

prayers OF hope

monday - PRAY FOR EMPATHY

Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong.

Hold tightly to what is good. Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other. Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically. Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying. When God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality.

romans 12: 10-13

"Love each other with genuine affection and take delight in honoring each other." Take a moment to reflect on that verse and ask God to search your heart. Have you, have we as the Church, taken delight in honoring each other? Or have we been so focused on the sacrifices we've had to make that we forget that those very sacrifices are made out of love and honor to each other and to our community. We've heard it said many times throughout these past months. "We may all be in the same storm, but we are not in the same boat." Let's take time today to (metaphorically) enter another's boat. While many of us have been inconvenienced, stretched, and pushed to our limits, others have suffered deep losses. Job loss, loss of retirement, loss of a loved one. Let's be intentional today about seeing our sacrifices as an act of love, out of genuine affection for each other. As Bob Goff says, "Loving people the way Jesus did means constantly taking cuts to the back of the line." Also, as today is Memorial Day, let's not forget to pray with empathy, for those who have cut to the back of the line and made the ultimate sacrifice for the sake of others.

TODAY'S ACTION STEPS

Ask God to give you genuine affection for those around you today, even those you disagree with. Choose to see the sacrifices you're making today (big or small) as an act of love to your community.

tuesday - PRAY FOR FRUIT

But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things! Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives.

galatians 5: 22-25

The age-old metaphor of the vine and the branches. How rich it is still today! We, as the branches, can literally do NOTHING on our own to produce fruit. The branch has one job, and one job alone. Stay connected to the vine. No matter the wind of the storm. Just stay connected. Hold tightly to the Vine. Because it is through that unhindered connection that we are opened up to our fruit-making abilities. What the Holy Spirit can produce in us through this connection is exactly what will make this world more adequately reflect the Kingdom of God. Love, the antidote for hate and fear. Joy, the antidote for depression. Peace, the antidote for anxiety. Patience, the antidote for a hot temper. Kindness, the antidote for selfishness. Goodness, the antidote for corruption. Faithfulness, the antidote for distrust. Gentleness, the antidote for abrasiveness. Self-control, the antidote for recklessness. May THESE be the things that are produced in us this season.

TODAY'S ACTION STEPS

Reconnect to the Vine. Spend time today asking the Holy Spirit to fill your life and produce these types of fruit. Pray that our fruit would be evidence of the Holy Spirit's mighty work to a broken and hurting world.

wednesday - **PRAY FOR PROTECTION**

"God's way is perfect. All the Lord's promises prove true. He is a shield for all who look to him for protection. For who is God except the Lord? Who but our God is a solid rock? God is my strong fortress, and he makes my way perfect. He makes me as surefooted as a deer, enabling me to stand on mountain heights.

2 samuel 22: 31-34

As each of us consider what it looks like to open ourselves up and begin to regather in different ways, may we do so with wisdom and discernment. In the coming weeks we will all be taking somewhat of a calculated risk. Whether it's re-opening our business, eating at a restaurant, gathering with close friends, or meeting as a church family. All are great and wonderful things and necessary to move forward; however, all hold with them an element of risk. Here on the Central Coast, we have been largely spared from the devastation seen in other parts of the country and world. That is not to minimize the Central Coast lives that have been affected; but relatively speaking, God's hands of protection seem to have been upon us through His supernatural power and the loving sacrifice of our community. As we take the welcomed and exciting steps toward "normalcy" let's pray together that God would continue to protect us and guide us with His wisdom.

TODAY'S ACTION STEPS

Pray in Jesus' name that our infection rates will remain low as we begin to re-open our counties. Pray for those who continually risk their health for others. Pray for God to miraculously protect the vulnerable among us.

thursday - **PRAY FOR MARRIAGES**

Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts

colossians 3: 12-15

Let's be honest. All this stress and uncertainty and extended periods of being in each other's space has caused many of our marriages to take a hit. We've been short with each other and spoken with harsh words. We've taken our fear and our anger out on the ones we love. For those with kids, alone time has been non-existent; and for those without kids at home, every night has been date night. And sometimes too much of a good thing can be a problem. Let's pray that God would reawaken our love for our spouse. As we start to see the light at the end of the tunnel, may we see this season as temporary and may we persevere with God's strength. Above all else, may we clothe ourselves with love for each other and make allowances for each other's faults.

TODAY'S ACTION STEPS

Ask for forgiveness today. Forgive your spouse today. Make allowances with grace and humility. If you are single, pray for the marriages around you. Pray that God would strengthen and equip them for this season. Pray that God would miraculously repair that which has been fractured.

friday - **PRAY FOR NEARNESS**

"Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends.

revelation 3:20

"His purpose was for the nations to seek after God and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him—though he is not far from any one of us. For in him we live and move and exist. As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.' And since this is true, we shouldn't think of God as an idol designed by craftsmen from gold or silver or stone.

acts 17: 27-29

If you're like most of us, the disappointments, the fear, the anxiety, the anger over the world being closed, have slowly taken up residence in your heart. All of these things (and more) built up over time, have created what feels like a wall between you and God. Even though we may be doing all the same things, it feels like our prayers are just bouncing back off that wall. However, as we all can attest to, our feelings don't always match reality. The truth of the matter is, Jesus doesn't social distance. You can't stay 6ft away from someone who dwells WITHIN you. As this verse in Revelation says, He is already at the door, and He wants to come in and share a meal. He's not trying to make a Zoom call over a terrible WiFi connection. He is NEAR. So let's give over to Him those things that have been building up that wall. Brick by brick, let's tear it down to reveal the truth that God has not left you and that His presence is available to you today.

TODAY'S ACTION STEPS

Ask God to reveal that which has been hindering His nearness. Pray for God's presence to fill your heart and your home.

saturday - PRAY FOR CONFIDENCE

Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure
ephesians 1: 4-5

You have been CHOSEN by God. And if you have been chosen by the One who placed the stars in the sky, there is no doubt about it. You matter. Perhaps the stress of this pandemic or the isolation it has brought caused you to believe lies from the enemy. That you've been passed over. That you're invisible. That your time for viability and purpose is over. That other people are the ones who are called and equipped by God to make a difference. Nothing could be further from the truth! If you are breathing and you are in Christ, your life and identity is in the One who IS life. And He's not done with you yet! The Kingdom of God is crashing into Earth and God is pursuing people with His love, hope, and redemption. And He wants you to be a part of that pursuit! He is moving, even now, and you have a role to play. It's time to start seeing yourself as God sees you: called, equipped, valued, and with great purpose. The world is opening up and the harvest is plenty. It's time to step into your calling.

TODAY'S ACTION STEPS

Ask God to reveal to you the way He sees you. What has God been preparing in you during this season? Where is He calling you to step out in faith? Spend time allowing God to fill you with His truths about your identity, your calling and your value.

sunday - PRAY FOR YOUR PASTORS

And I will give you shepherds after my own heart,
who will guide you with knowledge and understanding.
jeremiah 3:15

I know we've asked you to pray for us multiple times during this season, but man, do we covet your prayers! Every week of this pandemic has stretched us beyond the capacities of our own leadership. So we thank you for praying for God to continue to sustain us and guide us through His strength. As we prayerfully consider when and how to re-gather with our congregations, we need God's supernatural wisdom and discernment. We are being bombarded with so many people's beliefs and opinions about how to move forward. We know that most are well-meaning and coming at us with love. However, it is very difficult to sift through all the different perspectives to see the situation through God's eyes. Pray that God would move in us and bring us His peace that we are making the right decisions through His discernment. Pray for peace of mind and restful sleep. Above all, pray for love, humility, and grace as we make difficult decisions in partnership with each other, with our leaders, and, of course, with the Holy Spirit.

TODAY'S ACTION STEPS

Pray for your pastor and other pastors in the area. Pray for wisdom and discernment. Pray that we would hear and know God's heart for our people. We always would love a note of encouragement and support. Pray also for our church leaders who also face hard decisions about regathering.