

WEEK FIVE

prayers OF hope

monday - PRAY FOR JOY

When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought me joy.
psalm 94:19

I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn over what is going to happen to me, but the world will rejoice. You will grieve, but your grief will suddenly turn to wonderful joy. It will be like a woman suffering the pains of labor. When her child is born, her anguish gives way to joy because she has brought a new baby into the world. So you have sorrow now, but I will see you again; then you will rejoice, and no one can rob you of that joy. At that time you won't need to ask me for anything. I tell you the truth, you will ask the Father directly, and he will grant your request because you use my name. You haven't done this before. Ask, using my name, and you will receive, and you will have abundant joy.
john 16: 20-24

Joy differs from happiness because it's not based on our circumstances, but rather based on the hope we have in Jesus. It's like the song we used to sing as kids..."I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy, down in my heart to stay!" Joy is something that lives deep within us; it is not easily robbed from us by bad news or climbing COVID-19 case numbers. In times like these it is easy to get frustrated, impatient, and fearful...but this week, let's go back to our source, our salvation, our hope. Let's tap into that deep well of abundant joy that dwells within us, seemingly dormant at times. Let's allow that joy to bubble over and to take center stage in our lives!

TODAY'S ACTION STEPS

Pray for God to shower you with His abundant joy. May we find joy in the little things; the warmth of the sunshine, children's smiles, the rhythm of the ocean waves, even leftover Easter candy! Share your joy with someone else today!

tuesday - PRAY FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES

And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others. For God is the one who provides seed for the farmer and then bread to eat. In the same way, he will provide and increase your resources and then produce a great harvest of generosity in you. Yes, you will

be enriched in every way so that you can always be generous. And when we take your gifts to those who need them, they will thank God.

2 corinthians 9: 8-9, 10-11

The coronavirus has greatly impacted our small local businesses. They are doing all they can to survive this season of massive change. Many of these business owners are our friends, family, and brothers and sisters in Christ. Let's spend some time praying for them today. Pray that God would graciously provide for them during this time. Pray that they are able to connect to resources available to them. Pray that many of them would be able to continue to serve and give back to our community. Pray that they would have peace and trust that God is making a way for them.

TODAY'S ACTION STEPS

If you are able and comfortable with it, participate in Take-Out Tuesday. Order food or coffee from one of your favorite local restaurants. If you are looking for a list of places that are open during this time follow slostilopen on Instagram. You can also purchase gift cards from local businesses to use at a later date.

wednesday - PRAY FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you. Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith. Remember that your family of believers all over the world is going through the same kind of suffering you are. In his kindness God called you to share in his eternal glory by means of Christ Jesus. So after you have suffered a little while, he will restore, support, and strengthen you, and he will place you on a firm foundation.

1 peter 5: 7-10

There is no shame in feeling anxious or worried during this time and there is no shame in asking for help. Please know that we truly are in this together and the God who intimately created you cares deeply about you and wants to shoulder your worries. In this season, may we find the balance between acknowledging the darkness, while not allowing it to become our closest friend. Cling to hope. Cling to what is good. And be gentle to yourself. It is ok if your day is not productive and it's ok if you haven't learned to sew or code websites during quarantine. Give yourself space to just be. Let's also spend time today praying for those who struggle with mental health, who are prone to clinical depression, anxiety, and other disorders. Let's pray hope and healing over their lives.

TODAY'S ACTION STEPS

If you are struggling, reach out! Call a friend or connect to a resource that can help. Many counseling centers are offering tele-health sessions. (New Life Counseling: 805-489-3891) If you know someone who struggles with mental health, reach out and check in on them.

thursday - PRAY FOR WISDOM

If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking.

james 1: 5

So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise. Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. Don't act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do.

ephesians 5: 15-17

Let's be honest. We need God and we need His wisdom. None of us have navigated a global pandemic or weeks and weeks of quarantine before. We are doing the best we can when it comes to parenting, teaching, loving our neighbors, and simply getting through the day. Let's ask God today to supply us generously with his wisdom today...that we might not act thoughtlessly, but actually make the most of these strange days. Let's also spend time praying for God to grant wisdom to our leaders. Many people across our community, country, and world are facing some big decisions about how to open back up while still keeping safe. Let's pray that God would direct those decisions with His wisdom.

TODAY'S ACTION STEPS

Pray with humility, recognizing that you are in need of wisdom and guidance. If there's an area of your life where you're feeling particularly inadequate, tell God and ask Him to direct you. Pray for wisdom for our leaders as they make decisions that greatly impact others.

***friday* - PRAY FOR THE UNDER-RESOURCED**

Who can be compared with the Lord our God, who is enthroned on high? He stoops to look down on heaven and on earth. He lifts the poor from the dust and the needy from the garbage dump. He sets them among princes, even the princes of his own people!

psalm 113: 5-8

As with most hardships, the coronavirus is especially harmful to those who are already under-resourced. Many people around the world (and in our own backyard) don't have access to adequate healthcare, food, or Netflix (gasp.) God cares deeply for those people and He has imparted to them dignity and value. Let's spend time praying for specific groups that are having an extra tough time during this season. Pray for our homeless community. Pray for those who are incarcerated. Pray for those who have no access to healthcare or health insurance. Pray for those who have recently lost their jobs. Pray for those who live in countries where quarantine means they are unable to provide food for their families.

TODAY'S ACTION STEPS

Spend time in prayer for these specific groups.
If you are in a position to help, don't hesitate to be the hands and feet of Jesus.

saturday - PRAY FOR GROWTH

And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow him. Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.

colossians 2: 6-7

These days are strange. All of us have been pushed outside of normalcy and outside of comfort zones. If there's one thing I know about my God, it's that He chooses to move and work most in those times where we are forced outside of our routine and are more likely to rely on Him. I am confident that God is going to use this time to grow you more and more into the man or woman He has created you to be. Let's use this time to allow our roots to grow down deep into Him. May God start a revival in our own hearts that pours out into our families, our cities and our world. When we finally come out of our homes, may we emerge as different people, firmly built on Him, and set ablaze, ready to do the things Jesus did and to awaken our cities to the love of Jesus!

TODAY'S ACTION STEPS

Allow God to work in your heart. Pay attention to the whispers He is speaking to you. Spend time in the Word today and ask God to start a revival in your heart.

sunday - PRAY FOR YOUR CHURCH

So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God's holy people. You are members of God's family. Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself. We are carefully joined together in him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord.

ephesians 2: 19-21

The church buildings may be closed, but the church is not closed; the church is deployed! These times are *proving* that the church was NEVER a building. God is still at work and He is using our local churches in mighty ways during this season. From feeding our community, to providing weekly worship in creative ways, to dispensing hope and encouragement daily. Our churches are doing an amazing job as being the Church! However, churches aren't exempt from the same struggles that we are all facing. From financial struggles, to struggles with endurance and adaptation. We need God's wisdom and provision in our churches as well.

TODAY'S ACTION STEPS

Pray for your church leadership.

Pray that the church would be a "place" of hope and encouragement for our hurting community.

May those who have never turned to the church before, look to the church for hope and help.

Partner with your church financially. Even if it's only a few dollars, it shows where you choose to place your trust, and allows your church to continue it's amazing ministry.