

HOW TO SPEND A DAY IN PRAYER

PREPARING FOR YOUR DAY OF PRAYER

The Day Before—Preparation for your “Day of Prayer” begins the evening before. In Scripture the day begins in the evening—“*the evening and the morning*” made up each day in Genesis 1. Start with an attitude of humility. God calls us to humble ourselves before Him and to come recognizing our needs (personally, communally, nationally, internationally) and to cry out to Him for mercy and grace (Hebrews 4:14-16). Read these verses the day before your “Day of Prayer”: (1 Peter 5:5-8; James 4:5-10; Philippians 2:3-11; 2 Chronicles 7:14; Isaiah 66:2; Luke 18:9-14; Isaiah 57:15; Psalm 51:17; 138:6; 34:18).

Praying takes time—Determine your block of time (at least 3 hours) for your “Day of Prayer.” You may choose to set aside two, three, or more blocks of time (for example, early morning, mid-morning, mid-day, afternoon, early evening, or late evening). Make this time a priority and work your schedule accordingly.

Prepare Physically—Get a good night’s rest the night before to be alert for the next day. If the Lord calls you to fast, you may begin your fast by missing supper or prepare for the next day by eating a very light supper (do not splurge first before you fast). For additional thoughts, “Guidelines for Prayer and Fasting” can be downloaded from www.flbaptist.org/i366.

Prepare Mentally—Watch out for distractions. The enemy can use many forms of thought darts—TV, movies, internet, all kinds of media—to distract and even detract from your time with God. Be quiet, read some Scripture, and focus attention on God. Give Him your night and the following day.

Prepare Spiritually—The night before your “Day of Prayer,” prepare your heart with a quiet time with the Lord. Read about some of the Days of Prayer recorded in Scripture (see 1 Chronicles 28-29; 2 Chronicles 5-7; 15:1-15; 20; 30-32; Ezra 8; Nehemiah 8-9; Esther 4-8; Joel 2; Acts 4; 12).

Come Expectantly—Expect to meet with God and to see answers because of your time in prayer. Remember, who you are meeting and consider this as important an appointment as you could possibly have—more so than with any king, president, CEO, or celebrity. This is God! Remember the essential attitude of humility (1 Peter 5:5-8).

Eliminate Distractions—Seek to eliminate any distractions or potential distractions. Choose a place that is quiet. Avoid phone calls. Turn off your cell phone unless it is absolutely necessary. Be alert. You are in a war zone! Watch out for enemy distractions—thought darts, worry zones, false-guilt attacks, and thought “parades” (one thought after another, one “remember this-remember that” after another). Call on the Lord. Give Him the Day. Ask Him for His protection, His power, and His guidance.

THE DAY OF PRAYER

Get up—Wake up—Listen up. Do what is necessary to be alert and focused. Bring your Bible and a small notebook or Journal for your prayer time. You may want to write some verses of Scripture, record insights God gives you in prayer, write out your prayers, or write the things God leads you to pray for. This will help you pray in later days and track the answers better.

Important Note: Your goal in this Day of Prayer is not to get through this guideline on “How to Spend a Day in Prayer.” Your goal is to pray, being led by the Spirit of God. You may spend longer times or shorter times in certain parts of this prayer guide as the Spirit leads you. He may bring up issues that are

not mentioned here. Pray over the burdens He gives. Pray concerning the “burning” in your heart. Remember, the Holy Spirit is The guide in prayer. We are weak and ignorant and must depend on Him to guide us and to pray for us (Romans 8:26-27). Follow Him and His word on this journey in prayer.

1. A TIME FOR WORSHIP

The entire day is one of worship, as every day should be. Worship is the expression of love, respect, adoration, reverence, fear, obedience and trust to the Lord. In believing God is who He says He is, we respond in worship by honoring Him as God in all and over all we do—work, school, hobbies, home life, friendships, etc. (Romans 1:21; 12:1-2). With an all-day worship mindset, it is fitting that to have special focused times of worship, time more concentrated on our Heavenly Father, Jesus our Lord, and the leading and enabling of the Holy Spirit. Here is a general guideline for a time of worship:

True Worship—True worship is walking in the fear of the Lord, obeying Him and His Word, and withholding nothing from Him (Genesis 22:5, 11-12, 18). It is a moment-by-moment surrender of all you are to all He is (Romans 12:1-2; Matthew 6:9).

Surrender to Jesus as Lord this day (Romans 12:1-2). Submit and commit this time to the Lord. Thank the Lord for His presence and His promises. Focus on the Lord.

Honor and praise the Lord (Romans 1:21). Listed are Bible passages you may select from to read and use to praise the Lord: Genesis 1:1-31; Exodus 15:1-21; 1 Chronicles 16:8-36; Psalm 8; 18; 19; 24; 29; 33; 34; 47; 65; 66; 67; 76; 77; 84; 92; 93; 97; 98; 99; 100; 103; 104; 111; 145; 146; 147; 148; 149; 150; Isaiah 40; 44:6-8; Daniel 4:34-37; Nehemiah 9:5-38; Matthew 2:1-11; 11:25-30; Luke 1:46-55; 67-79; John 9:35-38; 12:1-8; 20:26-29; Romans 16:25-27; Ephesians 1:1-14; 3:20-21; Philippians 2:5-11; 1 Timothy 1:17; 6:15-16; 2 Peter 3:18; Jude 24-25; Revelation 4-5; 11:15-18; 19:1-7.

In praising the Lord, you may want to use a hymnal or book of poetry or prose to aid in singing to or speaking praise to the Lord. Often the words of a hymn connect with the heart in a unique way. They are the testimony of a brother or sister in Christ who has walked with God. Their testimony through a song or poem connects with your heart and helps connect your heart with the heart of God.

Give Thanks to the Lord—We have much for which to be thankful. Some helpful Scriptures to focus your thanksgiving include: Psalm 100; Romans 1:8; 1 Corinthians 1:4-9; 2 Corinthians 2:14; 9:15; Ephesians 1:15-16; Colossians 1:3-4; 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3; 2:13; Philippians 1:3-4. Be specific in thanking the Lord for the following:

Spiritual Blessings-You may want to write these in your notebook/Journal.

Relational Blessings-Name names of family members, friends, and fellow believers.

Physical Blessings

Material Blessings

Trials/Pressures and Certain People-Matthew 5:10-12, 43-48; James 1:2-5).

Heart Check Up—As you begin your time of prayer, sometimes there are distractions that interfere. The closest distraction is “static” in the heart. It is a misconnection, something that interferes with hearing or speaking clearly. Unconfessed and undealt-with sin can be a major distraction. How is your heart before the Lord? Are you having difficulty praising or thanking Him? Ask the Lord to show you anything that is in the way, anything you have not dealt with His way, any sin or offense against Him or against another. Is there some matter of restitution that you need to take care of?

As you come before the Lord and read the Bible, the Spirit of God may convict you of something you need to deal with. It may be a sin to confess, a wrong to make right, or some matter of disobedience, or restitution that you need to make. Whatever God brings to mind, deal with promptly and fully. If you need to contact someone, do it as soon as possible.

As He brings things to mind, jot them down on a notepad. List any sins He brings up. Then, confess those as wrong, agree to make right what you can make right, and claim 1 John 1:9. He has promised to forgive and cleanse because He deals with the sin and the stain. Take the list and shred it or burn it because it has been dealt with on the Cross and in your heart. For those situations in which you need to make something right, ask the Lord for wisdom in how to do that as quickly as possible. For further help, read “How to Deal with Sin,” a resource available at www.flbaptist.org/i366.

Remember, it is vital to die to self and any selfish agenda (Luke 9:23-25); maintain a heart of surrender throughout the day; and recognize that you may encounter some moments of wrestling over an issue. Look to the Lord and let Him have His way. Trust God for what He brings up and that He wants the very best for you—His best.

THE HOLY SPIRIT’S FULLNESS IN YOUR LIFE—By faith ask for and receive the fullness and control of the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 5:18 commands us to keep on being filled with the Spirit making it God’s will for sure and a daily directive. We must depend on the Spirit of God to empower us in all of life. If we are to see Him working in our lives and in our churches, we need His fullness matched to our surrender and trust. Over 2,500 years ago, the Spirit of God reminded Zechariah and the people of Israel that God’s work would be done “*not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the LORD of Hosts*” (Zechariah 4:6). Not military might, abundance of wealth, technological genius, physical strength, human ingenuity, or superb organizational skills will accomplish what God wants in His Kingdom. We must depend on the Spirit of God to accomplish His work in us and through us—using what He wants as we surrender all to Him. Yield to the Fullness and Control of the Holy Spirit expecting Him to empower you to pray and to do His will His way (Ephesians 5:18-21; Galatians 5:22-24)

THE HOLY SPIRIT’S LEADING IN YOUR PRAYING—The Spirit of God will give different burdens to different people. He will burn something in your heart for which He wants you to pray and in which He will lead you in prayer. Look to Him to guide you in prayer. Jude 20 speaks of “*praying in the Holy Spirit,*” meaning to be led by Him, under His control (Ephesians 5:18; 6:18). This is not some weird experience. He will bring things to mind, He will guide you with Scriptures to pray, bringing certain Scriptures to mind to match certain burdens on your heart. He will give you insight during your Day of Prayer.

2. TIMES IN THE WORD OF GOD

Intersperse times in the word with your times of Prayer. Read and meditate on the Word throughout your “Day of Prayer.” Let God’s thinking frame your thinking. He wants us to think in line with His word. God’s word is a lamp to our feet—everywhere we go and in everything we do, especially in how to pray. In humility, seek the Lord and His will in the word. Let your thoughts and prayers in every area be in line with the word of God (Joshua 1:8; Psalm 119:9-18, 38, 72-74, 97-105, 127-130, 160-176; John 17:17; Ephesians 6:19-20; Colossians 4:2-6).

PRAY THE WORD OF GOD—The more you know and understand His word, the greater your “prayer vocabulary” grows. You begin to think Scripture thoughts and pray Scripture prayers. Often reading and meditating on the word will lead you directly into praise or thanksgiving; confession of sin; intercession for others; or to petition for your own needs. At times, God will bring a person to mind as you are reading His word. Look for “prayer connection points” between what you are reading (a verse, a story, a phrase, a promise) and the person of whom you are thinking and pray as the Spirit of God leads.

Pray the Scriptures—Pray the scriptures back to the Lord. Let Him lead you in prayer as you meet with Him in the word. Purposefully mix prayer with reading the Word. Just as you read the word in your times of praise and thanksgiving, so read the word as you pray over various needs you are aware of and over any lists of requests you have for this day. In scripture, we find examples of believers who prayed the word of God. In Nehemiah 1:5-11, he quotes from Leviticus 26:33; Deuteronomy 30:2-4; 12:5. In Daniel 9, he prays after reading Jeremiah 25:11-12; 29:10. In Hebrews 10:5-10, we find Jesus’ prayer from Psalm 40:6-8.

Passages you can pray or that can help you pray the Word of God include: Joshua 1-2; 1 Samuel 1-2;; Psalm 1, 19, 119, ; Matthew 5-7; Ephesians 1:15-21; 3:14-21; Philippians 1:9-11; Colossians 1:9-12; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; 2 Thessalonians 3:1-5.

Be Undistracted and Undisturbed—To help in concentrating on the Lord and praying, you may want to read the Bible out loud and pray out loud. Stand up if you are getting sleepy. Perhaps, take a walk in a place where you can concentrate and remain undisturbed and undistracted. Write your prayers in your notebook. That often helps concentration. Write a poem or a letter to God. Sing a song to the Lord. Remember, it is just you and Him in the room.

Be Aware—The enemy will try to distract you, deter you, detour your thinking, make you feel defeated, or just plain dumb. No matter what happens, keep praying. Keep looking to the Lord and His word. Pray the things God burns in your heart and mind.

Be a Follower—Remember, your goal is not simply to finish this Guideline. Your goal is to follow the leading and burdening of the Spirit in prayer, seeking God for His will and way in the matters that are important to Him.

3. A TIME OF PRAYER FOR YOUR WITNESS AND THE WITNESS OF YOUR CHURCH

Make an impact that makes a difference—Every person and every church makes an impact for good or for evil. God wants us to make an impact that makes a difference. He does that by placing Himself, the “treasure,” in earthen vessels, jars of clay, and then placing us, His vessels, so that the life of Jesus can be revealed (2 Corinthians 4:7; Matthew 6:10).

Pray for your impact/Christian witness at home—Pray for your Christian witness to your own family and pray for the witness of your family to those around them. Ask the Lord to make an impact through each one. (Luke 8:39; Acts 16:14-15, 25-34).

Pray for your Christian witness and your church’s impact in your neighborhood, work and community—Pray for your neighbors, your work associates, and the leaders of your community. (Luke 8:39; Acts 2:46-47; 5:14, 42; 6:7). As you pray, be specific in praying for those who are lost—unsaved. Pray for the lost by name. As a help in praying, download “Prayer Points for Laboring in the Harvest and Touching the Lost” from www.flbaptist.org/evangelism/prayer.htm. This gives specific scripture guidelines on praying for the lost.

Pray for your world impact and Christian witness and your church’s impact beyond your hometown—Pray for how God may want to use your witness beyond your current hometown. (Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:8; 2:5-11; 8:4; 9:31; 10:34-35; 11:18; 13:2-4; 19:26)

4. A TIME OF PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The witness of each Christian and each church often changes dramatically in times of Spiritual Awakening. Every awakening in the Old Testament, New Testament, and in Church History has been a time of returning to the Lord, His Word, and Spirit-filled worship and witness. Everything intensifies in a Spiritual Awakening—worship, insight in the word, effective and fruitful Christian witnessing, creative and fruitful new ministries, as well as the spiritual battles that are part of the spiritual war we face.

We need Spiritual Awakening in our churches and among many, many Christians in Florida. We need the influence of spirit-filled, spirit-led Christians and churches in every area. Pray for God to work supernaturally.

In our **churches**—Pray for brokenness before the Lord for our spiritual leaders (pastors, deacons, Sunday school teachers, Small Group leaders, any involved in leadership). Pray for congregations to recognize signs of lethargy, laziness, lack of love, and concern for others. Pray for all to recognize any sin, repent, and return to the Lord, calling on Him for spiritual awakening

In our **neighborhoods**—Pray for needs that you are aware of; sensitivity to things the Lord wants you to pray for your neighbors; and for the Lord to make you sensitive to those areas in which He wants you involved.

In our **community**—Pray for community needs and the Lord’s will in those areas

In our **schools**—At every level, preschool through University, pray for God to open doors into the hearts and lives of the students, teachers, and administrators.

In our **government**—Pray for those in authority (Romans 13:1-7; 1 Timothy 2:1-4) and for God’s working in their lives. Pray for open doors for the Word as Paul prayed when he was in a Roman prison writing Colossians 4:3-7.

In our **recreation, arts, sports**—Pray for open doors in each of these areas. Pray for a clear witness of the Lordship of Jesus over each area, in each event.

In our **media**—Pray for creative ways to reach people and for Christian influence and impact on individuals involved in print, internet, TV and radio.

5. A TIME OF PRAYER FOR YOUR WORK—[ON THE JOB OR AT SCHOOL AND IN THE KINGDOM]

Work is God's will for our daily lives. His priority is always to follow Him and His word in our work and He wants us to Pray for the work He gives us to do. There are three areas of our work. (Matthew 6:10-11). In scripture we find at least three areas of work: the work of ministry in the church and Kingdom; the work of missions at home and throughout the world; and the work of maintenance, the daily work for food, clothing, shelter, personal needs, and the opportunities to help with the needs of others.

Pray for your work of ministry—Every believer is blessed with spiritual gifts to be used in the local church, the body of Christ. Pray to discover and use those grace gifts as the Lord desires. Pray for the ministry God has given you or desires to give you. Pray for your church and the ministries God has given there. Pray that you and those with whom you worship and work will guard against self-made, self-achieved “ministry” and strife with one another in ministry (Romans 12:3-8; Colossians 4:17; James 3:13-18).

Pray for your work of missions—Pray for your involvement in local and world missions and for others involved in world missions. Pray for missionaries you know or of needs on the field of which you have been made aware. Pray for the Missions on which God may send you in your neighborhood, community, or around the world (Matthew 28:17-20; Romans 15:30; 2 Corinthians 1:10-11).

Pray for your work of maintenance—Pray for your daily job—to “do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men” (Colossians 3:23). Pray for your physical and material needs knowing your God knows those needs (Matthew 6:8). Pray for your finances and all that is involved in the day-to-day maintenance of what God has entrusted to you (Ephesians 4:28; 6:5-9; Colossians 3:22-25; 4:1; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15).

6. A TIME OF PRAYER FOR THE WARFARE YOU FACE

We live on a fallen earth and there is a war going on all around us. Some are warring against God; all of us face our struggles with the world, the flesh, and the devil. Jesus has overcome all and as we surrender to Him we enter into His victory. (Matthew 6:12-13)

Pray concerning your war with the “flesh”—Paul said, “I am crucified with Christ,” referring to his daily death to his old, sinful ways (Galatians 2:20). The cross is the only place that fits our “flesh” or sinful nature. As you die to the “flesh,” or “self,” you are free to let Christ live His life in and through you. Is there an area of your “flesh” with which you are now wrestling? By faith, bring it to Jesus and the cross. Count that area as “dead” and yield all to live unto God (Romans 6:5-14; Galatians 2:20; 5:16-17, 22-24; 1 Peter 2:11; Philippians 1:21).

Pray concerning your War with the world—Paul said, “The world has been crucified to me, and I to the world” (Galatians 6:14) and he urged us to “not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Romans 12:2). Is there a battle going on between you and the world system? Pray in line with Romans 13:12-14; James 4:4-6; 1 Peter 2:11-12; and 1 John 2:15-17; 5:21.

Pray concerning your War with the devil—Our submission to Christ is our victory over the devil. James 4:7 says “Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” Pray in humility in the light of 1 Peter 5:6-9 and Ephesians 6:10-20, trusting the strength of the Lord. Remember as you face the enemy's temptations, the promise of 1 Corinthians 10:13, “No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it.”

7. A TIME OF PRAYER FOR YOUR DAILY WALK

As you come to the end of your “Day of Prayer,” there are some personal areas over which to pray. Use this time to talk to the Lord about your walk with Him.

Pray about your relationship with the Lord—Think back over your time of prayer this day. What has the Lord spoken to you about personally? Talk with Him about those things that are personal burdens to you: spiritual struggles; emotional battles; financial problems; questions about your walk with the Lord. Whatever is on your heart, talk to the Lord about it.

Pray over your daily schedule—Ask the Lord if there is anything that needs to change in your daily or weekly schedule. Talk to Him about your responsibilities, upcoming events, etc.

Pray over your family/home—Ask these questions of yourself: How are things at home? How is your family? Talk to the Lord about each member of your family. Pray for His will—His best in each life.

Pray over your other relationships—Pray for friends, relatives, work associates, neighbors, etc. Whatever burden the Lord brings to mind or need surfaces as you think of these, talk to the Lord about it. Pray for His will in each life.

For each of these areas, especially for those closest to you, pray the **B.L.E.S.S.** prayer.

B.—Bodily needs: physical health, strength

L.—Labor needs: work, finances/budget

E.—Emotional needs: strains and stresses in life, freedom from worry, well-being in their lives

S.—Social needs: relationships at home, work, school, church or in the neighborhood

S.—Spiritual needs: That each would have a personal, growing relationship to Jesus as Lord and Savior and be involved in a healthy, truth-telling, truth-living local church.

THE END OF YOUR DAY OF PRAYER

As you close your “Day of Prayer,” thank the Lord for His guidance in this day; the way He has spoken to you; and for the way He will work in the days ahead through your praying. You may want to write a letter to the Lord in your journal, notebook or simply on a piece of paper. Record your praises, thanks and thoughts from the day. Remember, you have invested in eternity (Revelation 5:8).
