

21 Days of Prayer and Fasting

Each day we want to focus on a prayer or promise from scripture. Take time after you read to intentionally pray for each day's focus. If you want more information on prayer and fasting and to find each day in a portal format visit benningtonsda.org/21daysofprayer.

Day 1 | Prayer for the Holy Spirit

Bible Passage:

Luke 11:11-13 "If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? 12 Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? 13 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"

Devotional:

As we enter a new year, remember that God has promised to be with you always. One of the major themes in the Bible is God's desire to be with humanity. He walked with them in the Garden of Eden, lived in the middle of the Israelite nation in the Tabernacle and later the Temple, and He went so far as to become a human named Jesus just to be close to His loved ones. no wonder one of God's names is Immanuel, which means "God with us." Today, God is still with us. The Holy Spirit is God, and He wants to live within anyone who asks. And all we need to do is ask.

Day 2 | Prayer for God's Presence

Bible Passage:

Exodus 33:12-17 "Then Moses said to the Lord, "See, You say to me, 'Bring up this people.' But You have not let me know whom You will send with me. Yet You have said, 'I know you by name, and you have also found grace in My sight.' 13 Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight. And consider that this nation is Your people." 14 And He said, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." 15 Then he said to Him, "If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here. 16 For how then will it be known that Your people and I have found grace in Your sight, except You go with us? So we shall be separate, Your people and I, from all the people who are upon the face of the earth." 17 So the Lord said to Moses, "I will also do this thing that you have spoken; for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name."

Devotional:

As we discussed yesterday, God wants to live with humans, He is committed to it. One of his names is Immanuel, "God with us." As Moses recognized, we need God's presence with us. Without God's leadership the Israelites would have been lost, directionless, and powerless. The same is true for us. We need the Holy Spirit to lead us, guide us, and strengthen us. Today, let's join in Moses' prayer. We don't want to go anywhere without God's presence.

Day 3 | Prayer for Strength

Bible Passage:

Ephesians 3:14-16 “For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man.”

Devotional:

One of the most common resolutions people will make this year is a commitment to exercise. We want to lose weight or gain weight, be healthier, feel better about how we look and get stronger. But we cannot forget about a strength that doesn't show in our arms - inner strength. Paul talks about it in the prayer we just read. His prayer is that the church would grow in their spiritual strength, their love, and their commitment to God and each other. How do we do this? Through the gift of the Holy Spirit. Let's join with Paul in praying for the Holy Spirit to strengthen us in our inner being.

Day 4 | Prayer for Christ to Dwell in Our Hearts

Bible Passage:

Ephesians 3:17 “that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love.”

Devotional:

God wants to make His home in your heart. There is nothing like the feeling of arriving home after a long trip. You know every creaky floorboard, comfortable seat, and seasoning in the cupboard. God wants to be that close to you. He wants to comfort you when your heart is sad, He wants to rejoice with you as you see a loved one. He knows you inside and out, and He still loves you. He wants to be part of your life. But God won't force His way in. He knocks at the door of your heart hoping that you will hear Him and let Him in. It is our prayer here at Bennington SDA Church that you won't keep Him waiting outside. Let Christ in to your heart today!

Day 5 | Prayer to Know the Love of God

Bible Passage:

Ephesians 3:17-19 “that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— 19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”

Devotional:

Paul expresses, in the most expansive language he can conjure up, his prayer that the church would grow in their knowledge of the love of God. When he says "to know the love of God" he uses a word that means to learn through experience. This love of God is beyond what we have experienced from our human relationships. It is a love that has no conditions, no limits, and it never ends. No matter what you do, no matter who you are, God's love reaches you. It is no wonder Paul can say in Romans 8 that nothing "shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Day 6 | Prayer for Rest

Bible Passage:

Matthew 11:28-30 “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

Devotional:

I know that many if not all of us can count ourselves in the category of those who labor and are heavy laden. Whether it is stress from work, complications in relationships, health problems, loss of loved one, or some combination - more than ever we need the rest that God offers. Jesus invites all to come to Him, and He WILL give you rest. God makes you this promise; if you go to Him you will find rest for your souls. You don't have to stumble through life struggling under the weight of your burdens, you can find true rest in Jesus!

Day 7 | Prayer for God to Provide

Bible Passage:

Philippians 4:19 "And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

Devotional:

God promises to provide for you over and over again in scripture. One of the pictures Jesus uses is that of the birds. He says in Matthew 6 "Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?" While we stress and struggle, work and worry, just to provide for ourselves, we forget that God has promised to provide what we need according to His riches and glory. Trust me, He has more than enough riches and glory for you. Today let's thank God for His provision and pray that our trust and reliance in Him will grow.

Day 8 | Prayer for Freedom

Bible Passage:

1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." **John 8:36** "Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed."

Devotional:

Are you tired of feeling like you have no power over sin? Like you will never find victory? Consider this: God says that when you confess your sins He will cleanse you of those sins. You are dead to sin and alive in God! (Romans 6:11) As a result of what Jesus has done for you, your sin has NO power in your life. God created you to live in freedom, and when you were made captive to sin, Jesus won the victory over sin to give you back your freedom. "If the son sets you free YOU ARE FREE indeed." Today, right now, through Christ you can be free! You have the victory because Jesus has won the victory for you.

Day 9 | Prayer for Power in the Holy Spirit

Bible Passage:

1 John 1:9 “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Devotional:

Yesterday we talked about how you are not powerless in the face of sin. But the scripture we just read takes it a step further. Not only do you have power in the face of sin through Jesus, but you also have the power to share what Jesus has done through the Holy Spirit! Many of us today want to share how our lives were transformed through our relationship with Jesus. Yet, without the power of the Holy Spirit to guide our words and actions and also speak to the heart, it will be impossible to reach the world. We need the Holy Spirit's power in our message.

Day 10 | Prayer for Holy Spirit to Help Me Learn

Bible Passage:

John 14:26 “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.”

Devotional:

If you have noticed so far in our journey of 21 days of prayer and fasting, the Holy Spirit is REALLY important to so many of the promises that God gives to His followers. In our Bible verse today Jesus mentions another gift that comes through the Holy Spirit; learning and remembering. Through the "Helper," we can tap into a source of understanding which is far beyond our own intellect. It is incredible to think that God commits himself to teaching and mentoring you.

Day 11 | Prayer for Guidance from the Holy Spirit

Bible Passage:

John 16:13 "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come."

Devotional:

With all of the voices that we encounter on a daily basis, it can be hard to know what is true. Whom should we trust? Jesus states that He is "the way, the TRUTH, and the life." Here in this verse, we see that the Holy Spirit also is known as the "Spirit of truth." God is the truth, so when He promises to lead you to truth, He is committing to leading you to himself! He wants you to know Him, and if you know Him, you will know the truth.

Day 12 | Praying for the Holy Spirit in Our Weakness

Bible Passage:

Romans 8:26 "Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."

Devotional:

This is day 12 of 21 Days of prayer. Throughout this journey, we have offered focused prayer each day. We have talked about the importance of prayer, and God's promise to answer our prayers. But a text like this one reminds us that what is important is NOT that you know the right words to say to God in order for Him to help you. In fact, the Holy Spirit intercedes on your behalf, He translates your prayers! There is no special formula or perfect words needed to pray to God. You can talk to God with whatever you have and He knows what is in your heart.

Day 13 | Praying for Spiritual Gifts

Bible Passage:

1 Corinthians 12:8-11 “for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, 10 to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. 11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.”

Devotional:

When we pray for spiritual gifts like those mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12, we are not asking so that we can build ourselves up, so that we can be seen by others, or so that we earn status in the sight of God. The gifts of the Spirit are for the building up of the church and for the spreading of the Gospel. This work is too great for us to accomplish on our own. But just as Jesus called men and women from all walks of life, many without traditional training, Jesus calls each and every one of you. And those whom He calls, He provides for. He will give you what you need to accomplish the purpose He has for you!

Day 14 | Praying for Boldness

Bible Passage:

Acts 4: 31 “And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.”

Devotional:

The word boldness means "freedom of speech, the ability to take risks, and courageousness." When the disciples prayed, the Holy Spirit filled them. He gave them the courage to speak the Word of God. It was not easy, there were challenges from friends and enemies. Yet, they could continue on because they were not speaking their own words, but the words of their creator. No matter what happened to them, they were on the mission of God, and so the outcome was in God's hands. The Holy Spirit is still poured out on those who pray, and He still inspires boldness in proclaiming the word of God.

Day 15 | Praying for God's Will

Bible Passage:

Matthew 6:9-10 "In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. 10 Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven."

Devotional:

For the next four days, we are going to focus on what has come to be known as "The Lord's Prayer." Today we begin with the prayer for God's will to be done. Many of our prayers consist of asking God to do our will. But how often do we pray that God's will would be done? How often do we pray to know the will of God? Before we ask God to do for our neighbor, for our child, or for our country, what we think He should do, let us pray that we could know His will for us. As we understand the heart of God, as we hear from heaven His will for our lives, we will find that "as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My [God's] ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts."

Day 16 | Praying for God's Provision

Bible Passage:

Matthew 6:11 "Give us this day our daily bread."

Devotional:

God promises to provide again and again in scripture. In fact, Abraham named a mountain "God will provide" just so he wouldn't forget (see Genesis 22). We need a daily reminder that God will supply our needs. Jesus does not say to pray for tomorrow and He doesn't say to pray for a feast, even though He will provide for tomorrow and He often supplies much more than we need. Jesus' prayer is "give us this day our daily bread." It is a constant reliance on God that He calls us to, and not just for our physical needs. We need a fresh supply of the bread of Heaven, God's word, each and every day. Let us never forget that God will provide!

Day 17 | Praying for Forgiveness

Bible Passage:

Matthew 6:12 "And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors."

Devotional:

The word "forgive" in this verse means to "send away or to release." This is a beautiful description of what happens when we ask God to "forgive us our debts." Each of us has incurred debts that we cannot pay no matter how hard we try. But the good news is that Jesus has paid those debts, He has forgiven them! When we ask God to forgive our debts He sends them away and releases us from them. So no matter how big or how small you feel your debt is, ask God today, and He will forgive you! He only asks that as you receive forgiveness for your debt which you could not pay, extend forgiveness to those others. This will release you as well as them. This is what it looks like to live in forgiveness.

Day 18 | Praying for Victory

Bible Passage:

Matthew 6:13 "And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."

Devotional:

The Bible makes clear that God does not tempt anyone. Still, following Jesus does not mean that you will no longer experience temptation. There is an "evil one" who will try and bring you down any way he can. Jesus instructs His followers to pray for deliverance. We may have a powerful adversary, but we have a much more powerful God! Jesus has won the victory over Satan, it is an accomplished reality. When we pray for deliverance from God we call to our aid One who cannot be defeated. To claim God's promise in 2 Chronicles 20, "The battle belongs to the Lord."

Day 19 | Prayer for Wisdom

Bible Passage:

James 1:5 "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him."

Devotional:

I believe every one of us could do with some more wisdom. Not just an increase in information, but growth in intelligence and insight. God promises that if we ask, He will give "liberally and without reproach." Satan once made the accusation that God was trying to withhold knowledge from humanity (Genesis 3). Here in this verse, God makes clear that He not only wants to give wisdom, He will give liberally. That means He readily and freely offers wisdom to all who ask. Let's take Him up on His offer!

Day 20 | Prayer for Unity

Bible Passage:

Philippians 2:1-2 "Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, 2 fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind."

Devotional:

One of the gifts the Holy Spirit brings is unity. God calls His followers to be of one accord and one mind. God does not call us to be all the same, or uniform. Our differences can work together to present a more full and beautiful picture of God. This is especially true when we recognize that we have one thing that unites us - Jesus. We are all called to grow to be more like Jesus. When we focus on Him instead of those things that separate us, with the help of the Holy Spirit, we can grow together in unity. This unity in diversity is how we share the gospel with the world.

Day 21 | Prayer for Peace

Bible Passage:

Ephesians 4:1-3 “I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, 2 with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, 3 endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

Devotional:

On our final day of 21 days of prayer and fasting, we focus on relational prayer. Paul's wish for his church is that they would treat each other with integrity. Humility, gentleness, patience, and love are the identifying characteristics of the called. Our prayer is the same. God give us: humility - to know that we don't know everything, gentleness - to care responsibly for the vulnerable, patience - to accept or tolerate delay, trouble, or suffering without getting angry or upset, and overall help us to love like Jesus!