



PRAY**40**FOR COLUMBUS

2018 Prayer Devotional

Week 1: January 15 - 21, 2018

PrayForColumbus.org

Dear Praying Friends,

We invite you to join us for a special season of prayer and fasting for our city beginning January 15th and ending February 23rd. Each week, we will focus on a particular region of the city with devotionals authored by Christ-followers from that region. Each devotional centers on one of five themes found in 2 Chronicles 7:14: **posture, prayer, presence, repentance and reconciliation.**

Our city is in desperate need of God's intervention! Our condition is truly beyond human remedy. Jesus Himself often asserted that He could do nothing of His own accord (John 5:19,30; 8:28; 12:49). As we pray, we humbly acknowledge this truth. Looking to our Redeemer and Deliverer, the Lord God Almighty, we are reminded that He is the mighty warrior who saves, (Zephaniah 3:17) blessed are all who trust in Him (Jeremiah 17:7).

We can take encouragement from the assurance that "the prayers of the righteous avail much." (James 5:16). Along with our fervent prayers, we are assured that there is tremendous power in agreement. This season of city-wide prayer provides us the opportunity to agree in prayer with our brothers and sisters in Christ across Columbus. In Matthew 18:19 we read "Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven."

On behalf of Pray for Columbus and the dozens of devotional authors, we invite you to pray with us for our city, for the lost, for unity in the body of Christ, for ministries that serve the most vulnerable, for discipleship, and for radical transformation in Columbus that can only be explained by the living God answering the humble prayers of His children.

Thank you again for partnering with us in prayer for the city. We joyfully anticipate the fruit of our prayers. To God be the glory!

With grateful hearts,

Your Friends at Pray for Columbus



posture



prayer



presence



repentance



reconciliation

“The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’ But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’”

Luke 18:11-13, ESV

My church has been studying Jesus’ life through the Gospel of Mark. One of the most striking parts for me has been noticing the heart posture of the Pharisees in contrast with the heart posture of the weak, broken, “outcasts of society,” those society might deem as “the worst of sinners.” The Pharisees were meant to be the spiritual leaders, the scholars and the elite who knew the law better than anyone else. But instead of exalting the Lord, they exalted their ability to behave “righteously.” Yet, time and time again in the Gospels we see the “worst of sinners” understanding the mercy of the Gospel with a humble heart posture and much more genuine faith than the Pharisees. I was reminded of a passage in Luke 18 that I felt contrasted this well:

The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector:

To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’ “But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’ “I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.” (Luke 18:9-14, NIV)

How often have we played the part of the Pharisees, judging others for their actions, and considering ourselves more righteous, or more spiritual? The minute we lose sight of our position before the Lord as a sinner saved by grace alone, is the minute we stop sitting in our humble spot in the story of the Gospel. We have not earned righteousness. We are not righteous apart from Christ. We were sinners who have been rescued and shown great mercy.

What would it look like to approach those we consider the “worst of sinners” with the same mercy we have been shown by Christ?

What would it look like to recognize that we belong right alongside them and sit humbly at the foot of the cross?



LORD, have mercy on me, a sinner. I have never done anything to deserve the mercy you have shown me. Help my heart each day to remember the massive gift you have given me, and to each day approach others with the same heart of mercy you have bestowed upon me. Thank you, LORD. Amen.

DAY 1: January 15, 2018

Prayer Focus: posture



Prayer Region: greater campus

- Pray for a church partner for **Columbus Africentric Early College High School and Colerain Elementary.**

Featured Contributor:

Lisa Scott works with undergraduate students at OSU, helping young women learn how to use their gifts for God’s Kingdom in reaching the lost. She is passionate about helping people walk in the freedom found in a relationship with Christ. She enjoys teaching them how to deeply know God through His Word. Her heart is to disciple students who become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.

"I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours." Luke 17:9, ESV

I haven't felt like praying much lately.

Thankfully, my congregation has been unpacking the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) over the last six weeks and I've been shown that my situation isn't all that special. This has created the safe space to be honest in my struggle, so I'll be honest with you too. I've been through the gamut from forcing prayer to feeling guilty about not praying to just giving up on it entirely.

We know that God sacrificed His son to wipe our slate clean and draw us near to Him (Romans 3:23-26, Ephesians 2:4-6, 1 John 2:2). We know that He deeply desires to spend time with His children (1 John 3:1). We know that the more time we spend with Him, the more like Him we become (Romans 5:5). So what makes prayer so difficult?

For me, the struggle comes from my personal need to be in control. I crave tangible progress, and that makes prayer way too ambiguous. I need to check prayer off my list, and that makes movement of the Spirit scary. Through my work, I experience some of the darkest corners of humanity as I advocate for those impacted by human trafficking. Daily, I am reminded of just how little I have control of in this broken world. It's far easier to believe there's little I can do about it and quickly burn out as I rely on my own strength to combat the world's second largest criminal enterprise in our city of Columbus.

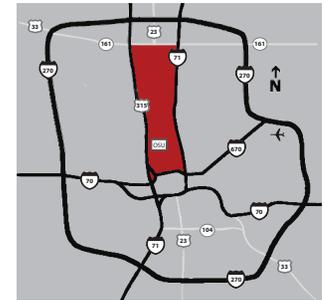
Two small disciplines have brought me through this season of spiritual dryness. I invite you to try them too. The first is gratitude. Count the blessings He has given you every day and challenge yourself to cast aside anxiety, trusting He is working all things for good. The second is intercession. Who could use my prayers? When we take the time to think of others, we reflect what Christ did for us even as he neared his death on a cross (John 17:6-26).



Dear God, You are eternal and gracious. As you reminded Job when he doubted Your goodness, You laid the earth's foundation and created all that is in it. Daily remind our doubting hearts of this too. Turn us from our inward brokenness and this world's surrounding darkness to your good and perfect will. We are thankful for your love. Amen.

DAY 2: January 16, 2018

Prayer Focus:
prayer



Prayer Region:
greater campus

- Pray for a church partner for **Columbus Gifted Academy**.
- Pray for the faith partnership with **Devonshire Alt Elementary**.
- Pray for our church leaders in Columbus (Jer 3:15).

Featured Contributor:

Courtney Schmackers is on staff at She Has A Name, an anti-trafficking nonprofit that exists to seek restoration for those impacted by human trafficking. As development director, Courtney loves helping individuals and organizations discover how they can join the abolitionist movement in meaningful ways.

“When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand as he came down from the mountain, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God” Exodus 34:29, ESV

Recently, my car radio completely stopped working. No sports talk radio on the commute to and from work, no music of any kind to help pass the time or even sing along to worship songs out loud alone in the car. At first this was a cause of great frustration. So in the absence of talk radio and music I asked the Lord to speak to me, which would inherently mean I would have to be quiet and listen. But I would quickly revert to saying, “I want to praise you Lord, I want to worship you!” because I thought that’s what I should do as a Christian, but more because I was uncomfortable with the silence.

After a few days of my radio not working and my efforts to listen, I heard from the Lord in my heart. It was like He invited me to seek His presence while I drive. I understood that He wants to spend time with me, uninterrupted by the noise of the radio!

When seeking God’s presence, I find it so helpful to remember that God was first the Great Pursuer. Back in the garden after Adam and Eve “hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God...” It was the Lord God Himself who first asked the man, “Where are you?” (Genesis 3:8-9)

Later in Exodus, the Lord extended invitations to Moses to “come up to me on the mountain.” It is interesting as well that in the context of the passage above, Moses had just finished spending forty days and forty nights with the Lord on the mountain. What faces may be shining at the end of this forty-day prayer initiative!

When meditating on seeking God’s presence today, do not be absent from hearing His initial invitation to you. May you find yourself, unaware, shining with the light of God’s glory because you have been talking with God. May you carry with yourself a testimony of God because of having been in God’s presence.



Lord, we declare that we seek your face! Show us your glory! We humble ourselves and ask that you would invite us to come up to meet you on the mountain. Thank you that we don’t strive to reach you. We just ask, please, meet with us and speak. Amen.

DAY 3: January 17, 2018

Prayer Focus:

presence



Prayer Region:

greater campus

- Pray for the faith partnerships with Indian Springs Elementary School and Hubbard Mastery School.

Featured Contributor:

Ryan Miller is married and lives in Clintonville. He works as a painter for Floit & Co. He attends Vineyard Columbus, Lane Avenue campus and serves at the River View International Center helping children of immigrant and refugee families with their homework.

“I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.’ And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.” Luke 15:18-20, ESV

Repentance. What’s the first thing that comes to mind when you hear this word? I’d say that our thoughts about repentance are similar to that of the prodigal son. When he comes to himself, he has an entire plan on exactly what he’s going to say and do to convince his father to take him back

“I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, “father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men.”

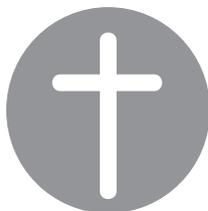
Luke 15:18-19

The prodigal was so steeped in guilt and shame that he believed that if he punished himself before his Father could, his father would see how sorry he really was and show pity. But the prodigal underestimated the power of repentance. He didn’t realize that his decision to return changed everything. He didn’t expect his father to run to greet him with hugs, kisses and excitement while he was still far off. In fact, the prodigal doesn’t even get the words of repentance out of his mouth before his Father lavishes his love on him.

“So he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.”

Luke 15:20

This view of repentance changes how we view our sin, scripture and our gospel presentation. It’s a higher call that causes us to embrace the God whose goodness leads us to repentance. Even the prodigal knew he could at least be a servant in his father’s house realizing that his father was good to even the servants. But when he turns he discovers his father is better than he knew and his sins are drowned in love.



Abba, we thank You for Your goodness that leads us to repentance. Today we choose to see You as a glad dad who is always excited when we come to You. We ask for hearts that see repentance through Your lenses of love and compassion. That repentance would be seen as the gift that brings Your presence to earth! Amen.

Prayer Focus:

repentance



Prayer Region:

greater campus

- Pray for church partners for **Indianola Informal K-8** and **Ridgeview Elementary**.

Featured Contributor:

Jahmarra Warfield is a full-time Intercessory Missionary and staff member of Hope for Columbus, a 24/7 House of Prayer in downtown Columbus, where she facilitates a House of Prayer internship. Jahmarra has a passion to see the fame of Jesus fill the nations of the earth. In October she launched an outreach on OSU’s campus called Fire120 to reach the nations on college campuses.

Yoshi came to the USA to study from Japan. Christians shared with her the good news of Jesus Christ and she decided to receive Jesus Christ as her Lord. As she grew in her relationship with Christ she desperately wanted others to know the good news. She became involved with the ministry of International Friendships where she was able to meet many other international students - the majority were from China and did not know Jesus. She decided, along with her husband, that she should move to Asia to share the good news there.

Her Chinese friends told her, “It will not be easy for you, many Chinese hate the Japanese because of the atrocities committed against them during World War II.” Yoshi had not been taught about what the Japanese troops had done and was shocked to learn the terrible sins that had been committed. She was embarrassed and hurt by the cover-up and the lack of repentance. Yoshi came to me for counsel. I told her “Why not make a public apology in front of your Chinese friends?” Her first thought was “I was not even born at that time.” I shared with her the examples of Nehemiah and Daniel who confessed the sins of their people before God: “I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father’s family, have committed against you...” (Nehemiah 1:6, NIV) “we have sinned and done wrong...” (Nehemiah 1:7, TLB) She decided that she would do it.

One night, at the large Bible study group, she stood up in front of all the students and asked for forgiveness, “I am so sorry for my country’s terrible sin against your people. Please forgive me and please pray for my people. Many of us had no idea what was happening but we are so sorry.” Suddenly the other Japanese in the room were standing and then bowing “We are so sorry. Please forgive us.” The Chinese in the room were deeply moved and tears started flowing. One of the Chinese leaders stood up, put his arm around Yoshi and forgave her and her people. A great bond of love was established between the Japanese and Chinese students that night.

Yoshi said that night began a healing journey for her. Yoshi has been living in China for the past 9 years where the healing journey has continued for her and the Chinese people. God is using Yoshi to demonstrate that Jesus is the true bridge builder and restorer of peoples and nations.



Lord, the leaves of the tree of life are for the healing of nations. You have brought many peoples from many nations to Columbus. Many carry wounds from their nations and their families’ histories. May Columbus be the place where healing takes place through Jesus Christ. May the dividing wall be broken down. Lord, help us to identify with the sins of our city in repentance that healing may come in Jesus name between those groups that have hurt one another. Amen.

DAY 5: January 19, 2018

Prayer Focus: **reconciliation**



Prayer Region: **greater campus**

•Pray for the church partnership with Weinland Park Elementary School and Whetstone High School.

Featured Contributor:

Rich Mendola is Executive Director of International Friendships, Inc. (IFI), a national ministry to international students. He has served internationals for the past 37 years. He is an author, church planter and the founding pastor of All Nations Christian Fellowship - a multicultural church. Read more at: www.ifipartners.org.