

The Serenity Prayer

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change;
 courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference.
 Living one day at a time; Enjoying one moment at a time;
 Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;
 Taking, as He did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it;
 Trusting that He will make all things right if I surrender to His Will;
 That I may be reasonably happy in this life and
 supremely happy with Him forever in the next. Amen. – Reinhold Niebuhr

FBC is continuing its season of focused prayer called, *"Call to Prayer."* We hope this prayer guide will help you to join our congregation in its church wide prayer emphasis through the Easter season.

Monday – The Habit of Prayer

"The truth is that we only learn to pray all of the time everywhere after we have resolutely set about praying some of the time somewhere." John Dalrymple – Simple Prayer

1. Please read Mark 1:35, Luke 5:16, and Luke 6:12. Describe some of the characteristics of Jesus' prayer life. What can we learn from his example?
2. Why is quiet time spent with God in prayer so good for our souls?
3. Have you designated a specific time and place to pray? If not, what steps can you take? Be creative.

Focus on Prayer – Please pray for the 85 teenagers, adults and children who make up this year's FBC Mexico Outreach team. Ask God to prepare the way for them and to do a mighty work in and through their lives. Let's ask God to glorify his name and build his Kingdom through the Mexico Outreach trip (April 7-14).

Tuesday – Sincerity in Asking

"We must lay before Him what is in us, not what ought be in us...those who have not learned to ask Him for childish things will have less readiness to ask Him for great ones." C.S. Lewis, *Letters to Malcolm*

1. Please read Matthew 6:5-8. Jesus condemns long, 'vain', public prayers. Why are candid and 'secret' prayers better?
2. Our Father knows every need that we have. So why does Jesus encourage us to pray for these things anyway? How can this truth set us free to share our deepest needs with him?

Focus on Prayer - In addition to your own needs, please pray for some of the neediest of our community and society. People you might consider praying for include the homeless, elderly (including shut-ins), and the poor.

Wednesday – Perseverance in Asking

"Let the one who seeks not cease until he finds." Clement of Alexandria

1. Read Matthew 7:7-11 and Luke 18:1-8. Why might God take a long time to answer some of our prayers? Why does he stress the importance of perseverance?
2. How might the New Testament's warnings about faithlessness (Mt. 13:58 and Jas. 4:2) actually *encourage* us to pray?

Focus on Prayer – Have you given up praying for something or someone because it has taken God too long to answer your prayer? Trust the Lord with the outcome and keep on praying.

Thursday – Interceding and Asking

"In the ongoing work of the kingdom of God, nothing is more important than Intercessory Prayer...People today desperately need the help we can give them...And we can make a difference if we learn to pray on their behalf."

Richard J. Foster – Prayer

1. Read John 17.
2. What similarities can be drawn between the Lord's Prayer and Jesus' prayer in John 17?

Focus on Prayer – Like Jesus, spend some time praying for God's glory (v. 1), the church (v. 6-19), and future believers (v. 20-23). Ask God to hallow his name, build his church, and unite believers in Christ here at FBC.

Friday – Unanswered Prayer?

"We shall come one day to a heaven where we shall gratefully know that God's greatest refusals were sometimes the true answers to our truest prayer." P.T. Forsyth – The Soul of Prayer

1. Read Luke 22:39-46, paying close attention to Jesus' emotional state and his demeanor.
2. Can you sense Satan's presence in the garden, tempting Jesus to doubt God's will as he did with Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:1-6? How does Jesus conquer this trial? How does God help him?
3. Are you agonizing over God's will in your life? Read Mark 14:36. Meditate on both parts of the verse and pray for God's divine help. For more encouragement from God's Word, read 1 Pet. 5:7-10, Eph. 3:20-21, and Rom. 8:28. Then, seek to live out his Word in your life.

Focus on Prayer – One of the reasons why Jesus perseveres in the garden is because of what is at stake – our eternal life lies in the balance. He endures because he trusts God and loves us. Following Paul's example (1 Cor. 15:56-57), thank Jesus in prayer for his willingness to suffer your punishment and die for your sins. Pray that as a congregation, FBC will grow in its passion to reach those who are lost without Christ.

Saturday & Sunday – Answered Prayer!

"Surely there can be only one satisfying and liberating answer to the question, 'My God, why have you forsaken me?' It is the answer of the resurrection..." Jürgen Moltmann - Power of the Powerless

1. Read Hebrews 5:7. How might this passage be connected to Jesus' experience in Gethsemane?
2. From the Garden of Gethsemane to the cross (esp. Mk. 14:32-42, 15:33-37) we are left with the sense that Jesus has been abandoned by God, and yet the writer of Hebrews says that Jesus was "heard." How can both Scriptures be true? (See Ps. 30:5 and Isa. 53:10-11)

Focus on Prayer – Jesus' resurrection means that we can pray with more confidence and boldness. He has risen, is alive, and interceding on our behalf! Thank God for the difference his resurrection makes in your life today.