

“What We Pray”

Psalm 37:23 • Matthew 11:28-30
Romans 8:26 • James 1:5-8 • James 5:14-16
1 John 5:14-15 • 1 Peter 5:7

READ

REFLECT

Prayer is less about the precise words we use and more about the surrender of our hearts. As a parent it is a joy to hear your child learning to speak. It is actually a sad day when he/she no longer pronounces things in his/her cute, but incorrect, way. Scriptures uses examples of children with a father when speaking of what and how we should pray. Repeatedly throughout scripture we are told if we ask anything in God’s Name it will be given us. This does not mean add “in Jesus’ Name” to your prayers and say all the right words to get them answered. Praying in God’s Name means we are His children and have taken on His identity, His name as our own. When we take on our Father’s identity and heart, we can then pray in alignment with His plans. As we pray in accordance with His will, rather than just our own, He hears and responds. So, prayer is less about what we pray and how we phrase our requests and more about engaging our Heavenly Father’s heart. A great truth of prayer is that as we share our hearts with Him, He shares His heart with us. In prayer, we surrender our burdens in exchange for His beauty.

What is most important about what you pray?

Why do you think God wants to be heard and not just hear our prayers?

How can you work to pray more of God’s will than your own?

What is God speaking to you today through this devotional?

RESPOND

- Repent for any times you have made prayer only about what you want.
- Ask God to show His will and give you His heart through prayer.
- Ask God to help you truly surrender your burdens as you seek Him.



Prayer

MARCH 2017 DEVOTIONAL

At Bethel we are reaching a city to touch the world, and prayer is one of the most important ways we reach a city to touch the world. That may sound like a bold claim, but it is true. Prayer is vitally important because it is through prayer that we learn how to best reach a city and touch the world. Prayer empowers us to reach a city to touch the world by preaching the gospel and demonstrating God’s love in powerful ways.

As God’s family of believers at Bethel we do not want to just come up with slick strategies or marketable messages. We want God’s heart for people and His wisdom for how to most powerfully and effectively impact each and every person He brings our way with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Prayer is the means by which we receive God’s heart for our city and world and their precious inhabitants. It is also the means by which we receive His Kingdom plans for how to demonstrate His love. Through prayer, each and every one of us can learn how to powerfully communicate the good news and love of Jesus to those around us.

No matter how you would rate your prayer life, this devotional and time of prayer and consecration are for you and could not come at a more poignant time in the life of our church. As our church moves into the new building, it is an invitation for all of us to grow deeper in the things of God. As with any building project, a structure is only as strong as its foundation. Prayer is definitely a foundational element to any life of faith. As such, we pray this devotional will help strengthen your foundations and that you will continue to be built, ever stronger, into God’s living structure, the Church.

PURPOSE OF THE DEVOTIONAL

We have provided a daily devotional for the purpose of inspiration and greater unity during these days of consecration. Each devotional will include a section called READ with key scriptures for study and memorization. A second section of the devotional called REFLECT will provide a brief study as the heart of the devotional. Finally, we will conclude each day with a section called RESPOND, which will assist you in applying the revelation gained from the READ and REFLECT portions.

INFORMATION ON FASTING

Visit bethelworld.org and the January 2017 devotional for information on the purposes of fasting, helpful tips while fasting, and appropriate things to do and not do during a time of fasting.

BETHEL PRAYER SCHEDULE

- Monday:** Prayer at 6am and Noon in the sanctuary
(Fasting optional)
- Tuesday:** Prayer at 6am and Noon in the sanctuary
(Fasting optional)
- Wednesday:** Monthly Church-wide Day of Prayer and Fasting - Prayer at 6am and Noon in the sanctuary – 7pm service

“Why We Pray”

READ

Psalm 145:18 • Jeremiah 29:12-14; 33:3
Luke 5:16 • Colossians 4:2 • Hebrews 4:16

REFLECT

Prayer is one of those topics that can seem to be reserved for the super spiritual elite. However, this was never God’s intent. God never intended for just some Christians to call to Him some of the time, but rather that all believers would speak with Him continually. In the Old Testament, only the high priest could commune closely with God in God’s presence, and he could only enter God’s presence once a year. However, because of Jesus we now have the privileged opportunity to communicate closely with God on a continual basis. Jesus died not just so we could get in to Heaven, but so Heaven could invade our daily lives. And, one of the greatest ways Heaven invades our daily lives is through prayer.

Prayer is not a specific routine of certain words, but rather simply a routine of meeting with our Maker. Prayer is also not a means of enticing God to achieve our desired ends. We do not just pray to grab hold of answers, but we pray to grab hold of the great I AM. As such, prayer is the perpetual process by which we relinquish our burdens and desires in order to pick up God’s passions and plans. Since Jesus, being fully God Himself, needed consistent and considerable time away to talk with His Heavenly Father, how much more do we need to prioritize time communicating with our Heavenly Father?

Why do you pray? What is your most frequent motivation?

Why is Jesus’ example of regular prayer a powerful plea for us to do likewise?

What is God speaking to you today through this devotional?

RESPOND

- Repent for any times you have taken Jesus’ sacrifice for granted.
- Ask God to help you more deeply understand why prayer is important to Him.
- Ask God to invade your daily life through prayer.

“When, Where and How We Pray”

READ

Matthew 6:5-13 • Matthew 7:7-11 • Mark 11:24
Luke 18:1-8 • Philippians 4:4-8 • 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

REFLECT

This devotional could never attempt to cover all that could and should be said about how, when and where to pray, as volumes have been written on the topic. However, we hope to encourage you to choose to pray no matter where you find yourself. And, no matter when you find yourself thinking about God, we hope you will choose to talk with Him. One of the most profound scriptures about prayer tells us to never stop praying (1 Thessalonians 5:16). While there is certainly a time and place for deep intercession and meeting with God in the secret place, we are also told to talk with God all day, no matter where we are or what we are doing.

Think about how attached most of us are to our cell phones. We are constantly accessible to others and regularly accessing information and those around us. What if we actually stayed in that constant of communication with God? Let’s try. Every time you touch your phone, first stop and reach out to touch your Heavenly Father through prayer. The beauty of regular communication with our Creator is not just that He hears us, but that He wants to talk with us. None of us enjoy being talked at. Just as we want God to hear us He wants us to hear Him. Let’s work to more continually communicate with God through both speaking and listening. Let’s communicate with our Creator without ceasing

What helps you most in thinking about when, where, and how to pray?

How does thinking about prayer as more of a two-way street help you?

Why does God want us to pray without ceasing?

What is God speaking to you today through this devotional?

RESPOND

- Ask God to help you communicate with Him without ceasing.
- Ask God to help you know and hear His voice more clearly.
- Write down practical steps to help you communicate more regularly with God.