
CBC WEEKLY RESOURCES



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DECEMBER 14, 2025
COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH
3645 Cashiers Rd, Highlands, NC 28741

I. SERMON RECAP

Pastor Gary began his sermon by introducing the concept of incorporating prayer into our daily lives in preparation for the coming year, 2026. He passionately encouraged the congregation to pray using scripture, emphasizing the power and alignment with God's will that it brings. He illustrated this by comparing scripture to a loaf of bread, each piece nourishing and edifying believers in their spiritual journey. Pastor Gary conveyed the importance of personal prayer for individual restoration and growth while also advocating for community-focused prayers that support and uplift others.

Pastor Gary delved deeper into the themes of adoration and worship as foundational elements in prayer, drawing on the parallels between Psalm 23 and the Lord's Prayer. By juxtaposing the personal, introspective nature of Psalm 23 with the communal and kingdom-minded focus of the Lord's Prayer, he highlighted the need for balance in praying for individual needs and the interests of others. He urged the congregation to prioritize worship and adoration, recognizing God's authority and offering thanksgiving for His provisions. This, he explained, sets the tone for a vibrant and effective prayer life.

In closing, Pastor Gary reiterated the necessity of being both whole and holy, reminding everyone that their identities are not defined by past actions but by who they are in Christ. He extended this message to the visiting recovery group, affirming their journey towards wholeness. The sermon concluded with a heartfelt prayer over the congregation and individuals, blessing them with God's guidance, protection, and the strength to embrace their roles as living poems of God. Pastor Gary's message remained a compelling call to deepen faith and community through scripture-imbued prayer.

Chapters:

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Chapter 1: Introduction to Praying Scripture

We are introduced to the concept of praying Scripture as a way to enhance our prayer life, combining personal needs with community concerns through passages like Psalm 23 and the Lord's Prayer.

Chapter 2: Balancing Personal and Corporate Prayer

We learn the importance of balancing prayer for our own interests with prayer for others, using Psalm 23 as personal prayer and the Lord's Prayer as community-focused intercession.

Chapter 3: Common Elements: Worship, Lordship, and Restoration

Both Psalm 23 and the Lord's Prayer share essential elements including adoration, acknowledging God's lordship, and experiencing His restorative comfort and provision.

Chapter 4: Practical Application and Blessing

We are given a practical framework for prayer that begins with worship, includes confession and thanksgiving, and only then moves to requests, demonstrated through prayer over a newborn child.

II. STUDY GUIDE

Key Points:

- Prayer should include both personal needs (Psalm 23) and community concerns (Lord's Prayer)
- Believers are God's "handiwork" or "poem" (poema in Greek), created to rhyme with God's heart and purpose
- Identity must be rooted in Christ, not in past failures or successes
- Prayer should begin with adoration and worship, not requests
- The practice of being still and quiet before God is essential for spiritual wholeness
- Wholeness is necessary before we can effectively help others
- Prayer should follow the pattern: adoration, confession, thanksgiving, then supplication
- Cultivating spiritual desperation and hunger for God should be a prayer priority
- Both Psalm 23 and the Lord's Prayer emphasize God's lordship, restoration, provision, and eternal promises
- Community-mindedness in prayer protects against becoming numb to evil and threats

Key Scripture:

Psalm 23 (Entire Psalm)

Ephesians 2:10 For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

Philippians 2:4 not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others."

Psalm 42:1 As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God."

Philippians 3:10-11 I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead."

Matthew 6:9-13 (The Lord's Prayer) 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 today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'

Romans 10:17 Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ."

Other Relevant Verses

Romans 8:26-27 In the same way, 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. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

1 Peter 5:7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

Galatians 6:2 Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

Matthew 11:28-30 Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

Psalms 46:10 He says, 'Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.'

III. DEVOTIONAL MATERIAL

Day 1: Understanding Your Identity in Christ

Question: How do you currently define your identity, and what role does God play in that understanding?

Reading: Ephesians 2:10 For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Devotional Thought: You are more than the sum of your achievements or failures; you are a masterpiece crafted by God Himself. Being His handiwork means that your story is intricately written by the Author of all creation. As you ponder this, consider the ways in which you might be living out of step with this divine identity. Are there areas in your life where you rely more on others' opinions or past experiences rather than who God has declared you to be? Embracing your identity in Christ frees you to walk confidently in the works He has prepared for you.

Challenge: Write down three unique attributes or talents God has instilled in you that reflect His character. Today, challenge yourself to perform one good work—be it a kind word, a selfless act, or a moment of encouragement—that aligns with these God-given characteristics. Reflect on how this makes you feel more connected to God's purpose for your life.

Day 2: Personal Prayer and Desperation

Question: When was the last time you truly allowed yourself to depend on God in desperation through prayer?

Reading: Psalm 23:1-3 The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul.

Devotional Thought: David's expression of trust in Psalm 23 invites us into a place of vulnerability and reliance on God. Too often, we equate desperation with weakness, forgetting that it is in our lowest moments that God's strength becomes most evident. In a world that values self-sufficiency, learning to lean on the Good Shepherd is countercultural. Allow God to lead you beside quiet waters today and restore your soul. It's in these moments of surrender that we find true peace and purpose beyond our immediate circumstances.

Challenge: Spend at least five minutes today meditating on Psalm 23, dwelling on each verse with intentionality. As you engage in this time, focus specifically on how you might be resisting God's guidance or trying to control your own path. Surrender these areas to Him in prayer, trusting Him to refresh and restore your soul.

Day 3: Community-Focused Prayer

Question: How often do you include others in your prayer life, and why is it important to you?

Reading: 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 today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'

Devotional Thought: The Lord's Prayer is a profound reminder that we are part of a larger community, interconnected through our faith. Jesus taught us to pray with an emphasis on "us" and "our," directing our focus toward collective needs and kingdom aspirations. Remember that prayer is not just personal but also communal, and through it, we build up the body of Christ. By aligning our hearts with God's will for our brothers, sisters, and neighbors, we fulfill His desire for unity and love.

Challenge: Identify one person or group within your community to pray for today. Consider someone you usually overlook or someone facing specific challenges. Reach out to them if possible, offering a phrase of support or a word of encouragement. Let them know they are not alone and that you are interceding for them before the throne of grace.

Day 4: Balancing Self-care and Others' Needs

Question: In what areas of your life do you struggle to maintain a balance between taking care of yourself and helping others?

Reading: Philippians 2:4 not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

Devotional Thought: The call to balance self-care with caring for others is an ongoing challenge in our walk with Christ. God does not demand that we exhaust ourselves to the point of burnout. Instead, He invites us to first find rest in His presence, allowing that wholeness to overflow into our interactions with others. Today, question whether you are giving out of a place of fullness or desperation. Reflect on how setting healthy boundaries can enable you to serve others with genuine love rather than obligation or resentment.

Challenge: Commit to one self-care activity today that nourishes your spirit; whether it's a quiet moment with God, a walk in nature, or a soul-reviving hobby. Once completed, take what you've gained from this experience to thoughtfully and intentionally extend care to someone else. This could be through an act of service, a listening ear, or a prayer of intercession, ensuring that the care you extend is rooted in the overflow of Christ's love in you.

Day 5: The Power of Worship

Question: How does worship play a part in your relationship with God, and how can it be more integrated into your daily life?

Reading: Psalm 46:10 He says, 'Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.'

Devotional Thought: Being still in God's presence is an act of worship that transcends singing or service; it is a declaration of His lordship over your life. Worship is the daily practice of placing God at the center and acknowledging His sovereignty. As you learn to be still, expect God's peace to invade your chaos and His voice to guide your steps. By integrating worship into everyday moments, you cultivate an awareness of God's presence in both the mundane and the extraordinary.

Challenge: Dedicate a specific time today to engage in worship, whether through song, writing, meditation, or another creative form that allows you to focus on God without distractions. Begin by listing His attributes and thanking Him for who He is. Let worship be the backdrop to your day, infusing even routine tasks with purpose and gratitude for His abundant grace.

IV. SMALL GROUP RESOURCES

Small Group Discussion Guide

Opening:

Welcome and Fellowship

Greet members warmly and encourage informal conversation to build community.

Opening Prayer

Invite the Holy Spirit to lead the discussion and prepare everyone's heart for meaningful engagement.

Discussion:

Sermon Recap

Theme: Understanding prayer's transformative role in both personal and community contexts.

Key Points to Highlight:

- Identity in Christ: We are God's handiwork (Ephesians 2:10) and His ongoing work of art. Our past doesn't define us; rather, God's plan and purpose do.
- Personal Prayer: Psalm 23 exemplifies how personal prayer can cultivate deep reliance on God during times of desperation.
- Community Prayer: The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) emphasizes the importance of praying with and for others, underscoring the idea of collective well-being.
- Worship and Adoration: Both personal and communal prayers are to start and end with worship, acknowledging God's sovereignty.

Icebreaker Question

Reflecting on the sermon, what specific aspect of prayer challenged or encouraged you the most, and why?

Scripture Exploration

Read:

Ephesians 2:10:

Discuss:

The implications of being God's handiwork.

- **Discussion Builders:**
 - How does seeing yourself as God's handiwork change your approach to daily life?
 - In what ways can recognizing God's craftsmanship in others enhance our community life?

Personal Reflection

Share experiences of personal prayer, focusing on moments of desperation and God's presence.

Discussion Builders:

- Describe a time when personal prayer was transformative for you. How can embracing vulnerability in your prayer life deepen your faith?

Application:

Community Application

Discuss the significance of community-focused prayer as modeled in the Lord's Prayer.

Discussion Builders:

- What are current issues in your community or globally that need collective prayer?
- How can we cultivate a more intentional prayer life focused on others?

Practical Application

Brainstorm concrete steps to incorporate the sermon's teachings into everyday practice.

Action Points:

- Set a personal goal for daily worship, whether through music, meditation, or scripture.
- Identify one person or cause to commit to praying for this week.
- Plan a group activity or service project as an extension of your prayer for the community.

Closing:

Share:

Provide space for group members to voice personal or communal prayer needs, ensuring a respectful and supportive atmosphere.

Closing Prayer

Lead the group in prayer, covering the shared requests and seeking God's help in applying the insights gained.

Fellowship and Dismissal

Offer reminders of upcoming meetings or events and encourage continued spiritual growth and connection outside of the group.

Leader Notes:

Familiarize yourself with the key themes of the sermon. This will help facilitate richer discussion and guide the group back to scripture when needed.

Encourage openness and respect in sharing, promoting a safe space for vulnerability.

Time management is key. Keep discussions flowing while ensuring each member has a chance to share.

Be attentive to group dynamics and gently guide the conversation back to core topics if it strays too far.

Follow up individually if someone shares something deeply personal or if you feel they need extra support beyond the group setting.

Your role is to guide, not to have all the answers. Encourage group members to explore scripture and life application together.

Prepare to share examples from your own life to model authenticity and encourage others to do the same.