psalm 130 reminds us that it is our job to wait on the LORD, not His job to respond to our instant call. Prayer reminds us that He is the Almighty, infinite, all-powerful, wise Ruler of all. He knows what He's doing even though we can't see it. What can you do as you wait? "*In His word I put my hope!*" Find His promises and instructions to hang on to while you wait. *The LORD is good, His lovingkindness is everlasting!* Tell the LORD that you are willing to wait upon Him because you are His servant. Tell Him that you know He is wise and good. *No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly* (Ps. 84:11). We do wait for Him to answer us but mostly we should be waiting on the LORD – like that watchman!

Spend some time reflecting on the scripture above and write down your thoughts:

Next time you're stuck in a long line or in highway traffic waiting: PRAY! Ask the Lord to teach you how to wait upon Him with anticipation and faith.

QUOTE: (Referring to the Savior's delay in responding to the request of the Syrophenician woman) It is said that "He answered not a word," but it is not said, He heard not a word. These two differ much. Christ often heareth when He doth not answer – His not answering is an answer. Samuel Rutherford

CIEFC Prayer – We have many who are waiting on the LORD to answer prayer concerning loved ones who do not know Him. Pray for some of these.

HYMN: [Take my life and let it be](#)

Take my life and let it be, Consecrated, Lord to Thee, Take my moments and my days, Let them flow in ceaseless praise (2x)

2. Take my hands and let them move, At the impulse of Your love,
Take my feet and let them be, Swift and beautiful for Thee (2x)

3. Take my will, and make it Thine, It shall be no longer mine;
Take my heart, it is Thine own, It shall be Thy royal throne (2x)

4. Take my love, my God, I pour at Thy feet its treasure store;
Take myself and I will be, Ever, only, all for Thee (2x)

Day 9 Friday Mar. 15 Ps. 27:14 More on Waiting

Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.

Waiting is hard! We wait on the Lord for many things: We wait on the Lord to answer prayer, to show us His purpose for our lives, to help us break free of troubling habits, to show us how to handle a situation, to guide us through times of difficulty, to...(you fill in your blank!)

But you might ask, if the Lord is God over all, why should we have to wait? Can't He just wave His hand and make whatever we want/need happen? Yes, He can but (a few reasons):

QUOTE: Wesley Duewel *Mighty Prevailing Prayer* p. 150-155 Writes:

1. Sometimes it takes time for separate parts of complex situations to fit together.
2. Sometimes it takes time for God to coordinate circumstances to bring pressure on a person until that one becomes willing to do what God wants him or her to do.
3. Sometimes demonic resistance delays God's answer until you and heaven prevail. (Daniel 10).
4. Sometimes it takes time for God to prune from your own life things that are hindering your prayer. You may have attitudes, activities, friendships, habits, possessions, spiritual idols, or other things that are hindering your prayer. Perhaps it is taking time for God to get you to the place where He is first in your life and prayer is first in your lifestyle.
5. Sometimes time is needed for the cumulative effect of a great amassing of prayer.
6. Sometimes the answer is delayed because Satan is entrenched. (Mark 9:29; Matt. 12:43-45; Luke 8:30).

Mostly, though we should wait FOR the LORD! We want Him to show up, to make His presence known, to speak to us. As we wait, the psalmist encourages us: **BE STRONG & TAKE HEART!** Spend some time in just being quiet before Him. Bow in humble adoration. Turn your attention to Him – so that your Hope in Him is renewed.

How did the LORD speak to you in what Dr. Duewel said?

CIEFC Prayer: #4 above is the one that has the most to do with us. Pray about this in your life and in our church family. Is anything hindering you or us? Write down what He shows you:

SONG: [In His time](#), in His time, He makes all things beautiful in His time. Lord, please show me every day, As you are teaching me your way, That you do just what you say, in Your time. In Your time, in Your time, Your make all things beautiful in Your time.

Lord, my life to you I bring, May each song I have to sing
Be to You a lovely thing, in Your time.

By Diane Ball 1978 Maranatha! Music Used by permission CCLI # 377598

Day 10 Sat. Mar. 16 praying the scripture Ps. 23:1

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.

One way to grow in prayer is to pray the Scripture. We'll begin with Psalm 23. David, as the author, was intimately familiar with the role of a shepherd in taking care of the sheep, providing for the sheep, protecting & guiding *his* sheep.

Shepherds knew their sheep, called them by name, and the sheep knew the shepherd's voice (John 10:27). David experienced this same kind of care from the LORD so this term was so dear to him. Spend some time today thinking of all the ways in which the LORD has been your shepherd in life. Maybe you have another metaphor/comparison that comes to your mind as you think about Yahweh. 'LORD, You are my ____!'

What did you put in the blank? Why is that idea of the LORD important to you?

IF Yahweh, the LORD Almighty, the King of the universe, the God of creation is your shepherd, THEN what He provides for you is custom designed for your personal needs because you are His sheep. Have you been "in want" lately? If so, for what? Maybe you have been looking in the wrong direction to get your needs met. There is a level of great satisfaction, peace, & contentment when we are truly experiencing the LORD as our shepherd. Now spend some time in prayer thanking the LORD, your shepherd, for all the ways in which He has been shepherding you. Write down some of them.

Now spend time in telling Him how you want to trust and follow Him as your shepherd. Confess before Him any ways in which you have been seeking to meet your 'wants' in a way that doesn't please or trust Him.

QUOTE: "He that cannot pray, let him go to sea, and there he will learn." John Trapp

CIEFC Prayer: Steve & Joan Eisenger – working with internationals in Indianapolis are shepherding many who do not know the LORD as their shepherd. Pray that they'd have wisdom as they witness & care for many from religious backgrounds but who have no personal relationship with Yahweh.

Song: [His sheep am I](#)

In God's green pastures, feeding By His cool waters lie, Soft in the evening walk my Lord and I. All the sheep of His pastures, Fare so wondrously fine. His sheep am I.

(chorus) *Waters cool, (In the valley) Pastures green, (On the mountain) In the evening (In the evening) walk my Lord and I.*

Dark the night, (In the valley) Rough the way, (On the mountain) Step by step (Step by step) My Lord and I.

2. Through the streets of the city, In the darkness of night, Far from the fold, He heard my lonely cry. Now I sit at His table In the palace of light; His sheep am I.

3. Yes, the Lord is my Shepherd, And no want shall I know
He'll guide and comfort me, Where'er I go On the mount, in the valley
By His hand, He shall lead. His sheep am I

Sunday March 17

Have you been having some good experiences in prayer (even a tiny bit)?

Have you been “showing up” each day?

Have you heard the voice of the Spirit call you to prayer?

Spend today prayerfully seeking to draw near to God as He promises to draw near to us (James 4:8).

Remember your prayer requests at the beginning!

SING: HYMN: SWEET HOUR OF PRAYER

Sweet hour of prayer! sweet hour of prayer!

That calls me from a world of care,

And bids me at my Father's throne

Make all my wants and wishes known.

In seasons of distress and grief, my soul has often found relief

And oft escaped the tempter's snare

by thy return, sweet hour of prayer!

2. Sweet hour of prayer! sweet hour of prayer!

The joys I feel, the bliss I share,

Of those whose anxious spirits burn

With strong desires for thy return!

With such I hasten to the place

Where God my Savior shows His face,

And gladly take my station there,

and wait for thee, sweet hour of prayer!

3. Sweet hour of prayer! sweet hour of prayer!

Thy wings shall my petition bear

To Him whose truth and faithfulness

Engage the waiting soul to bless.

And since He bids me seek His face,

Believe His Word and trust His grace,

I'll cast on Him my every care,

And wait for thee, sweet hour of prayer!

Day 11 Mon. Mar. 18 Quiet & Restful Prayer – Ps. 23:2

He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters,
Sheep need rest. Sheep are frightened to drink from running water, so they need a quiet, peaceful place to drink. The shepherd knows these facts and so causes these to happen. We need rest and quiet as well. One of the best places for this is to quiet your spirit and seek to rest in the LORD'S presence. Can you picture the scene? Lush, green, fresh pastures? A still lake reflecting the mountains in the background? Take some time out today to spend in quiet before the LORD. Ask Him to quiet your heart and mind. **THIS DOES TAKE PRACTICE** because we are living in such a distracted era. Think about incorporating at least a few minutes of stillness & quiet before the LORD **each day**. Ask for His help in allowing you to really find rest in His presence. Drink in His presence deeply. The idea today is just to concentrate on being alone with the Shepherd in a quiet and restful way. To enjoy being His sheep. Perhaps you can set a timer for five or ten minutes of quiet & stillness. At the end of the time you can ask, “Good Shepherd, is there anything that you want to say to me, Your sheep?”

How was your time?

What did you experience?

When will the next time of quiet and solitude be?

What can you learn in times of quietness and solitude?

QUOTE: “We are a peculiar people who somehow feel that the final measure of a person's spirituality is to be gauged by their capacity to go, go, go...for God. On the contrary, our Father calls us to come apart and spend some time in solitude with Him.” Phillip Keller

CIEFC Prayer: Angie Velasco has been ministering in Mexico for more than 15 years now! Praise the Lord! Thank you for your prayers for her. Pray that she will have wonderful times of quiet and rest, especially before and after *Simply the Story* training events which require a LOT of time and energy.

Sing this following song a number of times asking for the freedom of the Holy Spirit to flow through you.

SONG: [Set my spirit free](#)

Set my spirit free that I might worship Thee.

Set my spirit free that I might praise Thy name.

Let all bondage go and let deliverance flow.

Set my spirit free to worship Thee.

Day 12 Tues. Mar. 19 Ps. 23:3 Prayer's restoration & guidance

He restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Restoration in my life is necessary when...I (fill in your response)

The Good Shepherd knows how to bring restoration to His sheep but, the sheep must come to the Him and submit themselves to His restoring work. Sometimes we need restoration when we have gotten off His paths of righteousness like a wandering sheep. We get on the polluted paths that dirty our souls. Or, we listen to the lies of the enemy and have a hard time discerning what is true & right. Today in your prayer, be quiet before the LORD and then ask Him where you need restoration (physical energy, renewal of your mind, healing of a hurt). Write down what you hear:

- Ask the Shepherd to bring restoration to your soul.
- Ask Him for His guidance in your decisions, in your actions, in your words, and in your thoughts today.

Think about the names of God revealed in Scripture: *El Shaddai* – God Almighty, *Yahweh Shammah* – the LORD is always there, *Yahweh Shalom* – the LORD of Peace/wholeness, *Yahweh Qannah* – the LORD who is jealous, *Yahweh Boreh*, the LORD-the Creator! Names of Jesus: Savior, Redeemer, Holy & True, the Word of God, the Son of God, the Lamb of God! Names of the Holy Spirit: Comforter, Guide, Teacher, Intercessor! We carry this name as we walk in this world! He restores us so that we can know & experience Him more fully –we can know the truth of who He is in all of these names and more! Spend time in praise of His great name(s).

Quote: Ah, how often, Christians, hath God kissed you at the beginning of prayer, and spoken peace to you in the midst of prayer, and filled with joy and assurance upon the close of prayer. Thomas Brooks (but if we don't pray, how much we miss of this!)

CIEFC Prayer: Kevin & Lydia Kimble serve in Taiwan. Pray that they would be led in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Pray that they would have daily restoration & renewal. Pray for Kevin's eye to be healed.

HYMN: [Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah](#), Pilgrim through this barren land. I am weak, but Thou art mighty; Hold me with Thy powerful hand. Bread of heaven, Bread of heaven, Feed me till I want no more, Feed me till I want no more.

2. Open now the crystal fountain, Whence the healing waters flow; Let the fire and cloudy pillar, Lead me all my journey through. Strong Deliverer, Strong Deliverer, Be Thou still my Strength and Shield, Be Thou still my Strength and Shield.

3. When I tread the verge of Jordan, bid my anxious fears subside. Bear me thro' the swelling current, land me safe on Canaan's side. Songs of praises, songs of praises, I will ever give to Thee, I will ever give to Thee.

Day 13 Wed. Mar. 20 Ps. 23:4 Assurance in Prayer: For You are with me!

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

Today, we spend time praising & thanking the LORD for His protection, His comfort, His presence, and His deliverance. We cannot know all the times in which He has intervened and rescued us from danger, disaster, and evil. The shepherd is ever watching over his sheep. He knows the dangerous foes and pitfalls that might lead to the sheep's injury, peril, or death. The sheep **will** walk through times of darkness and distress, but we are never alone! The great words to sing in praise to our Father: **FOR YOU ARE WITH ME!**

Spend time in quiet stillness soaking in that phrase, drinking in its truth, giving glory to God!

The shepherd carried a rod – to fight off predators and a staff – to yank back wayward sheep. We need protection from the enemy and from our own wayward hearts and actions. Why would a sheep so wonderfully cared for wander off from the Good Shepherd? Why do we go our own way at times thinking it will bring fulfillment, pleasure, and joy? Foolish sheep! Pray through these verses. Tell the LORD you want to ever trust in Him. Thank Him that nothing which comes into your life is not screened first by Him, your Shepherd. We have nothing to fear. If you've been fearful lately, take whatever it is to your Shepherd. Ask Him for some new awareness of His comforting presence. Ask Him to use His staff to keep you on His path of life.

Quote: "Prayer will make a man cease from sin, or sin will entice a man to cease from prayer. Pray often; for prayer is a shield to the soul, a sacrifice to God, and a scourge for Satan." John Bunyan

CIEFC Prayer: Roger & Shirley Brown will be wrapping up 28 years of wonderful service in Kenya. They will be transitioning back to the U.S. but continuing their work. Pray for them as it is not easy to make such a big change. Pray also as they need to see support come in for their continuing ministry. Thank the Lord for the Browns!

Song: [Ps. 27:1,5 The Lord is my light](#)

*The Lord is my light and my salvation, The Lord is the strength of my life;
The Lord is my light and my salvation, The Lord is the strength of my life;
So I will not be afraid, no I will not be afraid,
Because the Lord is my light, the Lord is my light,
The Lord is my light*

1. In the day of trouble He will hide me
He will keep me safe He will guide me through (to chorus)

2. In the darkest hour He will keep me
Evil has no power When He shelters me (to chorus)

Day 14 Thur. March 21 Ps. 23:5 Prayer at the Table - Abundance

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Picture a great banqueting feast with overwhelming portions of rich food and drink. The host would then come and anoint your head with fragrant oil as a sign of honor. The provision at the meal never lacks anything. As a matter of fact, it “overflows” with abundance just like the lush, green pastures and quiet waters for the sheep. On top of that, the enemy sees this gracious provision and he knows of your belonging to the LORD and that His favor is upon you. The enemy doesn’t go away but the LORD shows that His blessing is upon us as we have been anointed, set apart as belonging to Him. Abundance is something to think about as you pray today. The abundant life that Jesus promised in John 10:10. The super abounding grace of God in 2 Cor. 9:8. His great, steadfast love of Yahweh in Ps. 86:13. The riches of our inheritance in Christ Jesus in Eph. 1:18. God does not ‘just get by’ but is able to cause an overflowing supply of all we need. Praise Him for these in prayer and/or song. Thank Him that we have our invitation already to the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:9). Ask Him to anoint you afresh with the Holy Spirit whom He gives without measure (John 3:34). See that banqueting feast as you sit in awe of Him quietly in reflection. Listen to His heart for you.

QUOTE: Our prayers may be awkward. Our attempts may be feeble. But since the power of prayer is in the one who hears it and not in the one who says it, our prayers do make a difference." - Max Lucado

CIEFC Prayer: Dale is reaching out to students & scholars at the U. of Maryland. He does so with great energy, strength, & love from the Lord. Ask the Lord to continue to lead and bless Dale. He asks for prayer for: Bo and Lonnie who are now back with their families, and desire to share their faith with them! Please pray that they would be courageous, and that the Lord would give them the right words and way to share the love of Jesus. They are also dealing with reverse culture shock.

SONG: I stand in Awe of You

You are beautiful beyond description, too marvelous for words,
Too wonderful for comprehension, like nothing ever seen or heard.
Who can grasp Your infinite wisdom?
Who can fathom the depths of Your love?
You are beautiful beyond description. Majesty enthroned above.
And I stand, I stand in awe of You. Lord I stand, I stand in awe of You.
Holy God to whom all praise is due, I stand in awe of You.

Mark Altrogge ©1987 People of Destiny International (Admin. By Word, Inc.) Used by permission
CCLI #377598

Day 15 Fri. Mar. 22 Ps. 23:6 Prayer: Rejoicing in God’s Goodness & love

Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

This should be the confidence of everyone who has come to know the goodness of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. David had MANY trials & tribulations in life – even years of trying to keep ahead of King Saul who wanted him dead. Yet, he knew of the goodness and lovingkindness NAS (*hesed* – steadfast love ESV, covenant faithfulness, love NIV, mercy KJV). *Hesed* carries ideas of faithfulness, commitment, and loyalty along with connection to Yahweh who keeps His covenant promises. No matter what we face, His goodness and *hesed* follows us because He never goes back on His commitment to those who belong to Him. It reaches into eternity where we will experience it beyond all measure in God’s presence. Today is a prayer of gratitude, confidence, & assurance to the Shepherd who is good! Tell Him you look forward to being in His presence forever. Thank Him that Jesus has gone to prepare a place for you (John 14:1-3). Think back upon your life and remember times when He has shown you His goodness and lovingkindness in special ways. Write some here:

Continue to entrust yourself to Yahweh, our Shepherd. Tell Him you are.

QUOTE: "Prayer should not be regarded as a duty which must be performed, but rather as a privilege to be enjoyed, a rare delight that is always revealing some new beauty." - E.M. Bounds

CIEFC Prayer: Christina is serving in Thailand. She will have a homeschool week coming up March 25 in which she is in charge of the program and will do a lot of the teaching. Pray for strength and wisdom in this. Pray for those helping to be effective. Pray that students will enjoy and learn.

SONG: Build my life

Worthy of every song we could ever sing,
Worthy of all the praise we could ever bring
Worthy of every breath we could ever breathe, We live for You, we live for You.
2. Jesus the name above every other name
Jesus the only one who could save
Worthy of every breath we could ever breathe. We live for you, we live for You.

Chorus: *Holy there is no one like you There is none beside you
Open up my eyes in wonder And show me who you are
And fill me with your heart And lead me in Your love to those around me* (to v.2)

And I will build my life upon your love it is a firm foundation
And I will put my trust in you alone and I will not be shaken
And I will build my life upon your love it is a firm foundation
And I will put my trust in you alone and I will not be shaken (to chorus)

Songwriters: Pat Barrett / Kirby Kaple / Karl Martin / Matt Redman / Brett Younker
Build My Life Lyrics © Sentric Music used by permission CCLI@ 377598

Day 16 Sat. Mar. 23 Ps. 86:11 Prayer for Learning & Walking

Teach me your way, O LORD, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name.

This is a prayer I pray OFTEN! Why? We need the LORD'S instruction in all things in order that we may 'walk' in a manner worthy of our calling (Eph. 4:1). "Walk" in the Older Testament is a term describing one's manner of life – how they conduct themselves. We know that Yahweh's way is the absolute best way to live because He is the Creator, Designer, & Author of life so He knows what is best for us, His creation. You can't walk in what you do not know so it's a good idea to be ever asking for the Holy Spirit to teach you. We won't pray such things or walk in such ways if we have a divided heart – that is, a heart that is trying to go in more than one direction, or one with competing interests for the top spot. So, we need to bring our heart into our prayer as well. The end result of an undivided heart is that we have the an awesome fear of God Almighty that makes us want to stay on His way of truth. It's the little things in life that often need clarification by the Spirit – "Is this your way for me? Am I walking in Your truth when I'm doing this?" Pray Ps. 86:11 today and...everyday! Then, take note when: you sense His answer as He teaches you, you have joy in walking in His truth, your heart becomes more united in its devotion to Him, and His name is the most revered name in your heart and actions.

QUOTE: "Jesus Christ taught his disciples to pray, healed people with prayers, denounced the corruption of the temple worship (which, he said, should be a 'house of prayer'), and insisted that some demons could be cast out only through prayer. He prayed often and regularly with fervent cries and tears (Heb. 5:7), and sometimes all night. The Holy Spirit came upon him and anointed him as he was praying (Luke 3:21–22), and he was transfigured with the divine glory as he prayed (Luke 9:29). When he faced his greatest crisis, he did so with prayer. We hear him praying for his disciples and the church on the night before he died (John 17:1–26) and then petitioning God in agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. Finally, he died praying." Tim Keller

CIEFC Prayer: Pray Ps. 86:11 for our church family

HYMN: [Teach me Thy way, O Lord](#) (Sing as a prayer!)

Teach me Thy way, O Lord, teach me Thy way! Thy guiding grace afford,
teach me Thy way! Help me to walk aright, more by faith, less by sight;
Lead me with heav'nly light, teach me Thy way!

2. When I am sad at heart, teach me Thy way! When earthly joys depart,
teach me Thy way! In hours of loneliness, in times of dire distress,
In failure or success, teach me Thy way!

3. When doubts and fears arise, teach me Thy way! When storms
o'erspread the skies, teach me Thy way! Shine through the cloud and rain,
through sorrow, toil and pain; Make Thou my pathway plain, teach me Thy
way! 4. Long as my life shall last, teach me Thy way! Where'er my lot be
cast, teach me Thy way! Until the race is run, until the journey's done,
Until the crown is won, teach me Thy way!

Sunday March 17

What a joy it is to gather together with Yahweh's fellow sheep in worship, prayer, joy, fellowship, learning, and encouragement.

Pray for God's Spirit to be powerfully experienced today!

Any reflections from this week you want to write down?

Sing: [All the Way my Savior leads me](#) By Fanny Crosby

All the way my Savior leads me
What have I to ask beside?
Can I doubt His faithful mercies?
Who through life has been my guide?
Heavenly peace, divinest comfort
Here by faith in Him to dwell
For I know whate'er fall me, Jesus doeth all things well
For I know whate'er fall me, Jesus doeth all things well

2. All the way my Savior leads me
Cheers each winding path I tread
Gives me strength for every trial
Feeds me with the living bread
Though my weary steps may falter
And my soul a-thirst may be
Gushing from a rock before me Lo, a spring of joy I see
Gushing from a rock before me Lo, a spring of joy I see

3. And all the way my Savior leads me
Oh, the fullness of His love
Perfect rest in me is promised
In my Father's house above
When my spirit clothed immortal
Wings it's flight to realms of day
This my song through endless ages Jesus led me all the way
This my song through endless ages Jesus led me all the way

Day 17 Mon. Mar. 25 Ps. 100:4 Prayer & Praise

Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.

There should be times in our lives in which we never get around to asking for things because we are so caught up in praise & thanksgiving. We enter God's gates with thanksgiving and our entrance to His courts is with praise! Picture yourself coming in to His presence in these ways and don't forget to bring your offerings! Surely you can think of a myriad of things to bring with you into His presence. Try to do nothing else today in prayer but this. What are some of the main praises & thanks you are bringing?

QUOTE: THE DYNAMICS OF PRAISE IN PRAYER (Wesley Duewel *Mighty Prevailing Prayer* p. 167-170)

1. Praise focuses our hearts on God – “In praise my soul ascends to self-forgetting adoration, seeing & praising only the majesty & power of God, His grace & redemption.” (O. Hallesby)
2. Praise cleanses our hearts of cares, fears, & earth-centered thoughts – Enter God's presence & shut the door behind you! Praise shuts the door on intruding ideas, our normal thought life, & satanic suggestions.
3. Praise produces & increases faith – The more you praise God, the more you become absorbed in His greatness, wisdom, faithfulness, & love. Praise cuts the enemy's forces down to size, “If God be for us, who can be against us!”
4. Praise invokes God's presence, God's power, & God's forces – Nothing unites us more with the angels of God than joining in praise of God, and perhaps our worshipping & militant praise unites them in our endeavor and in the answering of prayer as they minister to us (Heb. 1:14).
5. Praise confounds, terrifies, restrains, & thwarts Satan.

CIEFC Prayer: Pray for our worship leaders & team members: Jed, Joseph, Liju, Martin, Cindy, Elijah, Loyan, Stella, Jing, Kesan, Isaac, and future members. Pray that we'd all be people who spend time in worship & praise during the week so that Sunday would be our corporate extension of what we do all week long.

SONG: Holy & Anointed One

Je-sus, Je-sus, Holy and Anointed One, Je-sus
Je-sus, Je-sus, Risen and Exalted One, Je-sus
Your name is like honey on my lips, Your Spirit like water to my soul,
Your word is a lamp unto my feet, Jesus I love You, I love You.
By John Barnett 1998 Mercy/Vineyard Publishing Used by permission CCLI #277598

Day 18 Tues. Mar. 26 Job 16:20-21 Weeping and Prayer

Even now my witness is in heaven; my advocate is on high. My intercessor is my friend as my eyes pour out tears to God; on behalf of a man he pleads with God as a man pleads for his friend.

Ps. 126:5-6 *Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy. He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him*

Ps. 56:8 *Record my lament; list my tears on your scroll— are they not in your record?*

Weeping and prayer go together. Just ask Job. So often our hearts are hardened and we pray cold, detached, matter-of-fact prayers. Until...something so moves us or hits us that we find ourselves crying before God. Sometimes that is all you can do which is more than enough. God sees, knows, hears, records, and understands our tears. Here's some great thoughts on the subject.

QUOTE: WEEPING IN PRAYER Wesley Duewel *Touch the World through Prayer* p. 86ff

1. We should weep because humanity has forsaken God (Ps. 9:17; Rom., 1:28; 2:4)
2. We should weep because sin is multiplying (2 Tim. 3:13 from bad to worse)
3. We should weep because as a church we are too lifeless & powerless (Rev. 3:1,17)
4. We should weep because we as God's people are spiritually asleep (Rom. 13:11-12 – we get upset by blatant sins of people in the world but we fail to be disturbed by lives of unfruitful believers & by our self-centered prayers).
5. We should weep because there is still so much work to be done in God's Kingdom. Probably ¼ of all the world have never even heard the name of Jesus. At least ½ would not be able to make an intelligent decision to receive Him. The condition of the world should often drive us to tears. It is a spiritual crime to be calloused will the world goes to hell – to pray casually, dry-eyed & burdenless, while the world is in sin & pain.

CIEFC Prayer: Pray that we would be a church that gets real in prayer, weeping over sin, hurting with those who hurt, taking people's burdens upon ourselves.

SONG: You are my all in all by Dennis Jernigan

You are my strength When I am weak, You are the treasure That I seek
You are my All in All; Seeking You as a precious jewel,
Lord to give up I'd be a fool, You are my All in All
Jesus Lamb of God, Worthy is Your name (repeat)
2. Taking my sin My cross my shame, Rising again I bless Your name
You are my All in All; When I fall down You pick me up
When I am dry You fill my cup, You are my All in All

1991 Shepherd's Heart Music, Inc. Used by permission CCLI#377598

Day 19 Wed. Mar. 27 Matt. 6:16-18 Prayer and Fasting

When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Our Lord assumed that we would fast. Fasting doesn't have to only be about food but it is an effective attention getter for our soul. Even just skipping a meal or a particular food for a time period can be a helpful way to cause us to seek the Lord in prayer. Whatever you do, says our Lord, DON'T do it to impress people! Start small but then try to make it a regular habit. Something like: Each Tuesday I will not eat lunch but spend time with the Lord. Don't ignore medical needs. Some people's stomachs don't do well when they aren't fed. Perhaps just cut out something you really like for a day. Some more on fasting:

QUOTE: **FASTING** Wesley Duewel – *Touch the World through Prayer* p. 95-102

1. Fast to please the Lord – to draw nearer to Him. Fast because He is so precious to you that you want to give Him a costly gift.
2. Fast in response to God's call. (Joel 1:14; 2:15; Acts 13:2)
3. Fast to humble yourself before God. (1 Kings 21:27; Ps. 35:13)
4. Fast to seek God's face more fully. (Mark 12:30, 33; Jer. 29:13). We are to continue to Ask, Seek, and Knock (Mt. 7:7). The hunger to see God and His mighty work can be so great that one loses the desire for food.
5. Fast as a holy discipline of your soul. We need regular habits by which we seek the Lord in our lives and fasting is one of those holy habits that really help us in regularly seeking the Lord.

CIEFC Prayer: Pray for our youth: Ida, Loyan, & Elijah. They are exposed every day to strong opinions by teachers, classmates, and the media that tell them that holy (Biblical) values regarding sexuality are wrong or even hateful. The world wants to squeeze us all into its mold (Rom. 12:2) – the way it thinks about 'casual' sex, adultery, homosexuality and everything else. Pray for them to understand the great worth they have before God – that they'd believe what His word says about purity.

Song: [Draw me close](#)

Draw me close to You never let me go, I lay it all down again to hear
You say, That I'm Your friend. You are my desire, no one else will
do, 'Cause nothing else could take Your place, To feel the warmth of
Your embrace. Help me find the way, bring me back to You

You're all I want You're all I've ever needed
You're all I want Help me know You are near

By Kelly Carpenter. 1994 Mercy / Vineyard Publishing
CCLI #377598 used by permission

Day 20 Thur. Mar 28 Rom. 8:15 Prayer and the Father

For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."

Abba is the Aramaic word for father or papa, baba. It rolls off the lips of children in all languages very easily. Jesus is the one who taught us to go to "our Father in heaven" once we have been made His children through Him. (John 1:12) Some of the religious leaders were greatly offended (John 5:18) by Jesus calling God His father. But, once we have received Jesus, the Holy Spirit comes into our lives and we receive the "Spirit of sonship!" That is, we have all the rights and privileges of belonging to Him as His son or daughter. The presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives is the one who enables us to have this cry deep within. From the very depths of our being we cry out: "Abba, Father!" That is prayer at its most basic, like a child looking to his or her father for all they need. What an awesome truth this is in prayer. WE have a Father in heaven, and He is God Almighty! We can take anything and everything to Him in prayer, which is our privilege as His adopted child. We've been born again of the Spirit (John 3) and so the eternal, living, holy Creator of everything is now our Father! This alone should transform our prayers. Never forget that He delights to hear His children's voices just like an earthly father does. Go to your Father in heaven this day and rejoice! Tell Him you want to know and experience His fatherly love more fully. But don't make things too complicated. Just go to your Father and speak with Him.

Quote: "To pray in Jesus' name [is], essentially, to reground our relationship with God in the saving work of Jesus over and over again. It also means to recognize your status as a child of God, regardless of your inner state." Tim Keller

CIEFC Prayer: Pray for our fathers of younger children: Joseph, Andreas, Jerry, & Gary. Pray that they would have wisdom now and in the future as they live out before their girls a godly example of the heavenly Father (Eph. 5:1). It's an awesome and heavy responsibility.

SONG: [Abba Father](#)

Abba Father, let me be, Yours and Yours alone
May my will forever be ever more Your own
Never let my heart grow cold
Never let me go
Abba father, let me be
Yours and Yours alone

Dave Billbrough ©1977 Thankyou Music by permission CCLI#377598

Day 21 Fri. Mar. 29 Prayer and the Son, Heb. 4:14-16

Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin.¹⁶ Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. Verse 16 describes prayer in wonderful terms. We go to God, through the Son, with confidence NEVER in ourselves but in our great high priest, who is also the very Son of God. Without holding firmly to the faith/trust that we profess in Him, we'll lose our grip on prayer. What keeps us from prayer? Is it when we feel weak, useless, helpless, vulnerable, tempted, failing, or wrestling with sin? These are the times we should most quickly turn to Jesus because this great passage reminds us that He faced temptation in EVERY WAY that we have but He, unlike us, never gave in. You might think He would then not want anything to do with failures like us, but He knows we need grace and mercy to help us in our time of need. He is sympathetic but also exalted & victorious over sin. He is our GREAT high priest who is right there before God's throne interceding for us (Heb. 7:25). Our main problem is failing to go to Him for the grace, mercy, & help He is willing to give IF we seek these from Him. What help do you need today? Where are you feeling tempted? Go to Jesus!

QUOTE: The greatest tragedy of life is not unanswered prayer but unoffered prayer. F.B. Meyer

CIEFC Prayer: You probably know someone who is wrestling in life, struggling with sin, feeling weak, losing their grip – someone who needs the great high priest. Go to Jesus on their behalf, NOW!

Hymn: [COME, YE SINNERS](#)

Come, ye sinners, poor and needy, Weak and wounded, sick and sore; Jesus ready stands to save you, Full of pity, love and power.

*I will arise and go to Jesus, He will embrace me in His arms;
In the arms of my dear Savior, Oh, there are ten thousand charms.*

2. Come, ye thirsty, come, and welcome, God's free bounty glorify;
True belief and true repentance, Every grace that brings you nigh.
3. Come, ye weary, heavy-laden, Lost and ruined by the fall;
If you tarry till you're better, You will never come at all.
4. Let not conscience make you linger, Not of fitness fondly dream;
All the fitness He requireth, Is to feel your need of Him.

Day 22 Sat. Mar. 30 Prayer and the Spirit Rom. 8:26-27

The Spirit of God not only maintains this hope within us, but helps us in our present limitations. For example, we do not know how to pray worthily as sons of God, but his Spirit within us is actually praying for us in those agonizing longings which never find words. And God who knows the heart's secrets understands, of course, the Spirit's intention as he prays for those who love God. (J.B. Phillips)
Our present limitations or weaknesses (NIV) make our time remaining in this life a challenge. What are those weaknesses? The weakness of our human condition – we live in a world that is under the bondage to decay, subject to disease, aging, & dying. We get sick, we get injured, we lose loved ones, and our bodies deteriorate. Another weakness is our struggle with sin. Though we're a new creation in Christ we still live in this world and so we must be constantly on our guard against temptation and sin. Believers also face the persecution, ridicule, and hatred of the world that doesn't know Jesus. The last weakness is mentioned here – it is the weakness of ignorance. "We do not know what we ought to pray for." Our wisdom, perspective, & experience are limited. There are many times when we just do not know what to pray for and that is a weakness if we understand that our true hope & confidence should come from a life of prayer with our Father in heaven. Praise God, we are not alone as we go to our knees! We have help!! We have the Holy Spirit who helps us in our weakness! Now if you are proud and you feel you are not really weak in any way then this doesn't sound like such great news. But if you are humble enough to admit your weaknesses then when you go down to your knees in prayer you know that you do not go alone!!! He joins us in prayer but as He communicates with God the Father about us – He groans! Now this is not something that we hear but "with groans that words cannot express." Why does the Spirit groan? He sees our limitations and weaknesses. He is residing within us and knows our struggles. He is well aware of our ignorance to pray truly according to the will of God. He "identifies with our groans, with the pain of the creation and the church, and shares in the longing for the glorious freedom of both." (John Stott) Spend some time in prayer today thanking the Lord for the Holy Spirit. Thank the Spirit that you are not alone, ever, but especially as you pray. Don't know what else to say? No problem, just spend time before the Lord knowing that the Spirit is at work! Hallelujah!!

QUOTE: Ah, how often, Christians, hath God kissed you at the beginning of prayer, and spoken peace to you in the midst of prayer, and filled with joy and assurance upon the close of prayer. Thomas Brooks

CIEFC Prayer: Kurt & Denna Buzenitz were part of our church many years ago. They are doing church planting in rural Nebraska. God is using them powerfully. They have one son and four daughters and all of them are involved in the work. Spend some time thanking the Lord for this family. Ask for His protection on them as they drive long distances along narrow roads. Ask for wisdom so they'll know how to reach people for Christ. Kurt has inherited diabetes. Pray for his health and for Denna as she cares for him and the family.

SONG: [Holy Spirit, Breathe on me](#)

Holy Spirit, breathe on me, until my heart is clean;

let sunshine fill its inmost part, with not a cloud between.

Chorus: *Breathe on me, breathe on me; Holy Spirit, breathe on me;*

Take Thou my heart, cleanse every part, Holy Spirit breathe on me.

2. Holy Spirit, breathe on me, my stubborn will subdue;
teach me in words of living flame what Christ would have me do.
3. Holy Spirit, breathe on me, fill me with power divine;
kindle a flame of love and zeal within this heart of mine.
4. Holy Spirit, breathe on me, till I am all Thine own,
until my will is lost in Thine, to live for Thee alone.

Sunday March 31

We are more than halfway through our time of Lent. Take time to look back upon those requests at the beginning and your commitments. Entrust them to the Lord once again. Thank Him for any way He has spoken to you thus far. Ask Him to speak further as we go forward. Pray that this Lent guide would be useful to someone. Pray for others in our church family to receive encouragement, strength, or help.

Hymn: Blessed Assurance

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
O what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.

*(chorus) This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior, all the day long;
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior, all the day long.*

2. Perfect submission, perfect delight,
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
Angels descending bring from above
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

3. Perfect submission, all is at rest;
I in my Savior am happy and blest,
Watching and waiting, looking above,
Filled with His goodness, lost in His love.

Day 23 Mon. Apr. 1 Prayer and Growth – Puffing or building 1 Cor. 8:1

Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.

This week we will concentrate on areas of needed growth in our lives and...PRAY about them! (See the context of this verse where Paul is answering a question the Corinthian believers had about what to do with food offered to idols.) Knowledge is an important thing in life. The problem with knowing things is that sometimes we take pride in what we know and then may look down upon others who just don't know all that we know. That's when we get "puffed up." Think about a balloon stretched to the point of bursting. That is what pride in knowledge is like. On the other hand, Paul says: "*Love builds up.*" Rather than look around and try to impress someone with what I know or seek to put them down by what I see as their ignorance, love says: "I should be seeking to build them up." But, when I'm occupied with puffing myself up, it's really hard to think of ways in which I can be building up someone else. So, we must stop puffing and start building up. Seeking ways to encourage others, help them, come alongside of them, and bless them. Pride really blinds us. It tells us how much we know is what's most important. Remember the separation between the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25:31-46? Our Lord never asks how much they knew but what action they took. Maybe you are already humble to the point in which you aren't puffing up about what or how much you know. Great! However, if you're like me, you may be spending too much time thinking about how much you know rather than how you can be building up others in love. PRAY! Ask the Lord to show you where you are in this. Ask Him to show you who He would have you build up today, tomorrow, and in the coming days.

QUOTE: Prayer delights God's ear; it melts His heart; and opens His hand. God will not deny a praying soul. Thomas Watson

CIEFC Prayer: We have many people who volunteer as Sunday School teachers for our children & youth. Thank the Lord for those teachers who come to your mind. Ask that the Lord would give them wisdom to know how to best minister to those they are teaching. Pray that the students will be eager to learn & grow in God's truth & love. Pray for Barbara as she coordinates.

Hymn: More like Jesus would I be – Fanny Crosby

1. More like Jesus would I be, Let my Savior dwell with me;
Fill my soul with peace and love, Make me gentle as a dove;
More like Jesus, while I go, Pilgrim in this world below;
Poor in spirit would I be; Let my Savior dwell in me.

2. If He hears the raven's cry, If His ever watchful eye
Marks the sparrows when they fall, Surely He will hear my call:
He will teach me how to live, All my sinful thoughts forgive;
Pure in heart I still would be; Let my Savior dwell in me.

3. More like Jesus when I pray, More like Jesus day by day;
May I rest me by His side, Where the tranquil waters glide:
Born of Him, through grace renewed, By His love my will subdued,
Rich in faith I still would be; Let my Savior dwell in me.

Day 24 Tues. Apr. 2 Prayer & Growth – Discipline 1 Tim. 4:7b-8

Train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. (NIV) The Message: Exercise daily in God—no spiritual flabbiness, please! Workouts in the gymnasium are useful, but a disciplined life in God is far more so, making you fit both today and forever.

Getting into good shape takes hard work especially as we grow older and face age-related challenges. Paul says this has some value but much more important is training (disciplining) yourself to be godly. It takes daily effort. We need to do daily exercises of disciplines like prayer, worship, reading God's word, listening to the Spirit, fasting, memorizing Scripture, giving, serving, etc. so that we can grow into being more like Jesus. We don't do these things because we are seeking to earn God's favor but because we want to grow, change, & become more like Jesus. It doesn't happen by accident but rather by applying the means God has given us which help us to grow. As we make ourselves available in these ways, the Spirit helps us grow. Obviously, consistency is helpful but please don't do these things in a legalistic, "I have to do this out of an obligation" but rather as a love offering to our Savior. As we make ourselves available, He gives the growth (1 Cor. 3:7). The more progress we make, the more we realize how far we still have to go because we are seeking to be like Jesus. But as we cooperate with the Spirit's work, the work in progress that we are bears fruit as we give off more of the aroma of Jesus. (2 Cor. 2:14-15) Pray today about your need for training/discipline to be godly.

QUOTE: "Prayer is both conversation and encounter with God. . . . We must know the awe of praising his glory, the intimacy of finding his grace, and the struggle of asking his help, all of which can lead us to know the spiritual reality of his presence." Tim Keller

CIEFC Prayer: Pray for our Moody students: John, Isaac, Colby, Jordan, Susana, & Johnny. They are preparing themselves for future ministry but are already serving the Lord in a variety of ways. Pray that their classes will be a blessing now & in the future. Pray that they can stay up with their assignments and still have time for work, friendships, and other things. Praise the Lord for these!

SONG: Jesus, be the Center

Jesus, be the center. Be my source, Be my light, Jesus.

Jesus, be the center. Be my hope, be my song, Jesus.

Be the fire in my heart. Be the wind in these sails.

Be the reason that I live, Jesus, Jesus.

2. Jesus, be the center. Be my source, Be my light, Jesus.

Jesus, be my vision. Be my path, be my guide, Jesus.

By Michael Frye 1999 Vineyard Songs (UK/Eire) Used by permission CCLI # 377598

Day 25 Wed. Apr. 3 Prayer & Growth – Clothed with kindness Col. 3:12

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

When we get dressed each day before going out, we usually want to look our best. Some try on various combinations of clothing, we comb our hair and do other things to help our appearance. Our Lord is not very concerned with the outer appearance but rather what is flowing out of our lives from within. Here we're commanded to clothe ourselves or 'put on' these things. We do so out of the truth that we are already God's chosen, holy, & dearly loved people. So, once again, we don't seek to be clothed with these things that we might impress God but because we are already His. Surely, we have experienced God's compassion, kindness, gentleness, & patience! We can extend those to others. Are you feeling short in any of these vital garments? "My kindness is at the dry cleaners so I'm going to be a bit harsh with you today!" WRONG! Ask the Lord to help you put on each of these today, tomorrow, next week perhaps BEFORE you get finished dressing or maybe make it your prayer while you are dressing/getting ready. Then, when you're back home and changing ask the Lord, "Did people experience Your gentle ways through me today?" "Was I patient with people today?" Then, listen to what He says. How's your compassion level? Maybe it's an extra small but you need an XXL! Pray through the verse above and spend time in quiet before the Lord meditating upon it and listening. What did He say?

QUOTE: "A rich, vibrant, consoling, hard-won prayer life is the one good that makes it possible to receive all other kinds of goods rightly and beneficially. [Paul] does not see prayer as merely a way to get things from God but as a way to get more of God himself." Tim Keller

CIEFC Prayer: Where might the Lord have us show our kindness & compassion as a church in outreach? Pray that we'd find some new avenues for compassionate mission.

SONG: More Love, More Power

More love, more power, more of You in my life

More love, more power, more of You in my life

And I will worship You, with all of my heart,

And I will worship You, with all of my mind,

And I will worship You, with all of my strength,

For You are my Lord, You are my Lord. (2nd time And I will seek

Your face with all...)

By Jude del Hierro 1987 Mercy/Vineyard Publishing Used by permission CCLI

#377598

Day 26 Thur. Apr. 4 Prayer & Growth- The Cutting Sword

Heb. 4:12 *For the word of God is living 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.*

This is a verse we should be praying through regularly. If your reading of the Word hasn't been cutting into your thoughts and attitudes, there is something missing. Maybe I'm not giving it the proper time needed – I'm just rushing through. Maybe my heart is a bit hard and I'm resisting really hearing what He is saying to me. Maybe I'm proud and not open to see the truth about myself. Maybe I just haven't been asking for the Spirit to bring His conviction and illumination. We need to approach God's word every day as it truly is: Living & active – a super sharp double-edged sword! Let it do its cutting work on your thoughts and attitudes today. Write down any thoughts or attitudes you've been having that don't line up with the Word. Write down a prayer here about God's word:

QUOTE: "Our prayers should arise out of immersion in the Scripture. [We] speak only to the degree we are spoken to. . . . The wedding (merging) of the Bible and prayer anchors your life down in the real God." Tim Keller

CIEFC Prayer: Our ESL classes have been used of God over the years to bring many into contact with the gospel. Thank the Lord for the many who have taught over the years (since 1981!). Praise the Lord for the lives that have been touched. Ask His blessing upon our current teachers as well as Jed & Ding as they coordinate. Pray that more students will come and sense the Living God at work.

Remember, the songs/hymns we sing remind us of God's goodness toward us and our expression of faith & love to Him.

SONG: [Thank you for the cross, Lord](#) – Worthy is the Lamb

Thank You for the cross, Lord, Thank you for the price You paid,
Bearing all my sin and shame,
In love You came And gave amazing grace
Thank you for this love, Lord Thank you for your nail pierced hands
Washed me in Your cleansing flow, Now all I know
Your forgiveness and embrace
Worthy is the Lamb, Seated on the throne
We crown You now with many crowns
You reign victorious, High and lifted up, Jesus Son of God
The dearest of Heaven crucified
Worthy is the Lamb, Worthy is the Lamb

By Darlene Zschech 2000 Hillsong Publishing Used by permission CCLI # 377598

Day 27 Fri. Apr. 5 Prayer & Growth Ps. 32:1-5 Ignoring Sin

Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.² Blessed is the man whose sin the LORD does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit.³ When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.⁴ For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.⁵ Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD"— and you forgave the guilt of my sin.

Keeping silent about sin is not wise. When we belong to the Holy God, He will press on us when we allow sin to continue in our lives. Some of us can get so good at this that it may really take a heavy hand. David had this experience, probably more than once. Notice that he starts the psalm with the blessing of forgiveness but then moves a bit backward to the time he was not confessing it. Knowing that you have confessed and had your relationship with your loving Father restored is the state of blessedness that we should most desire. But when we deceive ourselves into thinking everything is good, we miss out on this blessing. Covering up rotten, smelly stuff is always a bad idea. Getting it out in the open and dealt with brings relief to us and those who have been around our acting clean when we're really dirty. V. 2 in the Message: *Yes, what joy for those whose record the LORD has cleared of guilt, whose lives are lived in complete honesty!* Spend some time today asking the LORD if there is anything in your life that you are holding back on, any deceit about what He knows is true of you, any thing you're trying to cover up, not acknowledging. Then, receive the blessing because of Jesus!

QUOTE: "To lose our grip on the costliness of forgiveness will result in a superficial, perfunctory confession that does not lead to any real change of heart. There will be no life change. To lose our grip on the freeness of forgiveness, however, will lead to continued guilt, shame, and self-loathing. There will be no relief. Only when we see both the freeness and the cost of forgiveness will we get relief from the guilt as well as liberation from the power of sin in our lives." Tim Keller

CIEFC Prayer: Pray that we, as a church family, would be quick to seek forgiveness from God and from one another. Not acknowledging a sin that needs to be forgiven can quickly tear apart a fellowship. Pray this also for husbands and wives in our church.

Suggested Song: [Lead me to Calvary](#)

King of my life, I crown You now, Yours shall the glory be;
Lest I forget Your thorn crowned brow, Lead me to Calvary.

**Lest I forget Gethsemane, Lest I forget Your agony;
Lest I forget Your love for me, Lead me to Calvary.**

2. Show me the tomb where You were laid, Tenderly mourned and wept;
Angels in robes of light arrayed, Guarded You while You slept.

3. Let me like Mary, through the gloom, Come with a gift to Thee;
Show to me now the empty tomb, Lead me to Calvary.

4. May I be willing, Lord, to bear Daily my cross for Thee;
Even Your cup of grief to share, You hast borne all for me.

Day 28 Sat. Apr. 6 Prayer & Growth: Thoughts 2 Cor.10:3-5

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ...

One of the big challenges in life is to bring our thought life under control. We are often attacked by the enemy here. Some of his schemes: "What ifs" – trying you to get you to doubt a commitment you have made or a decision you have made that you thought was led by the Lord; "If God" – if God is good then why...; "You're missing out" – so much fun awaits you if you would compromise. A host of others – you can add to this list. Beyond the enemy's attacks, our minds can wander into fantasy, lust, greed, revenge, bitterness, or even hatred if we allow them to keep going after someone has done something wrong to us or said something hurtful. But God has given us what Paul calls "divinely powerful weapons." The Message: *We use our powerful God-tools for smashing warped philosophies, tearing down barriers erected against the truth of God, fitting every loose thought and emotion and impulse into the structure of life shaped by Christ. We MUST bring our thoughts captive and make them obedient to Jesus. We must use these powerful weapons God has given. We must put on the helmet of salvation (Eph. 6:17) to have our minds protected with the assurance of salvation. We must submit our thoughts to God asking for His protection & wisdom. Otherwise, we can get WAY off the path. What thoughts do you need to stand against? What thinking do you need to rein in? Let the Lord search your mind and heart. Write them here.*

Pray for God's help & use what He has given you. Memorize Scripture like the above one and meditate upon it.

QUOTE: "God can pick sense out of a confused prayer." Richard Sibbs

CIEFC Prayer: How we think about each other is important! Pray against the enemy's devices that he would use to divide us, to devalue someone, or to shatter mutual respect & unity.

SONG: Hiding Place

You are my hiding place, You always fill my heart
With songs of deliverance Whenever I am afraid I will trust in You
I will trust in You, Let the weak say "I am strong In the strength of the Lord"

By Michael Ledner Word Music 1981 used by permission CCLI # 377598

Sunday April 7

Our introduction to Lent was back on Feb. 17 with Psalm 81. Listen afresh to God's heart for us, His people!

Sing for joy to God our strength; shout aloud to the God of Jacob!

² *Begin the music, strike the timbrel, play the melodious harp and lyre. ³ Sound the ram's horn at the New Moon, and when the moon is full, on the day of our festival; ⁴ this is a decree for Israel, an ordinance of the God of Jacob. ⁵ When God went out against Egypt, he established it as a statute for Joseph. I heard an unknown voice say: ⁶ "I removed the burden from their shoulders; their hands were set free from the basket. ⁷ In your distress you called and I rescued you, I answered you out of a thundercloud; I tested you at the waters of Meribah.*

⁸ *Hear me, my people, and I will warn you—if you would only listen to me, Israel! ⁹ You shall have no foreign god among you; you shall not worship any god other than me. ¹⁰ I am the LORD your God, who brought you up out of Egypt. Open wide your mouth and I will fill it.*

¹¹ *"But my people would not listen to me; Israel would not submit to me. ¹² So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts to follow their own devices. ¹³ "If my people would only listen to me, if Israel would only follow my ways, ¹⁴ how quickly I would subdue their enemies and turn my hand against their foes! ¹⁵ Those who hate the Lord would cringe before him, and their punishment would last forever. ¹⁶ But you would be fed with the finest of wheat; with honey from the rock I would satisfy you. (NIV)*

How is your listening going?

Are you being FILLED? Satisfied by the Lord?

Are you remembering that you are one of His people?

SONG: Jesus, we celebrate Your victory:

Jesus we celebrate Your victory; Jesus we revel in Your love;

Jesus we rejoice You've set us free;

Jesus Your death has brought us life

1. It was for freedom that Christ has set us free;

No longer to be subject to a yoke of slavery;

So we're rejoicing in God's victory;

Our hearts responding to His love (to chorus)

2. His Spirit in us releases us from fear;

The way to Him is open

With boldness we draw near;

And in His presence our problems disappear;

Our hearts responding to His love (to chorus)

By John Gibson 1987 Thankyou Music (Admin. by EMI Christian Music Publishing)Used by permission CCLI#377598

Day 29 Mon. April 6- Ps. 116:1-2 Sing a Prayer to God who hears

I love the LORD, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy. Because he turned his ear to me, I will call on him as long as I live. We DO know that the LORD hears us. He promises to do so because of Jesus (John 14:13-14). We want to keep calling with confidence. I now want to us think about some practical ideas, tips, joys, or experiments that we can have with prayer. You probably have some of your own ways that you have found useful. Prayer can be a joyful adventure with God even when we are facing difficulty because He does hear our voice, our cry for mercy!

Today's idea: Musical Prayer – prayer using a song or hymn set to music. One of the best I know is: *Be Thou my Vision*. Read through the words. Think about what they are expressing. Tell the Lord that these are things you need as well. Then, when you're ready, sing through it a time or two – making the hymn your prayer. Or go to the link and listen to it. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ihJAJA4ibEs>

Be Thou my Vision

Be Thou my Vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me, Save that Thou art.
Thou my best Thought, By day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.
2. Be Thou my Wisdom, and Thou my true Word;
I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord;
Thou my great Father, I Thy true son;
Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee one.
3. Riches I heed not, Nor man's empty praise,
Thou mine Inheritance, Now and always:
Thou and Thou only, First in my heart,
High King of Heaven, My Treasure Thou art.
4. Be Thou my battle shield, Sword for the fight
Be Thou my dignity, Thou my delight,
Thou my soul's shelter, Thou my high tower
Raise Thou me heavenward, O Power of my power.
5. High King of Heaven, My victory won,
May I reach Heaven's joys, O bright Heaven's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, Whatever befall,
Still be my Vision, O Ruler of all.

CIEFC Prayer: Pray for wisdom, direction, and vision from God for our church family. Pray that the Lord would guide our Board – Cindy, Barbara, Viju, Yen, Jed, Martin. Pray that we'd all 'see' what God would want us to see for effective ministry & outreach.

Day 30 Tues. Apr. 6 Prayerwalking – Ezek. 22:30

I searched for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand in the gap before Me for the land, so that I would not destroy it; but I found no one. Prayerwalking is getting outside and interceding in prayer while you walk. It is our attempt to get out and “stand in the gap” for neighbors, places where people hang out, schools, etc. NOT a hard concept to grasp! Why do it? We can and should pray in our homes but sometimes it's really good to get out and seek to have a sense of what the Lord is wanting to say while you are walking & praying. You might be silent for a time and feel the burdens of those in the area. You might hear people arguing who need God's peace in their life. You may walk and sense the need to pray against the materialistic spirit in America. You might discover there are other language groups in the area to pray for. It's best done with a friend or two but fine if you're alone.

Here's some tips from Steve Hawthorne who calls it, “Praying on site with insight”:

1. Open your eyes. Remember you are seeking to intercede where the Son and Holy Spirit have and are interceding. Look for items that can help you to pray (as you are walking), i.e. Children's toys, indicators of who live there. Watch the people you encounter and look for what God is doing. Pray with your eyes wide open physically and spiritually.
2. Open your mouth. Remember you are praying as a team, so it is helpful if you pray out loud. Stop and concentrate as you pray. Pursue conversational praying. Pray Scripture. Perhaps even read Scripture at times. Stop to talk about what you are feeling, seeing, and sensing. Prayerwalking is not about praying constantly.
3. Open your mind. Listen for God. Let Him communicate through the prayers of the others in your team, your surroundings, and through His Spirit. Meditate on Scripture that seems to be appropriate for the area. Remember the battle is not against flesh and blood. The Lord may direct you to a specific place or house in which He desires to work, a home with needs that He wants you to pray for, people who are searching who need the gospel.

Prayerwalking is just another way of joining Him in what He is doing. It is praying that enlightens and educates us so that we may intercede with internationality and a heart for the people of our target area.

CIEFC Prayer: Pray that as the weather gets better, we can get out regularly to prayerwalk, meet people, and befriend them. We are especially thinking of people from a Spanish speaking background in our area. PRAY!!

SONG: Shout to the Lord

My Jesus, my Savior; Lord there is none like You. All of my days, I want to praise, The wonders of Your mighty love. My comfort, My shelter, Tower of refuge and strength. Let every breath, all that I am, Never cease to worship You. Shout to the Lord all the earth let us sing Power and majesty praise to the King; Mountains bow down and the seas will roar. At the sound of Your name; I sing for joy at the work of Your hands; Forever I'll love You forever I'll stand. Nothing compares to the promise I have in You

By Darlene Zszech 1993 Hillsongs Australia – Integrity's Hosanna! Music Used by permission CCLI #377598

Day 31 Wed. Apr. 10 1 Thes. 5:16-18 Pray without ceasing

Be joyful always; ¹⁷ pray continually-without ceasing-never stop praying; ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

How can anyone possibly do this? Perhaps this is more of an attitude that we seek to keep going throughout the day and even as we get into bed. All through the day, offer up short prayers to the Lord. Before you speak with someone, silently or quietly pray for God's wisdom, help, & insight. As you are driving, ask for His protection and that your time driving would be a great time of fellowship with Him. As you are washing your hands, ask for the Lord to cleanse your heart & mind from the filth of worldliness that tries to creep into our lives. When you get a text or an email from someone, stop right then and pray for them. When you meet another believer somewhere, ask them what you can pray for them and then, DO IT, right then! As you are reading, ask God for understanding. At work, ask for his help and direction. Ask for good relationships with co-workers. Ask that you can shine the light of Christ brightly. Ask that you will be sensitive to the needs of those around you. Ask that you can ask good questions of people that might show you care and are interested in them. Ask that you can be a good listener to others' words and heart. Get the idea? Ask the Lord for some more ideas as you think about your day. Write them here:

QUOTE: "I have benefited by praying for others; for by making an errand to God for them I have gotten something for myself." Samuel Rutherford

CIEFC Prayer: Pray for the married couples in our church family. Satan wants to attack marriage because it is instituted by God and should represent Christ's relationship with the church. Pray that husbands will know how to effectively love their wives and do so sacrificially. Pray that wives will know how to encourage and show respect. Pray for God's protection from the enemy that they will not treat each other as the enemy but stand together against Satan. Which couples will you pray for? Maybe many throughout the day!

SONG: Psalm 55: 22, 16-17 Cast your burden

Cast your burden upon the LORD, and he will sustain you:
He will never allow the righteous to be shaken.
As for me, I will call upon God; and the LORD shall save me.
Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud:
and he shall hear my voice. He shall hear my voice.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mGIw_h7mhrY

Day 32 Thur. Apr. 11 Prayer and the names of God Prov. 18:10

The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe.

Here are some names of our God that should fill you with LOTS of ideas & joy in prayer, praising Him for who He is and how He acts. You can look up the passage reference as well. Keep this list and use it often. Some are not so commonly cited but are revelations of God's character & person. Call on His name and run to His mighty arms!

- *Yahweh Yireh* – The LORD will PROVIDE – Gen. 22:4
- *Yahweh Ropheh* – The LORD who HEALS – Ex. 15:26
- *Yahweh Nissi* – The LORD is my BANNER of victory Ex. 17:5
- *Yahweh Mikaddesh* – The LORD who SANCTIFIES/sets apart, makes holy Lev. 20:7
- *Yahweh Shalom* – The LORD of PEACE, WHOLENESS Judges 6:24
- *Yahweh Tsedkenu* – The LORD our RIGHTEOUSNESS Jer. 23:6
- *Yahweh Roheh* – the LORD is my SHEPHERD – Psa. 23:1
- *Yahweh Shammah* – The LORD who is always THERE Ez. 48:30-35
- *Yahweh Makkeh* – The LORD who SMITES/STRIKES Ex. 7:9
- *Yahweh Qanna* – the LORD who is JEALOUS Ex. 34:14
- *Yahweh Hashophet* – The LORD who is JUDGE Judges 11:27
- *Yahweh Sabaoth* - The LORD God of HOSTS - Psalm 89:8
- *Yahweh Gimuloth* The LORD of RECOMPENSE/RETRIBUTION Jer. 51:56
- *Yahweh Mishpat* – The LORD of JUSTICE – Isa. 30:18
- *Yahweh Mihoqqenu* The LORD is LAWGIVER - Is. 33:22
- *Yahweh Malechenu* - The LORD is KING – Isa. 33:22
- *Yahweh Ad'in* – The LORD, the MAJESTIC/MIGHTY ONE Isa. 33:21
- *Yahweh Boreh* – The LORD, the CREATOR – Isa. 40:28
- *Yahweh Goalechem* – The LORD, the REDEEMER Isa. 43:14
- *Yahweh Qidoshechem* – The LORD, your HOLY ONE – Isa. 43:15
- *Yahweh Milamedicha* – The LORD God who TEACHES you – Isa. 48:17
- *Yahweh Moshe'echa* – The LORD your SAVIOR – Isa. 49:26

QUOTE: "Prayer—though it is often draining, even an agony—is in the long term the greatest source of power that is possible." Tim Keller

CIEFC Prayer: Our singles need prayer as well! They get attacked by the enemy who wants to make them feel inadequate, unlovely, or forgotten by God. Paul reveled in his singleness but not all are called to this. Pray for them to have a great sense of our Lord's nearness if/when they are under attack. Pray for patience for them as they wait for whatever the Lord has for them. Pray for contentment for ALL of us!

SONG: [Children of the heavenly Father](#) Children of the heavenly Father;
Safely in His bosom gather; Nestling bird nor star in Heaven;
Such a refuge e'er was given. 2. God His own doth tend and nourish;
In His holy courts they flourish; From all evil things He spares them;
In His mighty arms He bears them. 3. Neither life nor death shall ever
From the Lord His children sever; Unto them His grace He showeth,
And their sorrows all He knoweth. 4. Though He giveth or He taketh,
God His children ne'er forsaketh; His loving purpose solely
to preserve them pure and holy. 5. Praise the Lord in joyful numbers:
Your Protector never slumbers. At the will of your Defender,
every foeman must surrender.

Day 33 Fri. Apr. 12 The Faithful Witness Rev. 1:5

Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

Here are some more names to rev up your prayer time! They all come from the book of Revelation which is called "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." God gave this gift to us to help further reveal just how great, awesome, powerful, and in control of everything He is in spite of what the world thinks and does. Meditate, praise, and pray through the list today and tomorrow. What name captivated your heart most today?

Portraits of Jesus in Revelation

- *Yeshua Hameshia* –Jesus the Christ/Messiah 1:1
- Word of God 1:2
- The Faithful Witness
- The first born from the dead
- The Ruler of the kings of the earth
- Him who loves us
- Him who freed us from our sins by His blood
- Him who made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve His God and Father
- The Coming one
- One like a Son of Man
- The first and the last
- The Living One
- (He who) was dead and now alive forever and ever
- (He who) holds the keys of death and hades
- (He who) Holds the seven stars in His right hand
- (He who) Holds walks among the seven golden lampstands
- The First & last
- Who died and came to life again
- Who has the sharp double- edged sword

QUOTE: "We know God will answer us when we call because one terrible day he did not answer Jesus when he called. . . . Jesus' prayers were given the rejection that we sinners merit so that our prayers could have the reception that he merits." Tim Keller

CIEFC Prayer: Our job as a church is to lift up the Lord in such a way that people will be drawn to Him in salvation. Pray for some of our seekers who have attended over the last few months. Pray that more will come and spend time among us and see Jesus.

SONG: [You are my King](#) I'm forgiven because You were forsaken, I'm accepted, You were condemned, I'm alive and well, Your spirit is within me, Because you died and rose again. Amazing love, how can it be that You my King would die for me? Amazing love, I know it's true, And it's my joy to honor You, In all I do; I'll honor You

You are my King, You are my King.

By Billy Foote 1996 [Worshiptogether.com](#) songs Used by permission CCLI#377598

Day 34 Sat. Apr. 13 Holy and True Rev. 3:7

These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open.

More names of our wonderful, merciful Savior!

- The Son of God
- Whose eyes are like a blazing fire - Whose feet are like burnished bronze
- Who holds the seven(fold) spirits of God & 7 stars
- Holy and True
- Who holds the key of David
- Who opens and no one can shut - Who shuts and no one can open
- The Amen
- The Faithful and true witness
- The Ruler of God's creation
- The Lion of the tribe of Judah
- The Root of David
- The Lamb – looking as if He'd been slain
- Who is Worthy
- The Lord of lords and King of kings
- Faithful and True 19:11
- Word of God 19:13
- King of kings and Lord of lords 19:16
- The Alpha and the Omega
- The Root and offspring of David, The Bright and Morning Star

QUOTE: God looks not at the elegance of your prayers, to see how neat they are; nor yet at the geometry of your prayers, to see how long they are; nor yet at the arithmetic of your prayers, to see how many they are; nor at the music of your prayers, nor yet at the sweetness of your voice, nor yet at the logic of your prayers; but at the sincerity of your prayers, how hearty they are. There is no prayer acknowledged, approved, accepted, recorded, or rewarded by God, but that wherein the heart is sincerely and wholly. The true mother would not have the child divided. God loves a broken and contrite heart, so He loathes a divided heart. God neither loves halting nor having.

Thomas Brooks

CIEFC Prayer: April 21 is Resurrection Sunday! Pray that many would come and hear the Good News, that believers' hearts would be strengthened by the joy & truth of the Resurrection.

HYMN: [Lily of the Valley](#)

I've found a friend in Jesus, He's everything to me, He's the fairest of ten thousand to my soul; He's the Lily of the Valley, in Him alone I see, All I need to cleanse and make me fully whole. In sorrow He's my comfort, in trouble He's my stay, He tells me every care on Him to roll: (chorus) **He's the Lily of the Valley, the Bright and Morning Star, He's the fairest of ten thousand to my soul.**

2. He all my griefs has taken, and all my sorrows borne; In temptation He's my strong and mighty tower; I've all for Him forsaken, and all my idols torn, From my heart, and now He keeps me by His power. Though all the world forsake me, and Satan tempt me sore, Through Jesus I shall safely reach the goal: (To chorus)

3. He'll never, never leave me, nor yet forsake me here, While I live by faith and do His blessed will; A wall of fire about me, I've nothing now to fear, With His manna He my hungry soul shall fill. Then sweeping up to glory to see His blessed face, Where rivers of delight shall ever roll: (To chorus)

Sunday April 14 Palm Sunday – Matthew 22:7-11

They brought the donkey and the colt, placed their cloaks on them, and Jesus sat on them. ⁸ A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹ The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, “Hosanna to the Son of David!”

“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”

“Hosanna in the highest!”

¹⁰ When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, “Who is this?” ¹¹ The crowds answered, “This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.”

SING: [He keeps me singing](#)

There's within my heart a melody
Jesus whispers sweet and low,
Fear not, I am with thee, peace, be still
In all of life's ebb and flow.

Chorus

*Jesus, Jesus, Jesus Sweetest Name I know
Fills my every longing Keeps me singing as I go.*

2. All my life was wrecked by sin and strife
Discord filled my heart with pain
Jesus swept across the broken strings
Stirred the slumb'ring chords again

3. Feasting on the riches of His grace
Resting 'neath His shelt'ring wing
Always looking on His smiling face
That is why I shout and sing

4. Tho' sometimes He leads thro' waters deep
Trials fall across the way
Tho' sometimes the path seems rough and steep
See His footprints all the way

5. Soon He's coming back to welcome me
Far beyond the starry sky
I shall wing my flight to worlds unknown
I shall reign with Him on high

Day 35 Mon. Apr. 15 Pray in the Spirit – Eph. 6:18

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

Another way to supercharge our prayer lives is to do what it says above. Pray with the Holy Spirit leading you as you pray, in a whole variety of ways, with a multitude of requests. Here's a few things to consider about the HOLY SPIRIT as you pray, cooperating with Him who is:

Our Comforter – John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7

Our Guide

Our Teacher

Our Intercessor – Rom. 8

Emblems of the Spirit – An emblem is “a picture representing to the mind something different from itself, a type or a symbol.”

Fire – Properties of..... “The fire of the Spirit produces burning zeal and incandescent love in the hearts of those wholly yielded to His influence. His purifying influence is in view.” J.O. Sanders

Wind (or Breath of God) (Acts 2) -

Water – John 7:37-39 – this flows!

Dove – at Jesus' baptism-a visible presence upon Jesus

A Seal – Eph. 1:13, 4:30; 2 Tim. 2:19 – keeping us safely in God's hand

Down-payment – ‘The Holy Spirit of promise’ Eph.1:13-14; 2 Cor. 5:5

Oil – OT passages ‘anointing’ – 1 John 2:20, 27; 2 Cor. 1:21; Heb. 1:9

QUOTE: “Prayer is the only entryway into genuine self-knowledge. It is also the main way we experience deep change—the reordering of our loves. Prayer is how God gives us so many of the unimaginable things he has for us. Indeed, prayer makes it safe for God to give us many of the things we most desire. It is the way we know God, the way we finally treat God as God. Prayer is simply the key to everything we need to do and be in life.” Tim Keller (these Tim Keller quotes are from his book: *Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God* Penguin Books 2016)

CIEFC Prayer: Pray that we will all have opportunities for telling people about what Christ has done for us THIS WEEK since it is a great time of the year to proclaim His death, burial, and resurrection from the dead!! Pray for the filling & empowering of the Spirit so we can be effective in witness.

SONG: [We believe](#) in God the Father, Maker of the universe

And in Christ His Son our Savior, Come to us by virgin birth

We believe He died to save us, Bore our sins was crucified

Then from death He rose victorious, Ascended to the Father's side

Chorus - Jesus Lord of all Lord of all (3x more); Name above all names (2x more)

2. We believe He sends His Spirit, On His church with gifts of power

God His word of truth affirming, Sends us to the nations now

He will come again in glory, Judge the living and the dead

Every knee shall bow before Him, Then must every tongue confess

CCLI Song No. 190689 © 1986 Thankyou Music (Admin. by EMI Christian Music Publishing)

Graham Kendrick For use solely with the SongSelect Terms of Use. All rights Reserved.

www.ccli.com CCLI # 377598

Day 36 Tues. Apr. 16 Prayer Burden – James 5:16-18

The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

Wesley Duewell: Carrying a Prayer Burden. A prayer burden is a level of intensity marked by urgency, commitment to the priority of the need, and holy determination to pray until God answers. You prevail with a prayer burden only by the enablement of the Holy Spirit. He summons you to prayer for the need, guides you in your praying, and fills you with the holy desire so intense that it becomes not only a deep concern but a consuming spiritual passion. It is the gracious work of the Spirit applying spiritual pressure upon your heart. It is God's way to call you to intercession at a time when your prayer is needed by God who has ordained to work through the intercession of His children. A situation that cries for God's answer.

5 Types

1. Instant, emergency prayer burden – sudden, strong call of the Spirit – an unexpected, sudden compulsion in your heart. A sense that your prayer is needed. As soon as you begin to pray, the burden gets heavier, and you feel the Spirit's help in prayer. You may not clearly know the reason for your SOS prayer burden until sometime later. You may never know. You may not know what to pray so you can begin with "Lord, let your will be done whatever the need..." Claim Christ's victory. As you continue in prayer, the Spirit may clarify more and more to your mind what you are praying for. Hold on until the burden lifts and God gives you peace.

2. Gradually deepening prayer burden – may begin with small interest but grows over time until it becomes a burden – a true prayer assignment from God. You find spare moments to return again and again to the need in prayer.

3. Long-term prayer burden – someone's prayer partner long-term, intercessor for a people group or a nation. *Mighty Prevailing Prayer* pp. 194-207

Have you ever experienced this? We've probably all been called by God to such a burden but maybe never answered the call. Ask the Lord to help you be someone He can count on in prayer.

CIEFC Prayer – Pray that we can all grow in prayer, learn to be effective in prayer, carry prayer burdens, and have blessed times of prayer together.

SONG: The Steadfast Love of the Lord Lam. 3:22-23

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, His mercies never come to an end.

They are new every morning, new every morning,

Great is Your faithfulness, O Lord, Great is Your faithfulness

Thou art worthy Rev. 4:11

Thou art worthy, Thou art worthy, Thou art worthy, O Lord

To receive glory, glory and honor, glory and honor and power

For Thou hast created, hast all things created, Thou has created all things.

And for Thy pleasure, they are created, Thou art worthy O Lord.

Day 37 Wed. Apr. 17 Matt. 7:7-12 A.S.K. (from 2011 40 days of Heart Work)

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. ⁹ "Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? ¹¹ If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! ¹² So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

The verbs: 'ask', 'seek', & 'knock' are all present imperative (commands) verbs. Jesus commands us to 'keep on asking, keep on seeking, and keep on knocking.' In other words, prayer requires diligence or persistence. Why? Because God is hard of hearing or we are to bother Him until He changes His mind? NO! Prayer requires persistence because persistence IS GOOD FOR US. As we keep bringing a matter before our Father in prayer, He works in our heart to bring about good things. As we keep on asking, we begin to examine the issue for which we are praying more closely. We begin to think about the will of God in the matter rather than just our desires. We begin to be willing to listen to God rather than just speak. Seeking often involves heart searching as we're told in Jer. 29:13 "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart." Persistence also helps us to remember that prayer is about our relationship with our Father and we remember that He is in control and He knows what is best for us. We are to seek Him rather than use Him. So, we are asking Him, seeking Him, and knocking on His door. Jesus goes on to help His hearers understand how gracious the Father is by drawing a comparison with earthly fathers. Most earthly fathers really do love and care for their children. They want what is best for them. HOW MUCH MORE will our Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him! He is able, willing, kind, gracious, & merciful – yet, at the same time, He is wise to give us according to His unending knowledge & wisdom. So, we should A.S.K. anticipating that our Father will answer us and we remember that He is good & wise. What have you been asking of the Father during Lent? Have you been also seeking Him about it and knocking on His door? Spend some time in prayer today ASKING of your Father.

CIEFC Prayer: Luke & Leanne Turk are working in the Central African Republic. Their last letter they asked for prayer: for Doctors and nurses, • People with specialty skills like anesthesia, nutrition, and physical therapy, • People with mechanical and IT skills, • People with pastoral experience to work with all ages and people with a heart for unreached people groups, • People with agricultural skills • For the 2019-2020 school year there remains a real need for hostel parents at the UBAC hostel in Yaoundé, Cameroon so that missionary parents (including us) can stay on the field! PLEASE contact us if you are interested!!! • And Rain Forest International School in Yaoundé is always in need of teachers (see the school website for details). LOTS of needs to keep ministry going there! Pray.

SONG: Ps. 9:1-2 I will give thanks unto the Lord

I will give thanks unto the Lord with all my heart

I will tell everyone of the things that Thou hast done,

I will sing praise to Thy name. I will give thanks unto the Lord

With all my heart. My soul shall find its source of joy

In Thee, Alleluia

Day 38 Apr. 18 Maundy Thursday John 13:34

Remember: *Maundy* comes from the Latin word *maundatum* which means "command". This comes from the commandment in John 13:34 after Jesus had washed His disciples' feet He said to them: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another."

Who comes to mind first when you hear this command? Someone difficult to love? Someone easy to love? Pray for that person right now!

Jesus not only commands us to do this, but He gave the living example in His patience with the disciples (and us!) and in His going all the way to the cross. Heb. 12:2 reminds us: *Who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

The reminder to love is all over the New Testament. Eph. 5:2 *and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.*

That is, we are to conduct our lives in a loving manner as we walk through our days and this is done as an offering to God and in a sacrificial manner.

The fruit of the Spirit is love (Gal. 5:22) so when we are yielding to Him, the Spirit empowers us to be able to bear the fruit of love.

Col. 3:13-14 reminds us: *Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.*

Today, as we think about the mandate Jesus gave us a command, in His example, by His sacrifice, and empowering us to do so through His Spirit, let us PUT ON LOVE – continually, sacrificially, with Jesus' example in mind, and grateful that we've been called by our Lord to emulate Him. WOW!

QUOTE: "God will either give us what we ask or give us what we would have asked if we knew everything he knows." Tim Keller

CIEFC Prayer: Pray Phil. 1:9 for our Church: *And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment...*

SONG: YOU LAID ASIDE YOUR MAJESTY

Words & Music By Noel Richards © 1985 Kingsway's Thankyou Music Used by permission CCLI #377598

You laid aside your majesty, gave up everything for me
Suffered at the hands of those you had created;
You took all my guilt and shame when You died and rose again,
Now today You reign in heaven and earth exalted

I really want to worship You, my Lord;
You have won my heart & I am Yours,
Forever and ever, I will love You;
You are the only one who died for me

Gave your life to set me free, so I lift my voice to You in adoration

Day 39 Apr. 19 GOOD FRIDAY! Isaiah 53:3-7

He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. ⁴ Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. ⁵ But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. ⁶ All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him. ⁷ He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth. (NAS)

The Gospel according to Isaiah is so clear in its description of just what Jesus went through and what He accomplished for us on that day long ago. Read the passage through several times and try to feel the weight of the great burden that our Suffering Servant bore because of our terrible transgressions, iniquities, and sins. God the Father is ultimately the One who crushed His One and only Son for us – He caused our iniquity to fall on Jesus. The unfathomable truth behind this? Romans 5:8 *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us!!*

Please spend the day contemplating these most wonderful truths. Thank God, worship Him, bow before Him, weep out of awe and gratitude.

Sing:

HYMN: "**Man of Sorrows.**" what a name, For the Son of God who came, Ruined sinners to reclaim! Hallelujah! What a Savior!
2. Bearing shame and scoffing rude, In my place condemned He stood; Sealed my pardon with His blood: Hallelujah! What a Savior!
3. Guilty, vile and helpless, we: Spotless Lamb of God was He: "Full atonement!" can it be? Hallelujah! What a Savior!
4. "Lifted up" was He to die, "It is finished," was His cry; Now in heav'n exalted high: Hallelujah! What a Savior!
5. When He comes, our glorious King, All His ransomed home to bring, Then anew this song we'll sing: Hallelujah! What a Savior!

PRAY: for some people you know who do not yet know the Savior and His work of redemption. Pray remembering God hears our prayer!

Day 40 Sat. Apr. 20 Silent Saturday Luke 24:13-21

Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem.¹⁴ They were talking with each other about everything that had happened.¹⁵ As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them;¹⁶ but they were kept from recognizing him.¹⁷ He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?" They stood still, their faces downcast.¹⁸ One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, "Are you only a visitor to Jerusalem and do not know the things that have happened there in these days?"¹⁹ "What things?" he asked. "About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people."²⁰ The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him;²¹ but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning but didn't find his body.

This actually took place on Resurrection Sunday, but Cleopas and his companion reflect the crushed spirit of Jesus' followers after He was crucified. All the events are VERY fresh on their minds so that they spend seven miles walking and talking about them. But they had lost their hope as their downcast faces tell us. They are willing to give Jesus the 'prophet' status and tell how they *had* hoped He was "the one to redeem Israel" but they seem to be leaving it all behind them. We know the whole story but, in spite of being told several times that the Christ must be crucified and raised on the third day, the reality of the events caused them to lose hope. Death is a pretty final statement/event, normally. Rising from the dead is not on most people's radar. Cleopas & friend are still in the silent Saturday mode like the disciples hiding in the upper room for fear of the officials that they thought might come to get them next. The next part of the story tells of the women's report but who can believe women? (the cultural feeling of the day). Jesus, as we know, opens their eyes after a long conversation. Their silent Saturday is over FOREVER! So is ours. Pray: Please pray that our worship service and potluck tomorrow might be used by the Spirit to bring some to faith, to strengthen others in their devotion to Jesus.

Hymn: [Take my life and let it be](#)

Take my life and let it be, Consecrated, Lord to Thee, Take my moments and my days, Let them flow in ceaseless praise (2x)
2, Take my hands and let them move, At the impulse of Your love, Take my feet and let them be, Swift and beautiful for Thee (2x)
3. Take my will, and make it Thine, It shall be no longer mine; Take my heart, it is Thine own, It shall be Thy royal throne (2x)
4, Take my love, my God, I pour at Thy feet its treasure store; Take myself and I will be, Ever, only, all for Thee (2x)

RESURRECTION Sunday – April 21 Luke 24:25-36 Suffering then Glory
He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!"²⁶ **Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?"**²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.²⁸ As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going farther.²⁹ But they urged him strongly, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them.³⁰ When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them.³¹ Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight.³² They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"³³ They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together³⁴ and saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon."³⁵ Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

Listen to Michael Card's song based on this passage, *Seven Endless Miles*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mk-Luie5_Ws

As we celebrate the Resurrection today, how often might our Lord say verse 25 to us? We know the whole story and yet how slow of heart are we to believe that: God answers prayer in Jesus' name, that the Holy Spirit empowers us to be effective witnesses of Christ, that God has already blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ, that trials are for our good, that faith can move mountains, that we are called to a holy life enabled by the Spirit? May our eyes be opened so that we can see the Risen, Reigning, Living Lord Jesus Christ and that He is the fulfillment of all that God has promised!

SONG: [I know that my Redeemer lives](#) Listen to this wonderful version by Bob Bennett
I know that my Redeemer lives; What comfort this sweet sentence gives!
He lives, He lives, who once was dead; He lives, my ever-living Head.

2. He lives to bless me with His love, He lives to plead for me above.
He lives my hungry soul to feed, He lives to help in time of need.
3. He lives triumphant from the grave, He lives eternally to save,
He lives all glorious in the sky, He lives exalted there on high.
4. He lives, all glory to His Name! He lives, my Jesus, still the same.
Oh, the sweet joy this sentence gives, I know that my Redeemer lives!

QUOTE: "Our time frames are not in touch with ultimate reality. Our perspective on timing compared with God's is analogous to a two-year-old's with an adult's. God has good reasons for making us wait a long time to see some prayers answered." Tim Keller