
Be One Umpqua Prayer Initiative

40 Days of Strategic Prayer for the Umpqua
(February 14 - March 25, 2018)



DCEF

Douglas County Evangelical Fellowship

UNITE

Douglas County Evangelical Fellowship - Editor J.D.Nutter

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Foreword: Why this guide?

“I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”— Jesus¹

On October 1, 2015, hell went on the offensive in Douglas County with a tragic barrage of bullets on the idyllic Umpqua Community College (UCC) campus. The peace and sense of security taken for granted by the students, faculty and staff of UCC, as well as the citizens of our community, was shattered. The venom of the serpent spewed forth as he attempted to kill, steal and destroy. In the tragedy and trauma the Church of Douglas County and Douglas County Evangelical Fellowship (DCEF) were galvanized.

For many years the DCEF has existed in near anonymity. We’ve been fond of saying *who we are*: Pastors, representatives, and unique congregational expressions of *the Church* in Douglas County. But relatively few know *what we’re about!* As a loosely associated organization, we’ve chiefly gathered for prayer, worship, fellowship, and the occasional collaborative effort to meet a tangible or spiritual need in our community. The UCC event opened doors for us to serve together in unexpected and practical ways. *This prayer guide is a focused effort to move deeper into relationship, partnership and prayer support for our entire community.*

While the UCC shooting was neither the first or last tragedy in our community, the magnitude of it, the magnifying glass of media scrutiny, and the moments of spiritual introspection it prompted, changed the fabric of our community in ways many of our leaders (including local pastors) are still trying to process.

In the minutes, days, and months immediately following the shooting, *the Church* stepped up. And, by the Church, we mean the body of believers who profess Christ as the source of their salvation. The light of Christ shined brightly in big and small ways as members of the body stood in the gap (both prayerfully and practically). A new awareness of the intensity of the spiritual warfare raging around us, and the depth of depravity the world is drowning in (and yes that includes our community) settled upon us as our new normal.

Surprisingly to some, the Church (or the “God people” as some in the community began calling us) was recognized as an integral resource and support for the community. And the Church, equally surprisingly to some, recognized the necessity of strategically engaging with individuals, agencies and other entities in ways we never had before. The Church of Douglas County entered a new season of collaborative effort on October 1. This season has continued to this day.

On February 14, 2018, the Douglas County Evangelical Fellowship (The Church of Douglas County) is declaring LOVE on our community and VICTORY over the enemy. We’re going on the offensive against hell in what we’re calling the Be One Umpqua Initiative. This strategic-prayer-initiative is our effort to mobilize members of our local congregations, and other individuals who profess faith in Jesus Christ to prayerfully express our love for Douglas County across every domain of society and field of endeavor. In addition, the Be One Initiative is an effort to practically advance God’s transformative kingdom agenda.

¹ Matthew 16:18

Over the next forty days leading up to Palm Sunday, it is our hope to see hundreds, if not thousands, of Christ-followers in Douglas County encouraged, and equipped to pray Biblically inspired and Holy Spirit empowered prayers. At the prospect of local congregations and individuals interceding for every sphere and member of our society and local community we're filled with hope and eager expectation. We're trusting God to show his power and demonstrate his love. We're believing spiritual strongholds will be demolished and significant victories will be won as prayers are answered, problems are solved, and people are transformed.

While this prayer guide is the collaborative effort of local evangelical² ministers and church members, we're confident other individuals who profess faith in Jesus Christ for their salvation may benefit from it. We humbly advance and offer this resource for the glory of God and the advance of his Kingdom and the holy, universal church!

Apostles' Creed

*I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
the Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord;
Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
The third day he arose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty,
whence he shall come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy universal Church*
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.*

* *universal is the ecumenical version replacing the historic "catholic". The original meaning is thus clarified as referencing the believing Church in all places and times.*

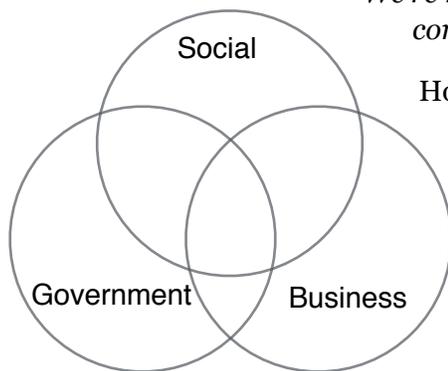
*I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power²⁰ that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms.²¹ Now he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else—not only in this world but also in the world to come.²² God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church.²³ And the church is his body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with himself. — **Ephesians 1:19-23 NLT***

² DCEF members have affirmed their agreement with the National Evangelical Association's Statement of Faith. See: <https://www.nae.net/statement-of-faith/>

An Introduction to Strategic Prayer for the Spheres of Society

Society or culture is often characterized as being composed of spheres, sectors, or domains. A three-sphere society is advanced by many social scientists. These spheres are generally recognized as: business, government and the not-for-profit or social sector. It might look like this (see below):

Other observers suggest society is best described by four or more spheres, the fourth often labeled home or family. Some divide society into as many as ten domains to account for the intersections and overlaps of these sectors. Our sister organization in Lane County (One Hope Network³) prays across ten segments, while other community-wide prayer initiatives have invoked a seven sphere or mountain model.⁴



We're not sure it matters how many domains we identify. We're most concerned our prayers be comprehensive and strategic.

However one defines what makes up a society, community or culture, it is undeniably made up of individuals whose private and public interests come both into contact and conflict with one another. Society is inherently at risk of segmentation and division. Polarization between and within domains is possible as well.

Businesses compete with one another, governmental entities have different philosophies and priorities, various social groups represent only certain segments of the broader society, each differing in their goals and practices. *Is there anything that would prevent the disintegration of all that is good and right in our world? What or who could possibly unite or hold together the people and the societies in which we live?*

We who profess a Biblical and Evangelical faith boldly answer, *"Yes! His name is Jesus! It is His Church empowered by His Spirit which bridges all the gaps and breaks down the barriers between domains."*

We further proclaim, *"it is the power of prayer which directly results in the advance of God's agenda within society."*

Finally, we declare, *"the Kingdom of God has already begun to be realized by the proclamation of and the practical living out of the gospel in our world."*

Jesus is building His Church, a colony of the Kingdom within every sphere of this world. It is Jesus' Church which infuses every segment of society; and it is He who has representatives within every sphere. So we pray strategically:

"Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."⁵

³ www.onehopenetwork.org

⁴ <http://www.7culturalmountains.org>

⁵ Matthew 6:10

How this Guide is Formatted

The 40-day period from February 14 - March 25 has been divided into six weeks of prayer for specified domains or spheres of our community. Each week opens with an introductory page intended to prepare participants hearts and minds to pray with insight, specificity, and strategically for the week's domain.

Following these brief introductory pages are daily prayer pages with accompanying scriptures, reflections, devotional thoughts, and prayer prompts. Each day closes with a brief written paragraph of prayer. This prayer is intended for use as a corporate prayer or common prayer for the day.

We hope congregations and pastors using these guides will incorporate the Sunday prayers into the prayer time of their worship gatherings. This might look like publishing the prayer in a bulletin, projecting it on screen or verbalizing it. In this way, we envision our ministries *practically and strategically praying as one* from week to week.

The sequence for which we will pray through the domains is intentional and significant.

Week 1: February 14 - February 18 (Days 1-5) Local Churches & Christ-Followers

In week one, though only for five days, we will pray for the broader Church of Douglas County and individual members of the Body of Christ. A Church that is holy and blameless, united in Christ, and mobilized for mission makes transformative impact in every other domain possible.

Week 2: February 19-25 (Days 6-12) Government & Public Safety

In week two we will pray for every level and branch of government from the national to local levels. Our prayers will be for the people and process, but not the politics. Additionally, we'll pray for our first-responders and public safety personnel. Fire, police and ambulance services hold a special place in our hearts. They serve a crucial function, so we'll lift the departments and districts and all their people to the Lord.

Week 3: February 26-March 4 (Days 13-19) Education, Healthcare & Social Services

This week's prayers will be in the overlap of government and social spheres. Each of these categories is impacted by government regulation and funding to some degree. Some of the services are provided directly by some level of government, while other entities including the church have institutions or programs providing these functions.

Week 4: March 5-March 11 (Days 20-26) The Economy (Agriculture, Business, Industry)

Our community has economic challenges endemic to its rural setting and resources. The size, location and geography have a variety of positive features and opportunities as well. In our prayers for the economy we'll pray for those concerns most central to economic flourishing and for important, though often under appreciated, components and contributors to our economic health and welfare.

Week 5: March 12-March 18 (Days 27-33) Arts, Media/Entertainment & Sports

These categories are interrelated and interdependent in our broader experience of culture. They include professional and amateur participants. Our youth and oldest citizens share interest in these pursuits. Each week our community, its citizens and our churches are impacted and influenced by this category.

Week 6: March 19 - March 25 (Days 34-40) The Family & the Lost of Douglas County

In this final week we focus on the family, while giving careful and sustained attention to those people in our community who are lost and disconnected from Christ and His Church. As the Douglas County Evangelical Fellowship our goal is to see redemption and transformation come to people far from God. This week of prayer will set the tone for our Community-Wide Palm Sunday Worship and Prayer Gathering, and help prepare our congregations for Resurrection Sunday and Easter outreaches.

Conclusion: Continuing to Pray and Partner Strategically for Douglas County

Learn how to stay informed and involved in ongoing DCEF prayer initiatives and ministry projects.

Additional Resources, Domains Personal Prayer Pages and List of Contributors

Be sure to check out the resources provided as suggestions for further study.

How to Use this Guide

For centuries Christians have benefitted from praying according to written prayer guides. Many people find using another person's thoughts and vocabulary aids in expanding their own capacity to pray. Our hope in providing this guide is simply to offer this kind of assistance. Our contributors have attempted to offer insight into how one might intercede for these important dimensions of our community. It is not their intention to create rote prayers to merely be repeated. Instead, it their desire to prompt prayers, and to invite the Holy Spirit to expand our consciousness of the needs and opportunities for prayer over our community.

It's important to note written prayers are no less or more spiritual than spontaneous prayers. And, neither are the prayers to be considered infallible or inspired in the same way Scripture is. Where the Word of God is quoted, we intend for it to speak for itself by God's Spirit. Where devotional thoughts are offered, they reflect the experience and thoughts of the contributor.

We encourage every reader to be discerning and to engage the material thoughtfully as well as prayerfully. You may not agree with or be accustomed to praying in the manner encouraged or prescribed. While every effort has been made to be sensitive to the broad audience for which this guide has been prepared, we recognize we are a diverse collection of Christ-followers. We urge grace and gentleness toward those who have contributed and prepared this document. Our intention is to be true to God's Word and to pray with the Spirit for our community. You are encouraged to pray as you feel led, and to personalize the many prompts and prayers included.

Finally, this guide was created in community for community. While it is suitable for private devotional praying (and we encourage its use in private prayer closets), it has been created to assist Christ-followers in Douglas County "be one" by gathering and praying its contents together.

If you are a small group leader, or Sunday School teacher; if you are a part of a discipleship group or recover ministry; if you meet with co-workers to study God's Word and pray, we encourage you to use this guide as part of those gatherings in the weeks ahead (with your Pastor's blessing of course).

In addition to existing groups, DCEF leaders have agreed to host gatherings across our community beginning on February 14. The list of these gatherings is available online on the DCEF Facebook page as well as the Be One Umpqua Facebook page (@BeOneUmpqua). There you can sign up to be a part of the group.

Wednesday (February 14) — Hucrest Community Church 11:45 - 12:45

Thursday (February 15) — TBD

Monday (February 20) — TBD

Tuesday (February 21) — Roseburg Alliance Church 11:45 - 12:45

Friday (February 22) — TBD

Saturday — No group

Sunday — Local DCEF congregations throughout the community

Week One

The Local Church

Praying for Congregations & Individual Christ-followers

I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message. ²¹ I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me. (John 17:20-21 NLT)

The Be One Umpqua initiative begins with Jesus' prayer that we would be one. One what? One body! One Church! One people of God in the greater Douglas County region, "the land of the Umpqua."

In the apostle Paul's letter to the church at Philippi we find these timeless words of encouragement and exhortation:

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, and comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, ² complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. (Philippians 2:1-4 ESV)

Our commonality in Christ is what makes us one. It is our mutual belief in Christ for salvation and the experience of his love and grace which compels us to act and pray as one!

The Douglas County Evangelical Fellowship (DCEF) is composed of approximately forty congregations, but the Church of Douglas County is composed of a far larger number of congregations and its individual members. The Church of Douglas County is constituted literally of thousands of individual Christians (some of whom are presently disconnected or out of fellowship with one another). How tragic and grievous a situation! How it must break the heart of Jesus to see his flock still divided, not merely doctrinally (a condition which may persist appropriately until he returns), but functionally in love!

Over the next five days we're praying with Jesus for His church. We're praying in humility and repentance. We're praying with confidence and assurance. We're praying in obedience and expectancy.

LORD, make us one!

Week 1: Day 1 — Douglas County Congregations & Christ Followers

So, let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most. (Hebrews 4:16 NLT)

Our perspective on prayer can influence how we will enter this season of prayer.

An electric cord is designed to deliver electricity, or power, when needed. Oftentimes, we approach prayer like an electrical cord. We carry it around with us and keep it conveniently nearby. When we need it, we rush around and (oftentimes?) frantically look for an outlet in order to “plug in” and receive power. Sound familiar? After all, our tendency is to pray when we need something: failing health, broken relationships and uncertain futures causes us to rush to pray. As we should! In this pattern, however, our perspective of prayer is skewed.

Let’s refresh our minds! Let’s replace the ‘electrical cord’ as our image for prayer with an *invitation card*. Do you remember the last invitation you received? It was probably for a family member or friend’s wedding; or a milestone birthday, retirement party or baby shower. Think about that invitation. Sent specifically to you, it expressed the desire for *you* to join in their presence. That’s what prayer is. It’s an invitation from God to you to enter His presence.

As we consider entering His presence, the writer of Hebrews encourages us to consider the journey of Jesus Christ. In His journey he faced all the same trials, temptations and testing we do today. Because He did, we can find comfort; he understands our weaknesses. Then, we are asked to think about what His journey was and where He resides. On this basis we may come boldly into His presence. That’s what prayer is! It is responding to Jesus’ personal invitation to enter His presence. And, it’s given to you.

Pray:

- our community of believers collectively, consistently and compassionately enter His presence
- Christians would come boldly before the throne of our Heavenly Father so they may receive His mercy and find His grace to help the church of Douglas County
- individual believers and Christ followers we will join in the pursuit of practical unity through prayer for one another

Dear God, We accept your invitation together. We desire to live in your presence daily, as we enter this season of prayer. We are a representation of your church in Douglas County. Although, we may come from different congregations and represent various traditions and faith communities, we pray that our unity will reflect your love for our community. We desire, as a community of believers and Christ followers, to receive Your mercy and Your grace. We desire to see You in our community in a fresh and unusual way. Embolden us to live in Your presence with an awakened and restored perspective. In Jesus’ Name we pray, amen.

Week 1: Day 2 — The Church in Douglas County

"...Praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel..." (Ephesians 6:18-20 ESV)

Jesus gave us many examples of living our lives as his disciples. Our lives are to be very different, in fact, opposite of what the worldly viewpoint considers "normal." As people of God, we are to live our life in growing degrees of holiness and grace. This difference is like "proclaiming the mystery of the gospel" with our everyday life.

"Let us hold fast the confession of our faith without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near." (Hebrews 10:23-25 ESV)

As a believer in Jesus, we are part of his body. We need fellowship in our lives to grow, to stay strong when we are weak, and to share and care for each other's burdens. As Jesus encourages us, we can join in his prayer.

"As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace." (1 Peter 4:10 ESV)

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:34-35 ESV)

Today, we pray for deepening discipleship and maturity in the body of Christ. May our prayers strengthen and encourage believers to spend time together in fellowship, and to grow in grace.

- Pray for believers to persevere in praying for each other
- Pray that believers would grow in discipleship and holiness in their personal lives
- Pray that believers would hold fast to godly convictions in these challenging times
- Pray that believers would encourage each other in good works and in serving each other
- Pray that believers would stay in fellowship with their local church, the body of Christ
- Pray that God's people would love each other fully and believe in each other's goodness

Lord Jesus, draw us near to you with a sincere heart, in full assurance of faith. May we be a people who observe your Word and seek you with all our heart. May we, as The Church of Douglas County, increase and abound in love for one another and all people, just as we do for you, Lord. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Week 1: Day 3 — The Church: Repentance and Forgiveness

This is the message we heard from Jesus and now declare to you: God is light, and there is no darkness in him at all... But if we are living in the light, as God is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin... But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness. (1 John 1:5,7,9 NLT)

Forgiveness establishes, maintains and preserves meaningful relationships.

There's a lot of items that one must take when one goes camping. In fact, according to one website there are ten 'essential' items: navigation, sun protection, insulation, first-aid supplies, fire, repair kit and tools, food, water and an emergency shelter. Do you know what rounds out the top ten? A source of light. Light is essential!

When you go camping and have no source of light it is difficult to function in the dark. The message of Jesus is *God is light* and *He has called us to live in His light*. John encourages us to consider we fellowship with each other because of the light of Jesus and the forgiveness He provides.

The forgiveness we receive from God establishes our relationship with Him. If we confess our sins to Him, His faithfulness and justice reigns in our lives because we are the beneficiary of His forgiveness. Responsibility, then, becomes our responsibility. Living in this light as John describes means we live and walk in this forgiveness *from* God and *for* one another. This light of forgiveness enables us to function in a true and honest fellowship with one another.

Pray:

- For believers and Christ followers of Douglas County to confess our sins, claim forgiveness and cleansing.
- For Jesus to touch those who have held themselves back from intimacy with God.
- For the church of Douglas County to rise and seek opportunities to forgive one another, release our grudges towards one another, and to break down walls of isolation that unforgiveness builds.

Dear God, As a community of believers, we come into Your presence and into Your glorious light. We recognize that Your Son did not come and die just to free us from guilt. You came to offer a forgiveness that cleanses us. Thank you for your cleansing forgiveness. There are moments, Father, that we withhold our forgiveness from others. Break us of this unhealthy habit. Give us the courage and grace to extend forgiveness one to another as You have forgiven us, so we can live in Your light and in true fellowship, one with another. In Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.

Week 1:Day 4 — The Church: Resurrected Life

Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God's right hand. Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth. (Colossians 3:1-2 NLT)

Where we set our sights reflects what has happened on the inside.

The 'principle of causation' is a concept that basically states that the operation or relation of a 'cause' is directly related to the 'effect'. The 'effect' is made possible by the 'cause'. In the above verses written by the Apostle Paul, he surmises that our sights should be set on the realities of heaven. This is the 'result' or the 'effect'. Heaven is real. Let your mind rest on that thought. Say the word out loud — heaven. Think about those who have gone before us and that we will see again. Think about the beauty and majesty that awaits us. Think about the preparation and planning that went into your eternal home. Think about Jesus. These realities of heaven await us...they await you.

Paul reminds us that this reality should be in the forefront of our mind because we have been raised to new life. That's the 'cause'. The reality of heaven is made possible because we have been raised to new life. This new life is available to everyone: to those in Downtown Roseburg, South County, Hucrest and in Sutherlin. It's available to everyoneeveryone! And, as people embrace the truth that Jesus offers a new life, we will see new families and new generations set their sights on the realities of heaven. What a homecoming that will be!

Pray:

- That believers and Christ followers in Douglas County will embrace the realities of heaven daily.
- That we would have a fresh perspective on the life that He grants us.
- That our county and our region will see new families and new generations receive His gift of salvation and the life that He offers.
- That the realities of Heaven will shape how we view each other, our community and our Savior.

Dear God, we look forward to coming home. Let the realities of heaven be in our sights. Let our actions be reflective in our assurance of our eternal home. Let our attitudes and words be reflective of the majesty and splendor of heaven. Father, let our lives reflect our heavenly citizenship. Give us the unique boldness and sensitivity required to share the hope of new life to our families and community. As we walk through this life, embolden us to set our sights on heavenly things, not earthly things. Let us not set our sights behind us in regret or shame for what has happened in the past. Nor in envy or jealousy as we look to those around us or in front of us in fear for what might be ahead. God, we set our sights on the realities of heaven and on our Savior. In Jesus' Name we pray, amen.

Week 1: Day 5 — The Church: Jesus' Be One Prayer

I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message.²¹ I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me.²² I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one.²³ I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me. (John 17:20-23 NLT)

Jesus left us an example of how to pray for his disciples, i.e., those who constitute the local church in our community. Sure, we come from a variety of congregations and backgrounds, but we share this in common, *we believe in Jesus for our salvation.*

We who are his disciples are each a part of what the apostle Paul described as the body of Christ, and as members of it, he urges us to:

“Lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God.² Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other’s faults because of your love.³ Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace” (Ephesians 4:1-3 NLT)

Praying like Jesus and practicing our faith like Paul prescribes in these verses alone is a pursuit of a lifetime. Deepening our own faith and communion with God in prayer requires a disciplined pursuit. But living out our unity practically before and with others is an even more difficult task! It requires an even more dogged perseverance. Yet, it is by God’s grace, and to his glory we succeed!

Today, as we join in the pursuit of practical unity through prayer, may the prayer prompts provided serve to focus our hearts and minds on that which edifies the church and glorifies God.

- Pray for all believers to deepen their communion with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- Pray for all believers to be connected to a local congregation
- Pray for the practical unity of all believers in Douglas County
- Pray for all believers to live worthy of their unique calling
- Pray for humility and gentleness to be evidenced by every believer
- Pray against impatience and fault-finding
- Pray for each congregation’s health and growth
- Pray for the community to notice our unity and love for one another and glorify God

Heavenly Father, we agree with the prayer of Jesus, and we ask you to make us one! Though we come from many congregations and represent diverse traditions, may our unity not only be preserved but observed in practical ways! In Jesus’ name we pray, amen.

Week 2

Government & Public Safety

Praying for Our Officials, Officers, Deputies, & Public Servants

Everyone must submit to governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God... ⁴ The authorities are God's servants, sent for your good... They are God's servants, sent for the very purpose of punishing those who do what is wrong. ⁵ So you must submit to them, not only to avoid punishment, but also to keep a clear conscience. ⁶ Pay your taxes, too, for these same reasons. For government workers need to be paid. They are serving God in what they do... and give respect and honor to those who are in authority.
(Romans 13:1-6 NLT)

It is fashionable in our time to bash the government and to condemn politicians and bureaucrats. We frequently find ourselves with mouths agape at statements of our President, or angry with the agenda of other elected officials. Many of us have become critics or cynics when it comes to the broad category of government.

Yet, a biblical posture toward those who have been elected or appointed to represent and serve the interests of our society calls us to loving, prayerful submission, and support. It is only under the most severe persecution, and under the most extreme moral duress we may disobey.

The scriptures clearly teach us it is God who ultimately governs our affairs. He is both actively involved and allows our rulers and authorities to assume their positions. It is possible God uses those we oppose (or even support) to teach us about ourselves or to punish us for our misguided desires. These are sobering and humbling reminders of how desperately we need the Holy Spirit to help us pray.

Government is granted significant responsibilities and has assumed many obligations in our community. These responsibilities and obligations are often fulfilled by appointed and hired staff. Sometimes we forget the challenges of working for elected officials or fulfilling the duties which entail conflict with the citizen. We must take care to respect and pray for these individuals.

Of pressing concern to each of us are the agencies and employees serving in the public safety arena. Fire, Police and Emergency Medical Service personnel are on the front line on a daily basis. The Douglas County Sheriff's Department and OPS have a significant presence and responsibility within our community. To pray for these brave men and women is both a privilege and honor.

Whatever your politics or experience with governmental entities we encourage you to seek the welfare of those who are serving in this important domain. If, words fail, remember:

... the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. (Romans 8:26 NIV)

Week 2: Day 1 — State & National Government

...'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' For what great nation is there that has a God so near to it as the Lord our God is to us, whenever we call upon him? And what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I set before you today? (Deuteronomy 4:6-8 ESV)

This great nation was founded upon principles of freedom. As we see in the preamble to the Constitution:

We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this constitution of the United States of America.

Our Pledge of Allegiance further defines us as being, "One nation, under God..." Although we are made up of many states and many diverse cultures and people, we are still one nation. Men and women gave their very lives for the freedom we enjoy today.

Scripture reminds us that we have a role and responsibility to pray for our nation and leaders. We are to stay alert and wise and remember that our national freedoms came with a price.

First of all then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercession, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, Godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (1 Timothy 2:1-4 ESV)

Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of your name; deliver us, and atone for our sins, for your name's sake! Why should the nations say, "Where is their God?" (Psalm 79:9-10 ESV)

Let us pray and inviting God's help in our nation and each of our states. Let us seek the Lord's plan, guidance, and care for Oregon and the United States. While Oregon has a history of influencing the nation, we have used this influence in unrighteous ways. As a state, let us seek God's mercies and forgiveness, Let us ask for His help to influence the nation toward righteousness.

Today, as we pray for Oregon, and the nation, let us fix our hearts on hope and not fear. Let us respond to God's prompting to pray and to seek his face.

- Pray a prayer of thanksgiving for this great nation to retain her freedom for the people
- Pray that the blessings of our liberty stay true to our founding fathers original intent
- Pray that God's people remain in hope and peace during challenging national and state situations
- Pray that our nation would stay true to God's Word whether or not they realize they are doing so
- Pray that Oregon would influence the nation toward righteousness and goodness
- Pray for Oregon's government to fulfill God's plan for Oregon whether or not they realize they are doing so

Lord Jesus, come. Turn our nation back to you. Have mercy on us, O Lord. Forgive us for all the places we have pushed you aside. Guide us to your truth. Teach us how to pray for our state and the nation. May your kingdom come, and your will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven. In Jesus name, we pray, Amen.

Week 2: Day 2 — County Commissioners & County Staff

But select capable men from all the people, men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain and appoint them as officials... (Exodus 18:21 NIV)

This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give to everyone what you owe them: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor. (Romans 13:6-7 NIV)

Today, we pray for our County Commissioners Chris Boice, Tim Freeman and Gary Leif.

The Board of Commissioners is entrusted by the people electing them with the responsibility of governing Douglas County with its population of 108,000 and 5,134 square miles. The three Commissioners provide a direct link between the citizens and their County government. The Board is responsible for: approving ordinances; adopting the County budget; setting standards for the use of County property; appointing non-elected officials, boards, commissions, and committees; and, overseeing the operation of County departments with appointed department heads, and 800 full-time employees. Their authority comes from the Lord Who rules over the nation.

Very few people understand the heavy burden of leadership our Commissioners are asked to bear. Their decisions affect people's lives in significant ways. Often times the only time they hear from the public is when things go wrong. Their families feel the burden as well. These men are often pulled away from family time and their personal businesses to deal with county issues.

The Douglas County Commissioners have asked for prayer for the following:

- wisdom to prioritize correctly the significant financial burdens they are managing
- courage to stand in the face of adversity and make decisions because they are right and not because they may or may not be popular; may the Commissioners always be able to respond to people with grace and kindness even when it might be difficult to do so
- God would keep the Commissioners strong and not grow weary as they serve and lead
- the County would prosper under their leadership

To the above we add:

- We pray that they will fulfill their duties with excellence and integrity
- We pray that You help them to consider the poor and needy
- We pray for careful management of our County land, forests, waterways, and shores, obstacles to be removed so resources may be available to create jobs and improve the economy
- We pray protection, provision, and health for they and their family members

Lord, we thank you that Douglas County Commissioners Gary Leif, Tim Freeman, and Chris Boice will receive direction from you, and will be strengthened by Your presence as they perform their duties. Grant them wisdom. May they not grow weary in doing good. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Week 2: Day 3 — Roseburg City Government

I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them. ² Pray this way for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity. (1 Timothy 2:1-2 NLT)

Local municipalities and the people who serve in positions of leadership have a unique set of circumstances. In Roseburg, every voting member is a volunteer. They aren't paid to spend the hours it takes to learn the details of the policies on which they vote. They give their time managing the operations of the jurisdictions they are appointed to oversee. They also open themselves to criticism, interruptions in their work life, and sometimes their personal lives.

Don't forget to include the city staff in your prayers. They toil for hours in city hall, carrying out the decisions made by our elected leaders. An interesting dynamic exists between elected leaders and city staff. It's not always positive; and, it certainly isn't saturated in prayer.

Often strife is present when elected leaders discuss difficult issues, or when various commissions have a meeting. With social media, temptation exists for councilors to take jabs at one another, or at the city. Friction is also felt between employees carrying out the daily operations of the city and in face to face transactions between the city and its customers (or constituents) — the taxpayers. Frustrated Americans see their local representatives as extensions of the current national political scene, and sometimes attack with an anger; understandable but misguided.

- Pray for humility among our elected leaders. Pray they recognize they were put in a position of leadership by God, and they should represent Him and pursue the things of the Kingdom
- Pray that believing councilors can influence the hearts of others around them for the kingdom and that the way they conduct themselves is a reflection of their faith in God
- Pray that they learn to recognize false statements or injustices and use their standing to correct them
- Pray that in their dealings with city staff or citizens, they are respectful and honest and humble
- Pray that their decisions are wise and that they seek information from all sides before making a decision
- Pray for their families, that their public standing doesn't result in others attempting to do harm to family members of elected officials in retaliation for decisions they make

Father, we thank you for humble civil servants and for the volunteers who take on the challenges of our city government. We ask for protection for each of these. May they expose lies, dishonesty and corruption. Help those in positions of power and influence recognize and boldly call out injustice, discrimination, hate and other evil practices. May they have a positive impact on our community as they resolve pressing issues. Thank You for the believers You have put in place within government. May they support one another, rely on each other and grow together in Your name. Help them find You, and follow Your example of humble leadership. In Jesus Name, Amen

Week 2: Day 4 — Winston City Government

“I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.” (1 Timothy 2:1-2 NIV)

Pray for the leadership of Winston as they lead their community. The Mayor, the City Manager, Chief of Police, and City Council are all working hard to make Winston a thriving community for its citizens. Winston has many positive things going for it. Many new houses are being built and businesses are remodeling, but there is still a shortage of housing for low income families. Illegal drug use and homelessness continue to be a problem.

Leaders in the city of Winston have asked for our prayers in the following areas...

- Pray for healing for the Mayor of Winston. He is recovering from a recent stroke.
- Pray that drug abuse in Winston would be eliminated and that those who are addicted to harmful illegal drugs would find the help and support they need for recovery.
- Pray for the homeless in Winston that they would find the help they need to escape the bondage of poverty.
- Pray for affordable housing for low income families to be made available in Winston.

Father, we thank you for the leaders and government officials in Winston. We recognize they face significant challenges and need your wisdom to take advantage of opportunities and to avoid pitfalls. We pray you would give them courage and creativity to address the persistent difficulties of the community. We pray for the peace and prosperity of the city. We pray for the welfare and prosperity of its people. We pray for blessings of health and hope on each of its officials. May you be glorified! In Jesus name, Amen

Week 2: Day 5 — North County Concerns

Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, ² for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. (1 Timothy 2:1)

Mayors, City Council Members, and City Managers play a crucial role in the well-being of the residents and business owners in their city. They need wisdom and discernment in adopting and operating budgets, setting tax rates, authorizing borrowing, approving contracts, regulating land use and business activity, and public health and safety. They even have power to take private property by eminent domain proceedings. They are essentially the guardians of the city, but they need the Lord's help and guidance.

It is good and acceptable in God's sight that we pray and intercede for the following city leaders:

- City of Sutherlin Mayor Todd McKnight, Council Members Tom Boggs, Frank Egbert, Wayne Luzier, Forrest Stone, Travis and Seth Vincent, and City Manager Jerry Gillham.
- City of Oakland Mayor Bette Keehley, Council Members Craig Riley, Kent Rochester, Jan Wier, Thomas Hasvold, and City Recorder Terri Long.
- City of Drain Mayor Rance Pilley, Council Members Eileen Kelley, Jim Beard, Sharon Ruud, and Council President Justin Cobb, and City Administrator Steve Dahl.
- City of Reedsport Mayor Linda McCollum, Council Members DeeDee Murphy, Leslee Collier, Mark Bedard, Rich Patten, and Debby Turner, and City Manager Jonathan Wright.
- City of Myrtle Point Mayor Barbara Carter, Council Members Joe Bouska, Samantha Clayburn, Stephanie Martell, Daniel Martin, Stacy Murray, and Mike West, and City Manager Darin Nicholson.
- City of Elkton Mayor Burke, Council Members Ryan Fall, Joan Smith, Paula Swanson and Mike Hughs, and City Staff Gary Trout and Linda Cereda.
- City of Yoncalla Mayor Jerry Cross, Council Members David Vian, Carl Cox, Roger Crawford, and Dan Wagner, and City Manager Kathleen Finley

Heavenly Father, we come to you in agreement on the following prayer points:

- We pray that you will give divine wisdom and guidance to these city leaders. We pray that you show them your vision for their city Lord. We pray that the freedom of religion and free speech will be protected in each of these cities Lord.
- We pray for discernment, mercy and compassion in all their dealings with people. We pray for courage for them to stand up for their convictions and to not be pressured to change their mind
- We pray for their safety and protection, as well as for their family members; provide for their material needs, physical strength and health.

We thank you Lord, that the righteous are in authority in Sutherlin, Oakland, Drain, Reedsport, Myrtle Point, Elkton and Yoncalla and that the people rejoice!

Week 2: Day 6 — South County Concerns

I lift up my eyes to the hills — where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip — he who watches over you will not slumber; indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord watches over you — the Lord is your shade at your right hand; the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord will keep you from all harm — he will watch over your life; the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore. (Psalm 121 NIV)

With all that we in the southern part of Douglas County have gone through in the past couple of years, one may wonder if God cares. He does! Our ability to go forward and to think about our future comes from what is happening on the inside of our hearts, not the outside.

God gives protection over His people. Safety is something of which each of us is concerned. God gives us the assurances we need as we journey in this life. Our Creator is a God of power, wisdom, and glory, We have nothing to fear. Satan and his demonic army may be at work opposing the saints, but this is still our Father's world. We live in a blessed area. Everything in the heavens and on the earth bears witness to the great Creator who is also our heavenly Father, so why should we fear?

Even while we sleep, God watches over us because He does not go to sleep. Our Keeper is not only on the throne looking down on us, but He is at our side to shield us from all harm. This does not mean that obedient believers never find themselves in difficulty or danger, or that they will never feel physical and emotional pain. The things God permits to happen to us in His will may hurt us but they will not harm us. The Lord at our right hand provides the "shade" we need. Day and night, our Father is with us to shelter us from what might harm us.

- For Safety in all areas that may threaten us or our families.
- For effective responses for the Law Enforcement, EMT's, Fire Personnel, medical teams Caregivers, Mental Health, Chaplains, and Churches
- To expand on the right jobs, industry and small businesses to come to our area for our families to thrive in
- To build and give reasons for our youth to excel and venture out with tools to succeed. We also want our youth to have the desire to return, if they choose, and engage in creating a place they would be proud to call their home
- For all schools, government, private businesses, social and faith based groups to resource, come together, finding common grounds and work alongside each other for the betterment of our home

Father, as we lean towards you day and night, we listen for the whisper or your Words of love, instruction, empowerment and encouragement. Our prayer is that you help us remember that you are in charge of every day and invite us to live where you have planted us. Help us to steward what you have given us, and share what you have provided. May we see each other as one made in your image and act in such a way to each other. That the resulting atmosphere in our community, would be a place that we see our spiritual, social, physical, relational, emotional and financial health excel. We pray this for your glory, and may it be evident on earth as it is in heaven. So be it!

Week 2: Day 7 — Public Safety Personnel and Chaplaincy

“The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong.” (Romans 13:1-3 NIV)

First responders work long hours under dangerous circumstances and put themselves at risk everyday to serve our community. Many first responders suffer from PTSD type symptoms related to the cumulative stress of their job.

Today as we pray for our Law Enforcement, Fire and EMS first responders...

- Pray that those who still suffer from the trauma of the UCC shooting would get the help they need to fully recover and find peace.
- Pray that our first responders would find healthy ways to cope with the cumulative stress of their jobs.
- Pray that their families would remain strong and healthy emotionally, spiritually and physically.
- Pray that they would have positive encounters with the community and feel our love, support and appreciation for all they do.

Douglas-Coos Public Safety Chaplains – This new public safety chaplains’ group was formed to help ensure our first responders are healthy emotionally and spiritually.

- Pray that God would help them build strong connections between the chaplains and our first responder community.
- Pray that God would give them favor with all Law Enforcement, Fire and EMS agencies in our county.
- Pray that God would use them to help build unity among the First Responder agencies they serve.

Dear Jesus, You came as in the flesh to serve us. You gave your life on our behalf. You became acquainted with our suffering and felt compassion for us. You know what it is to grieve and to grow weary of brokenness and pain.

Would you grant to our Public Safety officials and officers your mind and heart. Help them to not grow weary in doing good. Surround them with your presence and place supportive and helpful people in their paths. May those who are hurting find help and hope in you.

Would you pour out favor with the public for our agencies; may they find greater harmony within and across their ranks. Continue to make a way forward for the Chaplaincy program to grow and become a resource to our departments. Thank you Lord for hearing and answering! Amen

Week 3

The Social Sector

Praying for Education, Healthcare & Social Services

³⁵ Jesus traveled through all the towns and villages of that area, teaching in the synagogues and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom. And he healed every kind of disease and illness. ³⁶ When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷ He said to his disciples, "The harvest is great, but the workers are few. ³⁸ So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields." (Matthew 9:35-38)

This category is composed of three of the oldest kinds of institutions in our society. Each have roots in a Christian worldview which includes the impulse to honor the dignity of those created in the image of God and to serve the needs of others. Jesus modeled involvement in each of the helping professions for which we will pray. Our educational institutions, hospitals and social service agencies all attempt to address the essential needs of individuals and groups for a healthy, productive and well-functioning society.

In the early days of American history and westward settlement, schools, hospitals and charitable institutions were most often born out of churches, and staffed by her ministers and employees. Whole communities, which saw themselves as the people of God, took it upon themselves to make provision for the establishment and endowment of these institutions. Many of what we now consider public or state, or even government institutions or initiatives have grown up out of humble beginnings as dedicated Christ-followers and people of good will looked for ways to address some of the most perplexing problems of society.

We do well to remember, that in our own community, the CHI-Mercy Medical Center is a faith-based organization operating a significant charitable practice, employing a large number of Christ-followers from many local congregations, and providing excellent and nationally recognized levels of care in several specialty areas of care.

The VA Hospital serves some of the most vulnerable and valued populations of our society and while currently caught up in controversy is a significant community asset providing essential services to treasured individuals with military service backgrounds.

Our prayers for peace, appropriate provision and funding, the recruitment of needed professionals, and for positive interactions and outcomes with the patients are productive and strategic areas of intercession for both these institutions, their associated labs, clinics, and the broader medical field.

Our public schools, and community college employ many members of local congregations who view their professional vocation as a calling. These remarkable individuals serve the needs of students as an offering to God. They recognize their contribution as a way to influence and equip the next generation for what God is preparing them. Many of Christians students are enrolled in these institutions as well. A huge mission-field and mine-field exists in the public sector of education.

Education is also being provided in homes and in private faith-based institutions. We do well to support education and educators in all its forms by our prayers. Discipline issues, instructional methods, administrative concerns, lack of parental support, and workplace relationship concerns all weigh heavily on educators. These are areas of concern where our prayers make a real difference.

Social service providers make up the last area of concern for this week's prayer. The overlap with government is substantial. The Department of Human Services (DHS) in Oregon is the largest department of the state and serves one out of every four residents. It serves at risk populations and administers some of key delivery systems of assistance for children, families and seniors.

DHS finds itself operating in crisis, particularly in the Foster Care System. The need outstrips the currently deployed and available resources, but God is raising up the church to fill the gap. In 2018 the Embrace Oregon/Every Child initiative is coming to Douglas County. Local pastors and Christ-followers are in the early phases of developing a steering committee to help coordinate and administer this exciting new initiative designed to support and partner with DHS to mobilize the church and people of good will to get involved. Pray for God's wisdom, and the raising up of the right leaders for this program.

Social service providers exist beyond DHS. The United Way consists of 31 member agencies, all of which are addressing essential social service sector needs. God has raised up an executive director from our evangelical faith community (Bryan Trenkle) and placed many other examples of faith within the provider agencies. Continue to intercede on behalf of these providers and their personnel.

As believers, our prayers must be those of compassion for the less fortunate, the sick, afflicted and those struggling with literacy issues. Throughout this week, may faces and situations from our community come to your mind and break your heart.

Week 3: Day 1 — Douglas County School, Students & Staff

“... incline your ear to wisdom, And apply your heart to understanding; Yes, if you cry out for discernment, And lift up your voice for understanding, If you seek her as silver, And search for her as for hidden treasures;” (Proverbs 2:1–4, NKJV)

Douglas County is a diverse place for education. There are numerous public and private schools that offer a wide range of services for a wide variety of children and their needs. Educating our children and adults is an important task that calls for community efforts.

One of the most important tools in our tool-belt is prayer. We can pray for those who are engaged in teaching, in serving students — whether it is the mom teaching her children at home, the janitor who cleans the public or private school building, the administrator insuring that all the resources are needed for the classroom, and the teacher’s aide who listens to children as they learn.

In the Old Testament the primary means of education was the family. By the first century synagogue schools had become part of most Jewish communities. In our culture education has largely been taken on by local, state, and federal government agencies.

- Pray for believers who are working at all levels of government agencies that they might have a godly influence in directing policy and practice
- Pray for believing teachers, support staff, administrators who work in local public school settings to thrive and have opportunity to share their faith with co-workers and students
- Pray for Christians schools in our community as they seek to provide thorough Christ centered educational opportunities for children
- Pray for parachurch ministries such as Youth For Christ, Child Evangelism Fellowship and other groups that have connections with local schools
- Pray for churches to seek out opportunities in their local neighborhood to partner with local schools

Heavenly Father, we agree that providing education and training for our children is a God-given responsibility. May we seek to obey Your direction as we make choices for our children, may we work together with believers and non-believers to provide safe, secure environments in which children can thrive and grow. May we seek opportunities to proclaim Your Name to students and staff.

Week 3: Day 2 — Educational System and Teachers

“The student is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like their teacher.” (Luke 6:40 NIV)

“Hold on to instruction, do not let it go; guard it well, for it is your life.” (Proverbs 4:13 NIV)

I think we all remember someone in our lives who invested in us by teaching. There are lessons we have been taught over time by people who were placed in our lives by God to help us grow. Sometimes, especially in our youth, we take teachers for granted. Life lessons taught early on do not take hold until later in life. Remembering those who taught us is important.

I was blessed God put great teachers in my life. Their teaching still influences me and helps me grow. I would not be who I am today apart from their instruction.

The Bible regards teaching as a gift (Rom 12:6-7). It takes a special person to be a great teacher. We see Jesus Himself regarded as a teacher or “Rabbi” during His ministry (John 1:38). That Jesus Himself wore the title of “Rabbi” proudly, is enough reason to regard teachers with great respect.

Teachers are only one segment of the educational environment. Think of all of the people who work helping the next generation grow. Administrators, school staff, and volunteers often work behind the scenes to give children a safe and healthy space.

As Christ-followers our response is loving all our teachers, administrators, school staff, and others working as educators. One of the greatest ways we can love our educators is by praying for them.

With this in mind,

- Pray for wisdom for all of the people in the education field
- Pray that they will show patient love and care towards their students
- Pray that the lessons they teach will be lessons pleasing to God
- Pray that the students learn in abundance
- Pray that our children will be influenced in a way that brings them closer to Christ

Lord Jesus, we pray for the teachers, administrators, staff who are working to instruct students. We pray that you will give them wisdom and use their lessons to bring the youth up to be a generation close to You. We pray that you will keep our schools safe, our educators safe, our students safe as they continue their education. In Your Name, Amen.

Week 3: Day 3 — Healthcare

“...A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead... But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him.” (Luke 10:29-34 selected ESV)

Jesus tells the story of the Good Samaritan who took the time to care for another person, even though he did not know the stranger. Healthcare workers face similar situations every day. Many go into healthcare as a ministry of healing and not just as a job. Today, we face many challenges in our healthcare system which can cause confusion and frustration amongst those trying to serve the people. With politics and legislation often creating baffling and overwhelming uncertainty in healthcare professionals, they need the grace to stay focused on the ministry of bringing healing.

Jesus often healed the sick, comforted the anxious, and cared for the hungry. Healthcare professionals are in a natural environment to join in the ministry of Jesus in caring for those in need and expressing the love of Christ. They have an opportunity to impart hope as they bring their talents and skills into the medical community.

Healthcare professionals experience fatigue, frustration, and heartache when they face sad and desperate situations. Pray they would remain gentle and kind in their ministry of healing. We can ask the Lord to grace them, like the Good Samaritan, to walk in compassion, service, and bring healing, even when circumstances around them are tense and unsure.

- Pray for the Lord to guide our state and national legislative leaders to make wise and affordable choices on behalf of the people
- Pray that the healthcare providers will develop and implement new and creative ways to decrease healthcare costs
- Pray for divine wisdom and guidance for quick and accurate diagnosis and appropriate and efficient patient care
- Pray for healthcare professionals to have the heart and motivation of the Good Samaritan to take the time to provide quality care for those in need
- Pray the workers would be refreshed in their weariness and find their strength in Jesus
- Pray for Christian healthcare professionals to have the courage to share their faith and guide others to hope and eternal life in Jesus

Heavenly Father, you created us to love and care for others. We pray those whom you have called into the professional healing ministry would be refreshed in you with extra grace for this time. Father, help them to demonstrate your tender care and healing to all they interact with. May they be examples of compassion and kindness as they bring relief to the hurting, frightened, injured, and seriously ill. Bless them we pray, in Jesus name, Amen.

Week 3: Day 4 — Non-profit Sector

We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift...serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach...if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully. (Romans 12:6-8)

Douglas County is blessed with many non-profit organizations and para-church ministries that fill unique niches in our social and spiritual environment. We are grateful for their leaders, board members, staff and volunteers. The constituencies they serve are blessed by their efforts, and our community is healthier because they are here. We want to see God's mercy and compassion magnified in all areas of society, and each of these organizations helps our region to thrive by following their specific calling and gifting.

- Ask the Lord to direct and strengthen non-profits that serve the following populations: the homeless; the poor; the unborn; those struggling to be free from addictions; youth and children; parents; the abused and neglected; those incarcerated; senior adults
- Pray for any specific groups or leaders you know by name
- Pray for leaders who seek and listen for God's leadership, boards that are unified, resourceful and keep the organization on mission

Seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper. (Jeremiah 29:7 NIV)

Lord, give our non-profits in Douglas County clarity of mission and effectiveness in carrying out their respective visions. May these diverse organizations enhance our county through demonstrations of love and good deeds from hearts moved by you, our Creator and Redeemer. You are making all things new...would you renew our cities with fresh outpourings of your mercy? We ask for God-sized solutions to nagging problems in our society like poverty, homelessness, poor parenting, domestic abuse, addictions, abortion, and the abuse and neglect of senior citizens.

Week 3: Day 5 — Private and Home Schools

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction." (Proverbs 1:7 ESV)

"You shall therefore lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall teach them to your children..." (Deuteronomy 11:18-19 ESV)

Douglas County has many home schools and at least ten private schools. Not all the home or private schools are Christian based. The private schools are Canyonville Adventist Elementary, Canyonville Christian Academy, Cobb School, Grace Family Child Center, Milo Adventist Elementary, Phoenix Charter School, Roseburg Junior Academy, St. Paul Lutheran, Geneva Academy, and Umpqua Valley Christian.

Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching, show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned. (Titus 2:7-8 ESV)

For private and home schools, we can pray for our teachers and parents to have increased grace and courage to teach our children values and morals, as well as academics. For staff, and administration, may they know how to approach their tasks. May they never lose focus that they are shaping the nation's leaders of tomorrow as they invest their time and lives in educating and training children.

- Pray for funding for private schools, so more scholarships are available to families
- Pray for teachers to be filled with joy and energy in their profession
- Pray for private, and home-schooled students to realize the quality and care being invested in them
- Pray for teachers to recognize talents and skills in the students and set them on a trajectory to fulfill their full potential in God
- Pray for management and administrators to practice wise-counsel, discretion, and to have understanding. Protect them from all snares of the enemy

Almighty God, our private and home schools, although not all faith-based, recognize the need for clearer values to be taught. Inspire our teachers to shine your light and use them as mentors to teach the children well. Give our teachers grace and patience to teach integrity, morality, and wisdom. Protect our schools, teachers, and staff from all harm. We ask in Jesus name, Amen.

Week 3: Day 6 — Families & Agencies Serving Families

“When the Messiah came, He proclaimed the good news of peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.” (Ephesians 2:17–18, HCSB)

Like no other time we are observing the fracturing of the family and the social fabric which families create. Nearly 500 children in Douglas County were in some sort of foster care during 2017. According to US Census and Oregon Department of Human Services data 30 percent of Douglas County’s population, 42 percent of its poor live in four ‘poverty hotspots’ in Douglas County (a poverty hotspot is defined as a census tract with a poverty rate of 20 percent or more. We define a high poverty hotspot as a census tract or contiguous group of tracts with poverty rates of 20 percent or more for two consecutive measurements. Poverty rates were measured in the Census Bureau’s 2009-2013 and 2008-2012 American Community Surveys (ACS).)

The reasons for poverty and family fracturing are complex. In the midst of these challenges God has called forth His people to become agents of reconciliation — for families, for those disadvantaged by the world, those who have simply given up hope.

Pray

- for state agencies, non-profit agencies, and churches to find ways to collaborate in seeking to create a safe climate for families to be re-unified, for employers to connect with those seeking work, and for children to live with sufficient resources to thrive
- for churches and church leaders to renew their call to be agents of reconciliation in their local communities
- for parents who are seeking to reconnect with their children as they rebuild their lives
- or public officials to show favor on churches and church leaders who are willing to partner with state and federal programs to assist children and families
- for a renewed heart among all God’s people for being agents of reconciliation

Lord, we know and understand the pain of dysfunctional families. Our own families have never perfectly followed Your design. Yet, You are healing us, You are healing our families, and You are positioning us to be agents of healing and restoration in our community. May we be sensitive to the hurt others are experiencing and may we as Your people be those through whom You bring healing.

Week 3: Day 7 — Flourishing Communities

“Mankind, He has told you what is good and what it is the Lord requires of you: to act justly, to love faithfulness, and to walk humbly with your God.” (Micah 6:8, HCSB)

In Genesis 1-2 we are given a glimpse of a world operating the way God designed it to function. Man and woman were to flourish in that environment. However, as we read in Genesis 3, sin entered the world and has caused major disruptions. The last two chapters of the Bible, Revelation 21-22 describe the world re-created according to God’s eternal plan and purpose.

In the meantime believers are called to experience life in the Kingdom of God, demonstrating how to flourish even in often hostile environments.

Pray

- for church and business leaders to find ways to work together to create healthier communities
- for efforts underway in most communities to sustain programs and projects that enable individuals, families, and various age groups to flourish
- for public policy leaders to discover ways to work together with one another and with faith leaders to build a just community where God’s love can be made known in tangible ways

Lord, we live in a broken world among broken people. As you have reconciled us to Yourself, may we become Your agents of reconciliation among the brokenness of our world.

Week 4

The Economic Sector

Praying for Agriculture, Business, & Industry

if you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. ² All these blessings will come on you and accompany you if you obey the Lord your God: ³ You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the country... ¹¹ The Lord will grant you abundant prosperity—in the fruit of your womb, the young of your livestock and the crops of your ground (Deuteronomy 28:1-3, 11 NIV)

Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life: You should mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you, ¹² so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody. (1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 NIV)

Douglas County's economy is grounded in the availability and use of its vast natural resources. Industries associated with logging, wood product manufacturing, agriculture, and some fishing are not only subject to unpredictable and sometimes extreme weather conditions, but are economic arenas subject to varying land-and ocean-use constraints.⁶

Among all the sectors we pray for, it is the economy that seemingly occupies so much of our thought space. Whether it is an election cycle, a boom time or a recession, much of how we measure our existence comes back around to the economy. This is both unfortunate, and somewhat unavoidable, given the amount of time devoted to career and vocation. So many direct impacts come from business and industry. Employment or unemployment, prosperity and poverty are a function of the health of our economy.

Historically Douglas County was the Timber Capitol of the world before environmental concerns, regulations, automation, and changing markets (among many factors) led to a precipitous decline. Agriculture has also played a significant role in the economy of Douglas County. Rich river valley soil and a moderate climate have produced a wide-variety of crops. In recent decades the wine-industry has expanded rapidly. Agri-business and agri-tourism are a thing now.

Other industries and businesses exist, and in some cases are flourishing Ranging from data-call centers, real-estate, software as service, and media production these type of businesses testify diversification is happening, albeit at a slow and sometimes virtually imperceptible pace.

Retail business, hospitality and tourism opportunities continue to be challenging enterprises. These sort of business require significant investment and risk, often producing only marginal increases in employment. Every new establishment has the potential to improve the quality of life in our community. Still, other existing establishments are at risk from changing markets and competition.

This week let us pray for God's hand of favor on the economy of our county.

⁶ <https://www.qualityinfo.org/-/douglas-county-s-economy-the-last-10-years-2006-2016>

Week 4: Day 1 — Agriculture and Agri-Business

“Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. You also, be patient. Establish your hearts for the coming of the Lord is at hand.” (James 5:7-8 ESV)

Throughout scripture Jesus illustrates the faith of the follower of Christ with the faith of the farmer, who plants the seed not knowing what the future holds, yet trusting that it will produce a crop. Through this process, farmers model patient endurance through the dramatic changes both financially and environmentally, the very type of faith and endurance that Jesus has called the church to during both certain and uncertain times.

“The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.” (Genesis 2:15 ESV)

Since the beginning of time, God has tasked mankind with the job of working and maintaining the land. Since the curse of sin and the fall, this responsibility has increased in difficulty. With this increased difficulty, comes the increase of injury, depression, even loss of land and resources.

Today, we can pray for perseverance and encouragement for those in agricultural professions. May they hear or be reminded of the hope and promises of Christ, and may the work of their hands be fruitful and plentiful (Psalm 144:13-14 ESV)

- Pray for the physical safety of those working in agricultural professions (*farming is one of the riskiest professions in the US second only to mining*)
- Pray for unity and clear communication amongst people within this industry.
- Pray for the impact immigration reform is having on the agricultural industries, anywhere that they depend on seasonal foreign labor.
- Pray for peace, calm, and wise decisions by leaders as general unease in the agricultural community increases and profit margins remain very slim.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the men and women you have tasked with the responsibility of managing the land and feeding the people. We pray for a spirit of unity amongst the workers, the employers, and the supporting businesses. Most of all, we pray that the peace of Christ, which surpasses all understanding, would guard the hearts and minds of those in the trenches of agricultural life. May they recognize your provision, and be encouraged by your sovereignty both in seasons of plenty and times of drought. In Jesus name, Amen.

Week 4: Day 2 — Renewal of Rural and Agricultural Towns

Come to me all who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. 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. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. (Matthew 11:28-30 ESV)

With the decline in rural agricultural communities, there is an increasing population experiencing the effects of depression, loneliness, drug use, and abuse. For many homes, these things go undetected and unnoticed leading to further isolation and burden. The Psalmist reminds us, “*He heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds.*” (Psalm 147:3 ESV)

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. (1 Peter 5:6-7 ESV)

Today, we can pray specifically for those in rural communities who are isolated and suffering from the effects of little to no community. Pray for those who are crippled by addiction or injury, leaving them with little feeling of purpose or value. May they hear and know the love of Christ for them, and experience the freedom of life in Jesus.

- Pray for light to be shown in the dark places where brokenness and pain is going unnoticed
- Pray for people in agriculture and agribusiness to be heard and that each person’s experience would be understood more fully
- Pray for freedom in Christ for those whose only hope has become addiction or isolation.
- Pray for the local church as they seek to come alongside those who have isolated themselves as a result of segregation and mistrust in their communities

Heavenly Father, we recognize that we are broken people desperately in need of a savior, yet you have promised rest for those whose eyes are fixed on you. We pray for freedom for those in this business who are being held captive by darkness. We pray for the workers you have sent to these places to be empowered by your spirit and emboldened by your promises to persevere in the face of rejection and the burden of brokenness. May the hope of Christ be known, and the freedom from bondage be experienced in Jesus’ name, Amen.

Week 4: Day 3 — Entrepreneurs

"Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands upon us; yes, establish the work of our hands!" (Psalm 90:17 ESV)

"...And knowledge shall increase." (Daniel 12:4 ESV)

The economic condition significantly impacts the welfare of the people. When the economy suffers, people suffer as poverty increases. God has divinely inspired people with gifts and talents to use for his glory, to bless others, and the economy.

In the last hundred years, we have seen a considerable increase of knowledge poured out upon people. We can ask the Lord to give creative inspiration to more people who will use it for the benefit of all and his glory, in blessing our cities. We can ask the Lord to provide divine appointments that connect entrepreneurs with those who can fund and support new ideas, discoveries, and inventions.

"But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare." (Jeremiah 29:7)

We also need to ask the Lord to forgive us a nation for pursuing the American dream more than we pursue God. Our reasons for seeking a stable and healthy economy need to be based on blessing others, including the poor, and not just meeting our own needs.

- Pray for the economy to be stable, and to increase, for his glory and the benefit of all
- Pray for divine, creative inspiration for discoveries to boost and strengthen the economy
- Pray that those who have innovations will also have an opportunity to produce and see the fruition of their ideas
- Pray that discoveries will be righteousness and will aid the people and not bring harm
- Pray for new businesses to come to our cities and provide work for many
- Pray for those who need employment to find jobs that can sustain their homes and families

Lord Jesus, Creator of all, we ask for your help in our economy. Forgive us for the times we have acted selfishly and even neglected the poor. Hear our prayer and heal our land. Bring good jobs to our cities. Bring new employment opportunities that are righteous and would provide well for families. We ask for your blessing in our economy. In Jesus name, Amen.

Week 4: Day 4 — Timber and Wood Products Industry

If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. (James 1:5)

Roseburg and Douglas County were once known as the Timber Capitol of the World. Those days, for the industry, wage-earners, governmental entities and for much of the broader community are remembered as the good old days. While Douglas County remains the top producer of timber in Oregon, harvests remain at significantly reduced levels. Gains in employment during recent years have done little to offset the dramatic reductions of the previous two decades. It seems an intractable problem mired in political bickering and legal challenges in the courts. Clearly the entities involved in the timber and wood products industry need wisdom, and not just human wisdom, divine wisdom to navigate the problems, pitfalls, and opportunities their business entails.

Many of the companies based in Douglas County are responsible corporate citizens. The legacy of their founders and current management are impressive and influential. Some of these owners and operators are known for their Christian faith or charitable support of worthy causes. Their positive contributions to our community are difficult to underestimate.

Yet, the difficulties of sustaining, let alone growing a wood products or timber corporation in the current climate of environmental regulation and legal challenge have stressed some to the breaking point. Automation makes production more efficient but often reduces the necessary work force and entails hiring a different skill set with different educational requirements. Global competition creates still more challenge. Sometimes, the simple ignorance of others who gloss timber producers as the enemy of the environment leads to bad press or a poor reputation with prospective younger employees.

Yes, the timber and wood products industry represents a challenging and complex case. Still, it remains a key and necessary contributor to the well-being of our community and economy. From the forest owner, to the corporate operator and every employee and related enterprise in between we must pray.

- Pray for wisdom for the corporate and private operators as they navigate the complexities of their industry. Pray for the governmental entities regulatory, legislative, judicial and executive to weigh carefully the issues before them and to find favorably for those who depend upon resources for their livelihood
- Pray for innovation and invention to allow for increased productivity and profitability.
- Pray for the safety and protection of those working in these industries
- Pray for blessing and prosperity to flow to our community from the resources entrusted to us

Creator, sustainer and provider God, We humbly seek wisdom for our timber and wood products industry. Bring clarity within the complexity and challenge. Grant creativity to those who seek solutions, and a spirit of collaboration to those who have been adversaries. Make your provision abundant; grant protection from harm to those who are dependent upon this industry for their livelihood. Pour out blessing upon our community thru this industry. In Jesus' name. Amen

Week 4: Day 5 — Downtown Roseburg

Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. ¹⁸ Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, ¹⁹ storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come that they may lay hold on eternal life. (1 Tim 6:17-19)

The downtown businesses represent a faction of people who bring very passionate opinions on the issues we face. Few agree on what should be done. Sometimes that passionate opinion creates anger and strife between neighboring businesses, businesspeople and even neighborhoods. Often the conflict is between the rich and poor.

Big issues face our local business community. We have confounding public safety issues stemming from our transient population and an overwhelming wave of drug addiction. These problems are generating criminal activity harming local business owners throughout the city. Seeking God for wisdom and for solutions is a strategic investment of our time.

Pray

- all legitimate business would prosper
- God's name to be glorified in the solutions as they are discovered and carried out
- God's love would occupy every corner, street and sidewalk in downtown Roseburg and for it to spread throughout the city and the broader business community
- for unity within the business owners in downtown Roseburg
- our business owners and leaders would find common ground to move forward together
- differing opinions can be respected and heard and considered, even between historic enemies
- more resources are committed to mental health and drug addiction services

Lord, we commit these seemingly unsolvable problems to You. Allow success for businesses operated by Your sons and daughters. May You be included in the discussions around public safety, the mentally ill and those who are addicted to drugs. Amen

Week 4: Day 6 — Business People

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all of these things shall be added unto you. Matt 6:33

People in business have taken a risk not everyone is willing to take. They put their financial well-being in the hands of their customers and clients. They must also have faith in themselves, their products, the overall economy and the city where they do business. A Christian businessperson, also must have faith in God.

There is a mysterious unknown set of forces hovering over every businessperson as they cast their skill set or product line out before the world. There is no guarantee revenue will ever come back from the risk. It's quite a ride to trust God to deliver customers or clients. It's thrilling when they appear and support a business. Still, the believing business owner must learn to praise God when there are no clients or revenue just the same as when they are too busy to keep up with business.

The Christian businessperson must remember he or she is employed by God for furthering His Kingdom. He has us where He wants and needs us for His will to be accomplished. When business owners remember their larger job, it keeps the business owner's focus where it should be.

When businesspersons represent the Kingdom well, the body of Christ does well to support these businesses. Kingdom revenue is produced and distributed as these businesses support churches, missions, and other Christian enterprises.

- Pray that business owners begin pursuing God's eternal rewards instead of temporary wealth and greed
- Pray for believing business owners to recognize their position as stewards and servants in Your kingdom
- Pray for the success of believing business and their willingness to support other efforts to spread the Word

God of all wisdom, we recognize you as king and ruler over all things. As a loving Father you know our needs and have promised to supply us sufficiently for the day. Give us your wisdom to manage well what we possess. We ask for you be generous with our local business persons. Prosper them that they might share from their abundance. Show them how to invest strategically in ways which will bless our community. May you be glorified by the hard work and honesty demonstrated in their dealing with others! In Jesus' name, Amen.

Week 4: Day 7 — Business Owners' Eternal Legacies

For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? (Matt 16:26 NKJV)

Most people launch a business or operate their own company with the dream of amassing a large fortune. They are willing to put up with the risks, costs and headaches for the promise of money. Ego can also be a driving force behind a desire for success, fame and fortune. But God warns all of us to be aware of the trap of pursuing earthly treasures and praise.

As Christians we occupy a position on God's organizational chart. Each of us is a part of a larger plan He is carrying out in the world we live. The opportunity to hold a place on that chart is an honor which produces an eternal legacy instead of a temporary one. His opinion of our accomplishments lasts much longer than our bank account balance or even our name on the side of a building.

Today, we pray men and women who own and operate businesses in our community will recognize and prioritize the eternal over the earthly.

- God will raise up more heavenly minded business owners and operators
- For men and women in business to make legacy decisions which will promote Kingdom values
- For collaboration between business owners and other domain leaders for the benefit and blessing of the community now, and into the future
- For business owners and operators to make profits and to invest them in their employees, communities

Gracious God, We thank you for your generous and abundant provision for our needs. We acknowledge you own it all! You gift men and women who own and operate business with capacities, skills and drive to build enterprises which are profitable and employ us, our friends, family and neighbors. We ask you favor them. Give them wisdom. Reveal yourself to them. May they recognize their responsibility to you above all others. And, may they choose an eternal legacy over an earthly one. In Jesus name, Amen.

Week 5

Arts, Media & Recreation

Praying for the Arts, Media, Entertainment & Sports

³ I will refuse to look at anything vile and vulgar. I hate all who deal crookedly; I will have nothing to do with them. ⁴ I will reject perverse ideas and stay away from every evil. ⁵ I will not tolerate people who slander their neighbors. I will not endure conceit and pride. (Psalm 101:3-5 NLT)

This week we're praying for broad categories of endeavor which impact many domains. Most, if not all, of our county's population is either directly or indirectly involved and influenced by the arts, media/entertainment and sports categories. Professionals and hobbyists, the old and the young, the family and individuals of very diverse perspectives are engaged in creative expression, the transmission of news/information (if only on social media), entertainment, and in sports.

When we think of the Arts it is important to remember creativity is a gift from God. This gift reflects His image as Creator. Artistic expression may take many forms. Painters, sculptors, writers, singers, instrumentalists, actors and actresses, both amateur and professional, are engaging in artistic pursuits. In these, they often find and make meaning. Those who are influenced by the arts frequently appreciate it for its beauty, the sense of transcendence, and the Divine they encounter within them.

Our God invented beauty and gives us all the ability to appreciate it. So, we want to celebrate the good! We want to rejoice and encourage creativity within our churches, and especially our young people. But like so many things God created for our good, sin corrupts and sinners create in ways which reflect their depravity. Much of what is celebrated culturally about artistic expression offends the sensibilities of believers. Without careful consideration and discernment, what God meant for good can instead be used to corrupt and degrade.

The Media includes news sources (print, tv, and web), while the entertainment side includes movie production companies, tv networks, clubs and recreation venues. The Media provides an essential service to our society. At its best it helps keep the citizenry informed. For good or ill it often shapes the flavor and tenor of the discussions occurring in our day to day lives. Advertising dollars employed in media and entertainment exert incredible pressure on the consumers. Underlying world views and embedded messages in our entertainment can have a detrimental effect upon those who uncritically consume it.

Sports, for most participants and spectators, are a form of recreation or entertainment. These pursuits fill many family evenings and weekends with practices, games and travel. Sports families are frequently under pressure and torn between their desire to honor God and be good team players.

Professional, collegiate, and amateur sports (including youth and adult leagues) are big business and demand huge amounts of time, money and energy. While there are incredible life lessons and social benefits which may come from engaging in sports, there is a dark side. Corruption, abuse, gambling, drug use and alcohol abuse are frequent companions within the sports world.

Week 5: Day 1 — Artists and Creative Expression

Then Moses said to the Israelites, “See, the LORD has chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and he has filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills— to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood and to engage in all kinds of artistic crafts (Exodus 35:30-33)

The Lord gifted Bezalel thousands of years ago to create beautiful artistic works to adorn the tabernacle where God would dwell among his people, to delight the senses and point to the glorious magnificence of Yahweh. God is the Creator, and part of his Image in humanity is creativity. The urge to create and the diverse creative gifts endowed to individuals belies one of the ways in which we are like our Creator. The beauty and transcendence of works of art, in all its forms, can inspire us in ways few other modes of communication can.

- Pray for artists to thrive in local churches
- Ask the Lord to bless Christ-followers who are involved in the arts through our community and in our schools: theater, music, visual arts, dance, film. Pray for any specific artists you know by name. May they be focused on glorifying Jesus with their gifts
- Pray for people of character to be involved in the producing of the arts in our region. May the arts be used to promote godly virtues and integrity

Lord, bless our land with artists who are filled with the Holy Spirit, and give them creative vision for works that edify mind and soul. May people of all ages in our region be created in a way that enlarges our understanding of your grandeur.

Week 5: Day 2 — Athletes and Artists

“... and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship, to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, to work in every craft.” (Exodus 31:3-5, ESV)

In the 1980s I would watch a television show hosted by Ed McMahon called *Star Search*. Each week I would sit with my family and see people with a variety of skills and talents perform for the chance to become a star. The contestants had what it took to rise to the top as artists and performers.

It was also in the 1980s when I made it to the middle school wrestling team. I hadn't played many sports in the past, but I thought I'd give it a try. I remember stretching the tight singlet onto my body (the one-piece, tight-fitting, colored uniform) and taking the mat. I had a perfect record that year... I lost every match. Let's just say I did not have what it took to rise to the top as an athlete!

In the passage you read above, God is speaking to Moses about the men He had chosen to build the elements the people would use for meeting with and worshiping God. Moses learns that God had equipped these two men specifically to accomplish this. The God who gave these men the ability and intelligence, the knowledge and craftsmanship to devise artistic designs, is the same God who is at work equipping men and women with skills and abilities to fulfill His purposes in the world today.

Today let's pray for:

- Artists and athletes to see the skills and talents they have as a gift from God
- Humility and character to be reflected through those who use their talents
- God to be glorified through the believers who play on our various sport teams, with bands, choirs, in the theater, and other artistic communities
- Those who are in these communities who have yet to respond to Jesus to have the opportunity to hear the Gospel and choose Christ.

God our Creator, At the beginning of time you spoke creation into being. You saw what was not and made something from nothing. You created us in Your image and, like you, we are creative. Let the work of our hearts and hands be glorifying to You. Let the skills and abilities we have be a tool that we use to lift Your name on high. Let your people be a light to those in the athletic and artistic communities that have yet to know You. Amen.

Week 5: Day 3 — The Media and its Members

The truthful lip shall be established forever, but a lying tongue is but for a moment. (Proverbs 12:17 NKJV)

These days, it is impossible to think of media and not have the phrase ‘fake news’ come to mind. Faith in media may be at an all time low. How do we know the truth? Who is deciding what the truth actually is? How do we get our news and who can we trust?

The role of the media is crucial for a democracy. The ability reporters have to access information through public records requests must be protected and honored. The government or corporate bodies compelled to produce that information must also be transparent.

Local media representatives have the challenge to produce news stories and content in the most compelling way possible. They are (theoretically) required to balance that desire for the splashy headline with the truth. Sometimes that balance is hard to find. Sometimes it is ignored altogether. It takes reporters, editors, directors, and general managers with integrity to pursue the truth in reporting. Often, that means delaying the story — against the pressure of ‘beating the competition’ — in order to get the story right.

Our local news reporters and writers are also more accessible than in the larger markets. They are in the public eye often and can be reached somewhat easily. If they don’t respond, their bosses should. We can play a role in holding reporters accountable to the truth.

Unfortunately, many times people we know and love — sometimes ourselves — are put in the hands of the people reporting the details of some intense, private, negative moments in our lives. Sometimes when the story runs, it is not accurate or fair. Reputations can be damaged by those reports. In those moments, remember the people closest to you probably know the truth. The people who believe the reporters over your own integrity weren’t on your side or in your camp in the first place.

Sometimes the enemy moves through false reports about our character. There are times when God tests us through damaging our reputation. Ask Job! In those cases, it is good to remember that God judges us in our hearts and the people who truly know and love us know the real person behind the reports and do not forsake us because of what has been said about us.

- Pray for tenacious, honest, fair reporters and editors who have integrity and an open mind
- Pray for individuals who are willing to take a stand for the truth
- Pray that when under attack, we remember to reflect on Jesus

“Lord, we lift up every reporter, editor, publisher, general manager and owner of media outlets in Douglas County. Please help them seek the truth in every word they write or report. May they be men and women of integrity who demand accuracy while recognizing the impact they have on individuals and communities. Help each one of us to hold members of the media accountable through loving corrections, when necessary, and with bold tenacity, at the right time. And Lord, help us remember that You are the ultimate source of the Truth and that man is fallible and easily manipulated. Thank you that You are the same today, tomorrow and forever.”

Week 5: Day 4 — The Douglas County Media

“Finally brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.” (Philippians 4:8 ESV)

Douglas County media includes the headquarters for radio stations, KGRV and KQEN, and two newspapers, *The News-Review* and *The Beacon*. Additionally, we have many local musicians, journalists, presenters, editors, technicians, writers, and web-designers. There are also many more stations that come into our county through television, radio, and print. The media is one of the most influential and powerful voices in our times. We are often challenged to sort through all the information we hear and see to find what is factual and what is just an opinion.

The media is the primary source of news distribution and keeping communities aware and updated on topics, community activities, weather, and social events. The press impacts the city and can influence its behavior through its publications. Whatever our media source of choice, God has left us with Scriptures to guide us to live upstanding lives in our communities.

“But test everything; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.” (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 ESV)

God uses many means to accomplish his purposes. May television, radio, music, and print staff members be committed to accuracy and integrity, knowing that they can influence our children and us morally, spiritually and ethically. Today, we can pray for the influences of media that come into our county and homes. We can pray for truth and morality to be presented. Nothing is too difficult for God.

- Pray that the media in Douglas County would give truthful witness and honest testimony
- Pray that integrity would guide them and their words would be trustworthy and accurate
- Pray that our media would not be tempted to compromise truth
- Pray that they would stand firm in their belief in what is right and what is wrong
- Pray that they would be people of courage
- Pray for funding for media services that proclaim God’s Word
- Pray for protection for media personnel proclaiming God’s message

Thank you, dear Lord, for your words are truly guardrails for our lives. May you be honored in our prayers today for our media. We look to you, the One and Only God. May our local media provide objective and unbiased reporting. May our media be a voice for the voiceless, call for justice when needed, keep us rightly informed, and practice righteousness in all they do. In Jesus name, we pray, Amen.

Week 5: Day 5 — Athletes & Competitors in our Community

Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men,²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. (Colossians 3:23-24 ESV)

My Dad once told me, “Son, win or lose, I just want you to give your best effort.” Later, my wrestling coaches pushed us to excel and taught us our response in defeat or victory was as important as the result. Over time I’ve grown to appreciate the spiritual significance of these formative lessons.

Paul used athletics and sport in Scripture to illustrate truth (1 Cor 9:24-27). Paul had much respect for athletes. Competition in sports is painted in a positive light, and used as a metaphor for the Christian life. Athletic pursuits and competition can be noble pursuits in themselves.

The difficulty in our community is when people exchange devotion to sports for devotion to Christ. Sometimes the sport itself becomes more important than Jesus for whom we compete. We must remember as we participate in athletics or competition — it is for God. We do well when we put Him first in our walk. If we don’t lose focus on what is really important, our participation can lead to amazing spiritual growth and opportunity to honor God.

We need to be doing our best effort with whatever sport we are doing. In practice or in a game we need to work hard and want to achieve victory. This doesn’t mean that we will always win in a game, but it does mean that we will be victorious in our spiritual walk with God. Always work hard and give your best effort because God is pleased when we strive for excellence in what we do.

When we put forth our best effort for God we need to also remember who it is that we ultimately represent. Christians represent Christ, therefore we should be honorable athletes and spectators as Christ would want us to be. Whether we win or lose we cannot lose focus on God and know that we represent Him as Christians in everything that we do including games.

With this in mind there are several specific ways we can be praying:

- Pray for young athletes to put God first in their lives
- Pray that they are athletes of honor and strive to please God
- Pray for us to be encouraging to them to make God the goal
- Pray for opportunities to share Christ within athletic circles

Lord Jesus, we pray that we will put you first in every aspect of our lives including in the athletic arena. Please help young Christian athletes to do their best and be honorable examples of Christian athletes. We pray that You will use them to build opportunities to spread Your Gospel to teammates, spectators, and all people. In Your Name, Amen.

Week 5: Day 6 — The Intersection of Sports & Faith

Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father. (Colossians 3:16-17 NLT)

Today we seek to pray for the many ways we intersect with sports in our community.

Take a drive down Harvard Avenue in the spring or in the fall and you'll see the fields of green filled with children and their parents, uncles, aunts, loved ones. You'll see soccer fields and their parking lots full of families. Stop by a pizza place or a restaurant on a Saturday this fall, you'll see booths and tables full of football fans.

So, who do you represent? A soccer team? A football team? A church league team? Sports is definitely part of our community. It's a big part of many of our lives.

Look at how the Apostle Paul details our lives in Christ. He asks us to let the richness of the message of Jesus Christ fill our lives. He further encourages us that everything we say and do should be done as a representative of the Lord Jesus. So, let's ask the question again...who do you represent?

Pray:

- That God will reveal a calling and a purpose for children in our community as they pursue sports with their friends and family
- For those in coaching roles in our community who work within the sports teams in our schools to have a strong work ethic and high integrity
- For those that are visible, higher profiles in collegiate and professional sports, that they will know Christ and fulfill God's calling in their lives
- Pray that athletes in our community would live with integrity and carry out the responsibility of playing for their friends and families with integrity
- Pray for believers and Christ followers in our county, that their zeal and passion for our teams' pale in comparison to whom we represent on a daily basis

Dear God, thank you for our bodies. We give you praise for the health and strength You have granted to us and ask that we do not take them for granted. We pray that as we exercise and participate in various sports across our county, that You would reveal a call and a purpose worthy of Your kingdom. We pray that teachers, mentors and coaches across Douglas County will build and maintain a strong work ethic and high integrity. In our pursuit and passion for sports, may it always pale in comparison to our zeal, pursuit and passion of Your presence in our lives. We cheer for You. We praise You. We love You. In Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.

Week 5: Day 7 — Spiritual Renewal and Recreation

¹⁻² So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. (Romans 12:1-2 MSG)

For some of us the topics of prayer this week have been particularly challenging. In part, because we were raised to shun most forms of *artistic expression*, to avoid *worldly entertainments*, to be suspicious of *the media* and to look down on those whose *involvement in sports* took them away from church on weekends or other days when people were expected to be at prayer meeting or Bible study.

Praying for these categories and the people involved in them stretches us to consider God's presence; and, both how and where He evidences himself in our world. It also causes us to consider our own desires and impulses, our perspectives on the world, and our day to day habits and practices.

When God created the world, He declared it good. Since the fall, Creation itself has groaned under the weight of sin. Our desire to be entertained has become disproportional to our need to enjoy the Creator and His creation. Our impulse to relax versus our need to be renewed has been skewed.

Jesus reminded his hearers, "*The Sabbath was made to meet the needs of people, and not people to meet the requirements of the Sabbath*" (Mark 2:27 NLT). Our daily lives need the purpose, focus and rhythm of worship. Rest, recreation and appropriate forms of entertainment need to be integrated into them. When we're doing it "right" the world will notice a difference; we'll live distinctively. God will be gloried!

Let us pray we don't simply get caught up in the flow of our culture; but instead, we renew it as we ourselves are renewed!

- Pray Jesus will be at the center of our daily pursuits
- Pray God will be glorified in the arts, the media, sports and entertainment
- Pray Christ-followers will be wise in their participation and a witness in these arenas
- Pray for recreation and renewal will take precedence over mindless entertainment
- Pray for a gracious and generous spirit towards those who are "immature in faith" and struggle to find a consistent pattern of worship and rest

Creator God, Thank you for the gift of the sabbath and the impulse to recreate. Thank you for the capacities to create, to entertain and to enjoy. Thank you for the incredible opportunities we have in our culture and in our community to experience art, entertainment and to consume media. Give us wisdom. May we choose wisely and establish worshipful rhythms which renew our minds. May we be gracious to those around us who choose differently, and may we live distinctively for your glory! Amen.

Week 6

The Lost

Praying for Families and People Far from God

I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth. (3 John 1:4 ESV)

God instituted family as an expression of his heart for all people as the first place where they belong and feel loved. With the breakdown of society and family many individuals are broken, traumatized, and dysfunctional. The onslaught of cultural attacks against the family has never been stronger, even to the point of redefining what a family is. Now, more than ever we need to pray for our families. And, it begins with parents.

The highest joy and hope for a believing parent is to know that our children are walking in fellowship with God. The longing of our hearts, the deepest cry of our prayer, is for them to know him. In the Christian home, we see a tragic number of our children leave the faith when they become young adults. When we witness the disintegration of the home and the abandonment of faith, we're moved to pray. We pray for lost parents to find faith in Christ in order to rebuild the foundation. We pray for the many practical hardships that challenge families, making it overwhelming at times. Simply making ends meet, remains paramount for many families in Douglas County. For many, their extended families no longer live close enough to aid and assist in times of difficulty. Frequently families have experienced death or divorce. Children in single-parent homes struggles even harder. Poverty and homelessness are significant issues in our county. We can intercede and pray for all of these situations and individuals. Nothing is impossible for God. He still has the answer, and the solution, for every problem a person encounters. He is still on the throne and offers hope and help to all. For those who are disconnected from him, like prodigals, we can pray that God would draw them back to the faith. We pray for the lost who have never known God, that they would find salvation in him. We pray for all those who need forgiveness, that they would confess and find their rest and peace in God.

We pray for marriages and the family. It has been said that a family can survive without a nation, but a nation cannot survive without the family. This week, let's turn our hearts to focus on the family and individuals within the family. Let's pray for our families here in Douglas County to be strengthened and encouraged. Let's pray for heavy burdens to be lifted from our families, and that they would have the means to support their needs. Let's also pray for families to find a church and stay connected with the family of God.

Father, help us, as a nation, to not forsake our mercy (Jonah 2:8) and steadfast love in you, that you so freely offer to all. In Jesus name, we pray, Amen.

Week 6: Day 1 — Prayer for Men, Women, and Marriage

And when David heard of it, he sent Joab and all the host of the mighty men... Be of good courage, and let us be courageous for our people, and for the cities of our God, and may the Lord do what seems good to him. (2 Samuel 10:7, 12 ESV)

"Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love." (1 Corinthians 16:13-14 ESV)

Our culture has been shifting toward the removal of tradition, family, and faith, and replacing it with one group oppressing the other trying to prove a point. Today, we need to turn to the Bible as our standard of values, morals, and rights.

For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him. He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken. On God rests my salvation and my glory; my mighty rock, my refuge is God. (Psalm 62:5-7 ESV)

In our relationship struggles may we always remember who the real enemy is. It is not each other. The enemy is on a relentless mission to keep everyone fighting. So there is only strife, division, and no peace. May we resist all his attacks and stay in humility and self-sacrificing love as Jesus taught us to do so.

God offers hope in relationships. Today, may we pray and invite the Spirit of the Lord to bring his rest, wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, fear of the Lord, and his delight, into our marriages and relationships.

- Pray for men to "act like men" according to God's Holy Word in Scripture
- Pray for men to love their wives the way Christ loved the church and gave his life for her
- Pray for women to honor and respect their husbands the way the church does so to Jesus
- Pray for women to come under the protection of their husband's love
- Pray for marriage partners to love, honor, care, and respect, each other in all things
- Pray for men and women to find their identity and glory in God alone, and not to put unrealistic expectations on each other

Heavenly Father, marriage is part of your plan to provide at least one person in our lives for us to practice unconditional love. Help marriages when they need your guidance and strength to walk with tenderness, compassion, kindness, humility, and love. Bless, strengthen, and heal, marriages in our churches, cities, and nation. Grant us insight when the enemy stirs up strife and teach us how to wage counter warfare to stand in grace and peace with God and each other. In Jesus name, we pray, Amen.

Week 6: Day 2 — Imparting Destiny to our Young People

Then David said to Solomon his son, "Be strong and courageous and do it. Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed, for the Lord God, even my God, is with you. He will not leave you or forsake you, until all the work for the service of the house of the Lord is finished... Solomon my son... is young and inexperienced, and the work is great, for the palace will not be for man but for the Lord." (1 Chronicles 28:20-29:1 ESV)

Our children are a blessing we give to ourselves, to the Lord, the church, and the world, as the next generation of leaders. It is our honor and privilege to train them up in the Lord and teach them how to prepare for the task of becoming adults who will one day lead our cities, states, and nation. We can begin to pray for their lives before they are even born.

And you, Solomon my son, know the God of your father and serve him with a whole heart and with a willing mind, for the Lord searches all hearts and understands every plan and thought. If you seek him, he will be found by you... The Lord has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary; be strong and do it. (1 Chronicles 28:9-10 ESV)

We can pray, and we can speak destiny into our children. Our words can aid in imparting hope, life, and purpose, in their young lives. As we interact with them, we can make time and opportunity to impact, mold, and reveal their true identity is found in God alone. We speak blessing over our children which equips and strengthens them with our love.

Let's pray that our children resolutely serve the Living God. May they hear and observe God's Word in Scripture. May they learn to seek after all Gods commandments and grow in grace and the knowledge of him. May they seek him and find him. Let them consider the high calling of God on their lives and rise above whatever the world has to offer. May our children delight in uprightness, and the integrity of their hearts, may they joyfully serve the Lord.

- Pray for our children, like Samuel, to hear God, when they are very young
- Pray for our youth to know that God cares about everything they care about
- Pray for our young adults that God would direct their hearts toward him
- Pray God would give our young people a perfect heart to keep his commands
- Pray our children, youth, and young adults would be protected from all the snares of the world
- Pray they are rooted and grounded in the love of God, the church, and their family

Lord Jesus, we praise you because you are loving and faithful. Protect our children, youth, and young adults from the entrapments of the world. Guide their hearts toward righteousness, wisdom, and favor with you. We entrust our children into your care. May they fulfill your will and plan for their lives. In Jesus name, we pray, Amen.

Week 6: Day 3 — Praying for the Healing of the Generations

Give ear, O my people to my teaching; incline your ears to the words of my mouth! I will open my mouth in a parable... things that we have heard and known, that our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from our children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done... which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children, that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments. (Psalm 78:1-7 ESV)

There have always been "generation gaps" of one generation focusing on their tasks and having difficulties understanding the next. In the last decade's travel, technology, and the job market, have played a role in driving the generations apart. American families can be spread across the country and no longer live just down the road from each other. Additionally, the breakdown of the family and values have contributed toward separation in the generations.

One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts. (Psalm 145:4 ESV)

Let this be recorded for a generation to come, so that a people yet to be created may praise the Lord. (Psalm 103:18 ESV).

It is our hearts cry to heal and connect the generations, to heal the family unit, return the fathers to the home, permit our children to be born, and increase interactions across all age barriers. God demonstrates his desire to connect the generations in one of his titles as the "God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers. (Malachi 4:5-6 ESV)

May our prayers reflect the heart of our Heavenly Father for the generations, for all ages, all peoples, all tribes, all languages. May we pray to him for the healing of the generational gaps and especially forgive us for the times we have adopted a secular culture in our homes instead of a culture of honoring all life.

- Pray for a bridge between the generations, from the unborn to the very aged
- Pray for all ages to be saved
- Pray for healing for the family unit
- Pray for the hearts of the fathers to be turned toward the children, and the children toward the fathers
- Pray for families separated by many miles to find creative ways to have significant interactions
- Pray for those who are fatherless, abandoned, and orphaned to find fathers and mothers in the church and community

Heavenly Father, forgive our sin, hear our prayer, heal our land. Bless our descendants who will lead our country someday. Help us to practice honor in all our interactions, between all age groups. Cultivate within us your heart for the generations and teach us how to love one another across all age segregation. In Jesus name, Amen.

Week 6: Day 4 — Brokenness and Restoration

They wandered in the wilderness in a desert region... They were hungry and thirsty; their soul fainted within them. Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble; he delivered them out of their distress. He led them also by a straight way... (Psalm 107:4-7 ESV)

Compassion makes a difference. Jesus wept. He was moved with compassion on the suffering he saw. There are hurting people around us and in our families that need a gentle touch, a prayer of kindness, a thoughtful word of hope. Brokenness, dysfunction, and trauma, are everywhere. There is hope in the Lord when the weary call on God. He comes, easing their distress and putting them on a straight path toward freedom.

The Spirit of the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn in Zion. (Isaiah 61:1-2 ESV)

As people of prayer, we can pray for the hurting to be reconciled and restored to God and their families. We can pray that they would be set free by the Spirit of the Lord and find forgiveness and deliverance from addictions, bondages, guilt, and despair.

Their Redeemer is strong; the Lord of hosts is his name. He will surely plead their cause, that he may give rest...(Jeremiah 50:34 ESV)

"Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you." (Deuteronomy 31:6 ESV)

There is real hope and power in the cross. Let us pray for people to come to know God and have his reconciliation in their lives. Let's pray for them to be set free and restored to their homes and families. Let's pray for their hearts to be filled with gratitude and thanksgiving to God for who he is and what he can do in their lives.

- Pray that hurting people will call on the Lord to save and restore them
- Pray that they would receive the compassion of the Lord and put their hope in Jesus
- Pray that those who are struggling with unforgiveness or bitterness would find the grace to release their pain at the cross
- Pray that Jesus would come as the Redeemer, strong, and courageous and set them free.
- Pray that families who have been broken through addictions and pain would be reconciled and restored
- Pray that traumatized people would discover that God is good

Spirit of the Living God, move with power and might like Isaiah 61 says. Bring beauty for people who are in ashes, bring the oil of gladness, instead of mourning, ring the garment of praise, instead of fainting into the lives and families of the hurting. We pray in the mighty name of Jesus, Amen.

Week 6: Day 5 — The Disconnected and the Lost

I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness. (Jeremiah 31:3 NIV)

Multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of decision! (Joel 3:14 ESV)

Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls. (Jeremiah 6:16 ESV)

Life is filled with choices. Every person has been granted an opportunity to choose Truth and be set free (Romans 1:19-20). For those who have never made a decision for Christ, and for those who have become disconnected from following him, we can pray that they would find the way to the cross. Eternal life is a free gift. May these recognize the Truth is in Jesus alone and come to him for salvation, restoration, and reconciliation, with God and with the body of believers.

Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known. (Jeremiah 33:3 ESV)

In him was life, and the life was the light of men. (John 1:4 ESV)

In a world of competing and confusing ideas about how to find happiness and peace, we can pray that God would draw the people to himself with the power of the gospel message. We can pray for him to raise up those who go out and bring in the harvest. And we can pray that his directive to go into all the world and preach the good news of the kingdom would be done.

- Pray for God to draw all people to himself
- Pray for the grace of confession and repentance for those who are lost or disconnected from God
- Pray for the lost that in their searching they would come to the knowledge of the Truth in Jesus
- Pray for those who are disconnected from Jesus, that they would believe and trust God again
- Pray for healing and restoration where disillusionment and discouragement have caused them to separate from their families and the church
- Pray for the prodigals to come home to the Father and feel his love and care
- Pray for laborers to be raised up and sent out to bring in the lost

Heavenly Father, we ask for your tender mercies upon the lost and disconnected. Reveal to them that you are a good Father waiting to hear their prayer of confession and repentance. May these find their way to the cross and hope in you. Bring in the harvest, Lord. Search the highways and byways for the lost sheep and bring them to your loving arms. May the lost and disconnected come to know that you are the Christ, the Son of Living God and may they devote their lives to your kingdom service. We pray in Jesus name, Amen.

Week 6: Day 6 — Praying for Prodigals

So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him. (Luke 15:20 NLT)

One of the most difficult scenarios I ever imagine is parenting a prodigal.

From the joy of their birth, through the toddler and elementary years parenting is most often a joy and a privilege. Many well-intentioned, attentive and reasonable parents discover the teen years bring a completely different experience. The child who was easy and compliant changes (overnight as it were) and becomes defiant and difficult. Sometimes soon after, but other times only after years of struggle, these precious children as young adults leave home, leaving behind the faith and character the parent had hoped to instill. For many a nearly unbearable prodigal season follows.

Prodigal children and parents of prodigals experience differing difficulties but both deserve thoughtful and strategic prayer. We know God desires “none should perish” and we cling to the proverbial wisdom which suggests when we train our children in the way, “they shall not depart from it.” The prodigal child frequently enjoys a season of freedom before being confronted with unintended or unexpected consequences. Sadly, some parents do not live to see their children return. Some prodigals lose their way forever.

Let’s join in praying for those on this journey of loving a prodigal or being lost as one.

- Pray for mothers and fathers to act wisely, graciously, and compassionately towards their prodigal children
- Pray for strength and perseverance for parents who are praying for and loving prodigals
- Pray for God to place godly people in the path of prodigals
- Pray for prodigal children to come to their senses and return to God and their homes
- Pray for reconciliation and peace in homes
- Pray for siblings caught in the crossfire
- Pray grace and comfort for those families who have lost their children forever as prodigals.

Gracious and compassionate Heavenly Father, grant to us your compassionate heart for prodigal children and their parents. Help us to be kind and generous in our dealings with those who are struggling in their own unique way. For the prodigals we ask your mercy and grace. Draw them to yourself; place godly people in their paths whose kindness will lead them to repentance. For the parents we pray you would guard their hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, grant them peace and the strength to persevere in their faith. We pray for restoration, reconciliation and redemption. In the name of Jesus, Amen

Week 6: Day 7 — Praying for the Church to Reach the Lost

I thank my God in all my remembrance of you...because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. (Philippians 1:3-5, ESV)

The first few verses of Philippians describe the sense of joy Paul felt when he prayed for the people of the Church in Philippi. His joy was present because this church had committed to being persistent partners in the Gospel. Rather than losing heart in the midst of trials and opposition, they were encouraged to stand firm, keeping their focus on what was most important — their Savior. Paul told them to look to Jesus and let His model of humility and His sacrifice of love be the spark that ignited the fire of their faith, which would light up the world.

My hope is that the same would be true for the Church in Roseburg. For this to happen, we must choose to allow our love of Jesus to motivate a passionate response of loving God and others. Christians must take the initiative to engage with those who do not yet believe in Jesus. We must learn to clearly explain why the Gospel is good news and clearly explain what it is: Jesus died in your place for your sin and guilt, He rose from the grave on the third day. He offers us complete forgiveness and new life through the Spirit, and all we must do is believe that what Jesus did was enough to make us right with God and repent (change our minds).

Today let's pray for:

- All believers in Roseburg to be burdened with the passion to share Jesus with others
- Believers to have a clear understanding of the Gospel—no strings attached— and the courage to share it
- Compassion for the lost that moves us out of our comfort zone to be with them
- Receptivity to the Gospel for those who desperately need Jesus

God of Salvation, You have entrusted the mission of making disciples to us, Your church. Help us go out of our way to engage with people who need You and Your redemption. We know it is easy to become distracted, lazy, and comfortable in our own ways. Please help us to not be okay with this, because You are not okay with it. Burden our hearts for the lost. Help us to love them as You do. We choose to be partners in the Gospel for You. Amen.

Conclusion

Nearly six weeks ago we began this Be One Umpqua strategic prayer initiative. It is our hope and prayer you have been blessed, and have found this guide profitable for your prayers. Whether you joined a group during the week, or prayed in solitude, we're confident your prayers matter. They have been instrumental in bringing His Kingdom to the domains of Douglas County. We can't wait to hear and report some of what God has been up to in our community.

We invite you to join us in celebrating what God is doing, and to continue in praying strategically for our community at the 3rd Annual Palm Sunday Community Worship and Prayer Service. This year's event is at Garden Valley Church, Sunday, March 25 at 6:00 pm.

We'd love to hear how this guide has blessed and the answers to prayer you may have observed or observe in the future. To communicate with us please:



[@dceforegon](#)

or

[@BeOneUmpqua](#)

Please submit your comments and answered prayers there as well.

DCEF remains committed to a sustained strategic prayer effort in our community. If you'd like to learn more about how you can participate in future initiatives please email us at:

pastorpudi@gmail.com Subject: Strategic Prayer

Additional Resources

<http://onehopenetwork.org/prayer-resources/>

<https://waymakers.org/pray/seek-god/sample-page/>

<http://www.pdxprays.com/prayer-targets.html>

<https://hartfordprayer.com/prayer-tools/seven-mountains-prayer-points/>

Praying for the Domains: Personal Contacts & Concerns

Churches & Church Leaders

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
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- 10.

Economy (Ag., Business & Industry)

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Government Agencies & Officials

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Entertainment (Arts, Media, Sports)

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Social Sector

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People & Families Far from God

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Special Thanks

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A special word of appreciation to Lynn Ferder and the House of Prayer. Lynn graciously spent time with me, recruited contributors, offered great insight in her comments, and as is her usual style, offered loads of encouragement and affirmation.

Thanks to Marlene Daley who spent time proofing and correcting errors. Bless you!

Finally, thanks to my wife Kimber, who put up with me in the days leading up to the conclusion of this prayer guide. Thanks for your patience.

To God be the glory! May the result of our praying be transformation! May His Kingdom come, on earth as it is in heaven. — J.D.N.