

Main Street Church - Life Group Guide

Series: PRAY FIRST 2026

Message 1: MAKE ME AN OFFERING – Prayer Is the Altar

Speaker: Shawn Vandop

Date: January 4, 2026



Connect (25min)

1. WELCOME BACK

- a. Share a *Blessing* and a *Battle* from your Christmas & New Years season.
- b. What is one *opportunity* or *experience* that you're looking forward to in the month of January?

2. TAKE 5

 Read [Psalm 84](#).

Take 5 minutes to give thanks to God, and pray for one another as you start this new season together.

Message Discussion (45min)

1. Opening Reflection

- a. What jumped out at you from Sunday's message?
What did you learn? How were you encouraged or challenged?
- b. How would you describe your current experience with prayer?
Does it feel more like *connection*, *duty*, *performance*, or *frustration*? Why do you think that is?

2. When You Pray

- a. Read [Matthew 6:5–6](#). Jesus emphasizes **where** and **how** we pray before He talks about **what** we say.
What do you think Jesus is protecting us from by inviting us into private, personal, unseen prayer?

3. Performance vs Offering

- a. The message says, ***“Prayer was never meant to be a performance. Prayer was meant to be an offering.”***
- b. What are some subtle ways prayer can turn into performance, even in church or small groups?

4. The Lord's Prayer

- a. Read [Matthew 6:6](#) again.
Jesus promises a reward, but not a transaction. How does the idea that ***“the reward is God Himself”*** change the way you approach unanswered or delayed prayers?
- b. Read [Matthew 6:7–8](#). Jesus says God already knows what we need before we ask.
Why do you think Jesus still invites us to pray if prayer isn't about informing God?
- c. Read [Matthew 6:9–13](#).
As a group, identify one line of ***The Lord's Prayer*** that feels most challenging or uncomfortable right now.
What might God be inviting you to lay down through that line?

5. The Altar Question

- a. During the message Pastor Shawn said: ***“There is no fire without an offering.”***
- b. What might an offering of prayer look like for you this season, practically and honestly?

6. Living It Out - 21 Days of Prayer & Fasting

- a. Will you be engaging these **21 Days of Prayer and Fasting**? Do you have a copy of the **Pray First** booklet?
- b. Which one small, realistic step can you take this week to create space for private prayer?
 - >> A Time, a Place, a Rhythm, or a Posture.
 - >> Will you commit to 30 minutes per day to meet with Jesus? When is that time for you?
Example: *10min of Reading, 10min of Journaling, 10min of Prayer.*
Keep it simple. Keep it Real. Keep it up!
- c. How can this group encourage or check in with one another during these *21 Days of Prayer and Fasting*?

Response & Prayer (20min)

*Set aside 20min to Pray together as a group.

*Break into groups of 3-4 people to enhance sharing and prayer.

> **In response to our sharing and discussion... How can we pray for you and your prayer life this week?**
Pray for one another.

> **Who is one person in your life who needs prayer today? How can we pray for them?**
Salvation, Healing, Hope, Provision, Protection, Courage, Character, Calling... Pray for them together.

Resources

>> Visit mainstreetchurch.ca/prayer.

FYI

>> Share announcements and confirm your plans for your next Life Group meeting.

- **Baptism.** Baptism Class - January 11. Baptism Sunday - February 8. Visit mainstreetchurch.ca/baptism.
- **Empower Retreat.** January 30-31. Visit mainstreetchurch.ca/empower for info and registration.