



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH ASHLAND



This guide is an invitation to follow Jesus with greater purpose and hope. It will help you to explore the scriptures and challenge you to live out your faith. Each week we'd love for you to think about how you relate: **Up** (with God), **In** (with church) and **Out** (with neighbors).

Weekly Questions:

- How is God getting my attention? For help, think about these areas:
- How are you living up with God?
- How are you living in community with other followers of Jesus?
- How are you living out on mission with your neighbors?
- What are you going to do about it?

Habits of a Church on Mission

Matthew 6:1-15

- **A Life of authentic connection.** Jesus invites us into a way of praying that prioritizes heart motivation over public performance. True prayer in the Kingdom of God isn't about using religious words as a weapon or a way to appear holy, but about finding quiet places to be honest before God. When you think of "prayer," do you tend to think of a public performance or a private conversation? How does Jesus' warning about "hypocrites" (play-actors) challenge your own motivations when praying in front of others? In what area of your life is it currently most difficult to "close the door" and be fully honest with God about your needs?
- **The gift of dependency.** Jesus notes that "your Father knows what you need before you ask him". We aren't praying to inform God or to pull a lever on a "cosmic slot machine," but to align our hearts with His presence. Do you ever find yourself treating prayer like a transaction—hoping that if you say the right things, you'll get the result you want? How does that "vending machine" mindset steal the joy of simply being in a relationship with God? How does prayer help you to be more dependent of God?
- **Growing into mission.** The goal of prayer is that we surrender our own agendas to reach "unity in the faith" and see our neighbors through God's eyes. We need prayer to "reset our internal GPS" so we can love even those who are difficult to care for. What would it look like for our church to be a place where prayer isn't just a secondary practice, but the primary way we learn to love our enemies? Which "posture" of the Lord's Prayer do you resonate with most right now: *Surrendering your agenda*, *Asking for daily bread*, or *Practicing forgiveness*?

Practice: Prayer Reset

This week, identify **three people** you have been struggling to love or who do not yet follow Jesus. First, pray for them based on your own preferences and what you want them to do. Then, intentionally pause, ask God for "Jesus' eyes and ears," and pray for them again—surrendering your agenda for God's will in their lives.