

40 Days of Prayer for Southern Gables Church

Over the next 40 days we are asking the congregation to **pray**: to take time alone with God to **pray**, to **pray** with your family, to **pray** with a small group, and also **pray** together as a congregation. Enclosed is a guide to effective **praying** (keep in mind, the effectiveness is what God will do in our hearts as well as through us when we **pray**), a daily **prayer** guide made specifically for our church during this transition time, and also some ideas on fasting should you wish to include this spiritual discipline during this time.

Who should be a part of this 40 days of prayer?

Everyone who attends Southern Gables Church and desires to see God's continued blessing for the future and His choice of the next senior pastor.

What should we pray?

Let the Holy Spirit move you into what to **pray** for. We also have provided a guide suggesting some specifics to include in your **prayers**.

How should we pray?

Many people sit in a chair with their head bowed, hands folded. Others find standing out of respect to God helps them to focus. Have you ever gotten down on your knees to pray? Or have you prayed with your face to the ground? You may find one of these positions of your body helps your spirit to bow before God. You might also find that journaling your prayer helps you focus your thoughts, and helps you to remember to watch for how God chooses to answer. Your journaling will then be an aid in thanking Him for His answers.

Why should I pray?

Jesus **prayed**. Shouldn't we want to become more like him? Even though He was the Son of God, Jesus **prayed** while He was here on this earth. This tells us our deep need for **prayer**. If Jesus, the Son of God needed to **pray**, how much more do we need to **pray**?

Jesus' model of prayer

If we truly want to follow Jesus, **prayer** is one of His greatest examples to us.

Jesus began His ministry on earth **praying**.

*(Luke 3:21) When all the people were baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as He was **praying**, heaven was opened.*

Jesus went alone to **pray** and be with God.

*(Matthew 14:23) After He had dismissed them, (the disciples) He went up on a mountainside by Himself to **pray**.*

(Mark 1:35) *Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where He **prayed**.*

(Luke 5:16) *But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and **prayed**.*

Jesus **prayed** for others.

(Matthew 19:13) *Then little children were brought to Jesus for Him to place His hands on them and **pray** for them.*

(Luke 22:31-32) *“Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have **prayed** for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail.”*

Jesus **prayed** for His Disciples. (John 17:6-19)

(John 17:20-21) *Jesus prayed for us, “My **prayer** is not for them alone. I **pray** also for those who will believe in Me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as You are in Me and I am in You. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that You have sent Me.”*

Jesus taught His disciples how to **pray**.

(Luke 11:1-4) *One day Jesus was **praying** in a certain place. When He finished, one of His disciples said to Him, “Lord, teach us to **pray**, just as John taught his disciples.”*

(Matthew 6:9-13) *This, then, is how you should **pray**: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”*

Jesus agonized in the Garden, **praying** during His greatest hour of need.

(Matthew 26:36-46) *Then Jesus went with His disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and He said to them, “Sit here while I go over there and **pray**.” Going a little farther, He fell with his face to the ground and **prayed**, “My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.” So He left them and went away once more and **prayed** the third time, saying the same thing.*

Jesus **prayed** for Himself, bringing glory to God.

(John 17:1-5) *After Jesus said this, He looked toward heaven and **prayed**: “Father, the time has come, Glorify Your Son, that Your Son may glorify You. For You granted Him authority over all people that He might give eternal life to all those you have given Him. Now this is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent. I have brought You glory on earth by completing the work You gave Me to do. And now, Father, glorify Me in Your presence with the glory I had with You before the world began.”*

(Hebrews 5:7-10) *During the days of Jesus' life on earth, He offered up **prayers** and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save Him from death, and He was heard because of his reverent submission. Although He was a son, He learned obedience from what He suffered and, once made perfect, He became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey Him and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek.*

Prayer distinguishes the children of God¹

“Nothing distinguishes the children of God so clearly and strongly as **prayer**. It is the infallible mark and test of being a Christian. Christian people are **prayerful**. The worldly-minded are **prayerless**. Christians call on God. The worldly ignore God and do not call on His name. But even Christians need to cultivate continual **prayer**. **Prayer** must be habitual, but much more than a habit. It is a duty, yet one that rises far above and goes beyond the ordinary meaning of the word. It is the expression of a relation to God, a yearning for divine communion. It is the outward and upward flow of the inward life toward its original fountain. It is an assertion of the soul's paternity, a claiming of the sonship that links a Christian to the eternal Father.” (Romans 8:15)

“**Prayer** has everything to do with molding the soul into the image of God (2 Corinthians 3:18). It has everything to do with enhancing and enlarging the measure of divine grace (Hebrews 4:16). It has everything to do with bringing the soul into complete communion with God. It has everything to do with enriching, broadening, and maturing the soul's experience of God.”

¹Chadwick, Harold J. *EM Bounds: The Classic Collection on Prayer*. (Gainesville: Bridge-Logos Publishers, 2001) p. 42.

Will you follow Jesus' example of prayer and obedience to God and pray?

Jesus spent a whole night on a mountainside in prayer before He chose the 12 apostles. (Luke 6:12)

Will you pray these next 40 days, asking God who He has for Southern Gables Church?