

WEEK TEN

prayers OF hope

monday - PRAY FOR ENDURANCE

When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.

ephesians 3: 14-19

How many times over the last few weeks have you thought to yourself (or yelled it out loud), "I don't know how much longer I can do this!"? The truth of the matter is, life is different, and our sense of "normalcy" still seems a long way off...and in all honesty, you CAN'T do this for much longer. Our will power and bootstraps are not strong enough to sustain us through this season which is longer than any of us anticipated. HOWEVER, there is a greater way to live, and it is relying on the POWER of the Holy Spirit to be our inner strength. It is interesting in this passage that Paul doesn't pray for circumstances to change, he prays that believers would tap into the UNLIMITED resources that empower us through His Spirit; the power to stand firm in the midst of the wind and waves. So let's look toward the week ahead and choose to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit, rather than our own strength. Let's spend the beginning of our week, and the beginning of each day, allowing our souls to be refilled by the Holy Spirit.

TODAY'S ACTION STEPS

Admit that you can't keep going on your own. Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you with His enduring power. Start your morning each day this week emptying yourself of your own strength and allowing God to fill you with His strength.

tuesday - PRAY FOR BABIES

You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it. You watched me as I

was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.

psalm 139: 13-16

Even though the world looks different, life still keeps moving on and babies are still being brought into this very different world. Praise God for new life! However, all over the world mamas and daddies are bringing home sweet precious newborns into a life of uncertainty and isolation. In fact, in many places, mothers are having to give birth without the support of their families. The weeks and months following the birth of a baby, can already feel lonely and overwhelming, pandemics aside. So let's pray that out of God's unending grace, he grants some special blessings to these new and growing families. Pray for God's protection to cover these babies and parents. May He fill in the gaps where we are unable to provide socialization or support.

TODAY'S ACTION STEPS

Pray for newborns and new moms and dads.
Pray against postpartum depression. Pray for comfort and community and sweet, sweet joy!

wednesday - ***PRAY FOR HUMILITY***

Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross.

philippians 2: 3-8

It's true, what the world needs now is love, sweet love. However, true Love, the kind that changes the world, is not possible without humility and sacrifice. Praying for God to humble you is not the most desirable prayer. In fact, it's pretty risky to pray those words, but it is exactly what the world needs now. I know, it's super difficult to even see past your own circumstances and interests. However, when we do get outside of our own heads and see ourselves in an accurate light, we gain the freedom to listen to others, to hear their stories and to enter into their circumstances. And... BONUS, when we choose to humble ourselves, we are never more like Jesus. When this season finally comes to an end, let's pray that we emerge as a community more focused on the needs of others, more willing to listen, and less focused on being right or sounding impressive.

TODAY'S ACTION STEPS

Pray the risky words, "Humble me, Lord."
Who can you "take an interest in" today?
Ask God to reveal a name to you, and then follow His lead.

thursday - ***PRAY FOR GOOD MEMORIES***

"Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. "You parents—if your children ask for a loaf of bread, do you give them a

stone instead? Or if they ask for a fish, do you give them a snake? Of course not!
So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him.

matthew 7: 7-11

As we keep on this path and start to consider what life will look like on the other side of this pandemic, I can't help but start to think about how we will remember this time. There is no doubt that we are living through history. There is also no doubt that we will look back at this season and remember the tremendous burden and our immense daily need for Jesus. However, we worship the God of miracles, and He loves us so much that He wants to pour out on us sweet moments; He wants to give good gifts to those who ask Him. So let's keep knocking and asking for God to bring GOOD out of this situation. Pray that seeds of His mercy and goodness will be planted in our hearts, and in the hearts of our loved ones so that one day we can look back and remember not just the hardships, but also the moments that sustained us.

TODAY'S ACTION STEPS

If you don't already, start the habit of journaling. Pour out your heart to God, but also record moments of God's faithfulness during this time. Boldly ask God to grant you a gift today, one that will be captured and remembered for years to come. He is able.

***friday* - PRAY FOR THE HUNGRY WORLDWIDE**

Feed the hungry, and help those in trouble. Then your light will shine out from the darkness, and the darkness around you will be as bright as noon. The Lord will guide you continually, giving you water when you are dry and restoring your strength. You will be like a well-watered garden, like an ever-flowing spring.

isaiah 58: 10-11

I'm sure you are aware that COVID-19 isn't the only crisis happening in the world these days. In fact, in many ways it has caused a chain reaction, depleting the resources of the already vulnerable. Let's spend some time today interceding for those we will never meet. Let's pray for God's favor to be upon those who are struggling to feed themselves and their families. Pray that God would miraculously multiply their harvests, like He did over 2,000 years ago with a little child's meager lunch. Pray that God, through His Church would continue to be the light that shines in the darkness. Pray that the Church would be that ever-flowing spring, blessing those around the world and giving God the glory He deserves.

TODAY'S ACTION STEPS

Pray against hunger. Pray for miracles of multiplication. Pray for organizations that are doing all they can to feed those who need it most during this time. If you are able, consider making a donation to one of these organizations. If you don't know of one, World Vision is a great place to start.

saturday - PRAY FOR YOUR CIRCLE

The heartfelt counsel of a friend is as sweet as perfume and incense.
proverbs 27: 9

Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble.
ecclesiastes 4: 9-10

While it's important to pray for the overwhelming problems occurring all over the world; let's not forget to continue to pray for those closest to us. Whether it is your family, your small group, your church family, or simply those you hang out with; lift them up to the Lord today. Pray for your children and your parents. Plead to the Lord on their behalf. Let's also take some time today to consider who is on our team. Do you have friends that strengthen you and spur you on to good things? Do you have friends who continually point you back to Jesus? If so, thank God for them. If not, pray that God would start to fill your circle with people who will be like a sweet perfume in your life.

TODAY'S ACTION STEPS

Call or text a friend today and thank them for their friendship. Pray for those who are closest to you. Pray that God would fill your life with friends who give you wise counsel.

sunday - PRAY FOR FORWARD-THINKING

I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me. No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.
philippians 3: 12-14

I'm sure you've found yourself longing for how it used to be. While it is tempting to look back on the good old days when things were "normal" it is important to remember not to look back too often because we are not going that way. If you desire to do things how we've always done it, you are probably setting yourself up for disappointment. However, if you begin to treasure the ONE, the reason behind the form and programs, you are free to receive and love whatever they are turning into. God is a God who moves forward; He's a God of creativity and innovation. No pandemic is going to stop the forward movement of the Kingdom of God! So we, as the people of God, will continue to walk forward, in step with Jesus, excited for the new wine to put into our new wineskins, and learn to treasure the Winemaker above all else. Things may never go back to "normal" but that doesn't mean that they won't be AMAZING and exceed all of our expectations.

TODAY'S ACTION STEPS

Pray for creativity and innovation. Pray that God would plant a seed of excitement in your heart for what lies ahead. Ask God to give you a vision for what He is doing during this time. Spend time surrendering your expectations and allow yourself to be hopeful for the future. Listen to "Alive and Breathing" by Matt Maher and "New Wine" by Hillsong Worship.