

Month of Prayer

March 2020



Introduction

Our vision is to introduce spiritually curious people to the Jesus-centred life, through a movement of Jesus-centred churches. This month we'll be focusing on this together in prayer. Prayer is essential for our ability as a church to accomplish the vision God has given us.

We've created this guide to help you pray through our vision and put those prayers into practice. Each week there will be a theme, a scripture passage, a reflection, a written prayer, and a few suggestions on how to live it out. And since we're praying together as sites and extended family, we want to take this opportunity to intentionally pray for our church as well as our compassion engagement.

Use this guide on Sunday mornings, in Home Church, in your volunteer teams, and in your daily time with Jesus. If there are things God is highlighting in prayer that you want to share, chat with your local pastor. This month also overlaps with the celebration of Lent and our denomination, Be In Christ Church of Canada, has put out a great devotional you can pair with this. Find the devotional at canadianbic.ca/lentdevo2020 **Let's go!**

Remain in Jesus

Scripture

Exodus 33:15, John 15:1–5

Reflection

As we begin this month of prayer and reflect on our vision as a church, we remind ourselves that we can't do anything apart from Jesus (John 15:5). In Exodus, we read about God asking Moses to bring his people to the Promised Land. Moses said to him, "If you do not go with us, we will not go." That was bold! Moses knew that without God leading them, they wouldn't make it to where he wanted them to go. That's our prayer this week: that we will keep in step with where God is calling us and discern together with the Spirit when and where to go – both as a church family and as individual Christ-followers.

Prayer

Jesus, we acknowledge that it's so easy for us to try to do things in our own strength, to make big plans and try to move them forward. As a church family, we say together that we can't and won't go forward without you. We need your guidance each step of the way. Thank you for leading us to where we are today, and help us to remain centred on you. Amen.

Compassion connection

Today, invite God to lead us to work for peace and justice. As we come to the end of our Peacemakers campaign, pray over the peace and reconciliation efforts of MCC at home and around the world. Pray that God will use MCC and their partners to heal communities who have been torn apart by violence.

Pray for our church family in

London, Kitchener, Waterloo, Brantford, Burlington, Oakville

Practice

Think about things in your life that you just do by routine, without really even thinking or being aware of what God is inviting you into. Maybe it's checking your phone, getting to work, playing video games, watching TV, etc. Can you find a way to bring more awareness to it? Here are some ideas:

- Change the wallpaper on your phone to something spiritually significant for you so each time you open it, you remember God at work in your life.
- If you listen to the radio/podcasts/music while you're getting to work, take 5–10 minutes to just sit in silence and ask God to highlight things for you along the way.
- Set an alarm on your phone to go off at a time in your day when you think you'll need a reminder about abiding in Jesus.
- As you think about this season of Lent, are there things in your life you need to add or let go of to help you focus on Jesus? Think about a routine you can switch up or something you can wear as a reminder of his presence in your life and the gift of the cross. Be creative, intentional, and expectant for the Spirit to meet you in a new way this month.

Kids and Youth

- Before you play a video game, ask Jesus to help you show his love and peace even in how you play and react.
- Before you play your game or watch your show, open your Bible (or download a Bible app) and read John 15:1–5. Ask God to help you remain in him each day.

Introduce spiritually curious people to Jesus

Scripture

John 1:40–46

Reflection

At the beginning of his biography about Jesus, John recounts how the first disciples began following Jesus: Jesus invited some to be his apprentices, and they introduced the people they knew to him. In verse 42 we read that after meeting Jesus, the first thing Andrew did was find his brother Simon to tell him about Jesus. Andrew was overcome with a sense of urgency to bring his brother to Jesus. Later, we see Philip inviting a skeptical Nathanael “to come and see” Jesus for himself. Introducing spiritually curious people to Jesus has been a central practice for Christ-followers ever since, and as a church, we want to continue this tradition.

Prayer

Jesus, you have introduced us to a God who is Love. Help us to do the same for the spiritually curious in our lives – the people in our schools, our offices, our families, and those who live on our streets. Grant us courage to initiate spiritual conversations and humility to be great listeners. Give us a sense of urgency and creativity as we look for new ways to reach the people around us. Amen.

Compassion connection

Through our partnership with our denomination, Be In Christ Church of Canada, we're connected with anabaptist churches around the world including Latin America, Southern Africa, South Asia, and more. Pray over our denominational family as they share Jesus' message to members of their community.

Pray for our church family in

Hamilton Mountain, Ancaster,
Downtown Hamilton

Practice

- Who are five spiritually curious people in your life? Write their names on a sheet of paper and place it somewhere you'll see it each day. Pray for them each day this week.
- Practice hospitality! Invite someone from your list over for coffee or dinner this week(end). No agenda. Just get to know them. As the authors of *The Art of Neighboring* write, "Sharing the story of Jesus and his impact on our lives is the right motive, but it cannot be an ulterior motive in developing relationships. We don't love our neighbors to convert them; we love our neighbors because we are converted."
- If you're in a Home Church, take 10–15 minutes to brainstorm new ways our church (you!) could try to help introduce people to Jesus. Resist the urge to filter your ideas and be creative! Have someone record the ideas you come up with and share them with your pastor.

Kids and Youth

- Think of five friends who don't know Jesus. Get a piece of string or yarn and tie five knots for each friend. Wear it on your wrist or place it somewhere you will see it at bedtime to be reminded to pray.
- Ask your parents to arrange a play date at your home with one of your five. Find out what their favourite snack is and surprise them with it! For the next week when you're hanging out with friends, try playing the games they love, watching the movies they are excited about, and talking about the things they are interested in. See what impact that makes on you and your friendships.
- What would it look like for you to ask five of your friends what they believe about God? By being curious yourself, you get to know your friends better as you learn about what they believe!

Walk in the way of love

Scripture

Ephesians 5:1–2

Reflection

How do we live a Jesus-centred life? That's a good question! One of the best places to start is by getting to know who Jesus is and how he lived his life. How did Jesus treat the people around him, his friends and strangers? Ephesians 5:1–2 tells us to “walk in the way of love.” The kind of love that Ephesians is talking about is also described in 1 Corinthians 13:4–7: “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.” To live a Jesus-centred life is to live a life of love.

Prayer

Jesus, thank you for showing us who you are through Scripture and our experience with you. You are love; fill me with your love. Open my eyes to the opportunities to love those around me and stir your spirit in me so I can boldly live a life that reflects you. Amen.

Compassion connection

Last week we collected Relief Kits for MCC's relief work globally. Spend time praying for the journey of these Relief Kits as they travel to Jordan to be distributed to refugees and others affected by the Syrian conflict. Pray that as people receive these necessary resources, they will know they are loved by a community of Jesus followers halfway around the world and that through this sense of love they will find hope.

Pray for our church family in

Downtown Toronto, East Toronto, High Park, Uptown Toronto

Practice

- Read through one of the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke or John). Pray before you begin to read and ask Jesus to show you who he is.
- Look for local opportunities to volunteer and consider how you could serve on a Sunday morning or with one of your local compassion partners.
- Engage with your local community of Christ-followers by attending Home Church or inviting someone who needs some extra love over for dinner. Be open to learn from all around you.
- Pray using 1 Corinthians 13:4–7. Thank God that Jesus modeled love for us and ask that the Holy Spirit can work in your life so you can be an example of love to those around you.

Kids and Youth

- Pick a section of Matthew 8 and read it. How did Jesus show love to others? How can you show love to others? Pray and ask God to help you show his love to your friends and family.
- Ask your parents or siblings something you could do to show them love. Maybe it's cleaning up your room or helping with chores around the house! As you help, thank God that you have the ability to show love to the people around you.
- Ask your Kidmax teacher on Sunday if you can help them! Maybe you can help pass out supplies or clean up the space afterward. You can also ask your teacher if you can pray with them. Pray that they have a good Sunday and that they'd have fun teaching in Kidmax.
- Read 1 Corinthians 13:4–7 and ask God to show you one thing you can do this week to love better. Practice that this week.

Follow the way of Jesus

Scripture

Matthew 28:19–20

Reflection

In Acts 2 we learn about Jesus' devoted followers who had everything in common, and we don't mean interests – we mean possessions! This was a movement, a community to which the Lord added to their numbers daily. Maybe this is an example of what Jesus was talking about in John 14 where he reassures his disciples that they will do even greater things than what he did during his life and ministry because he's going to the Father (John 14:12). He says that we can ask in his name, and he will do it (John 14:13). Jesus promises us the Holy Spirit who will help us and guide us. What could it look like for us to be this kind of Jesus-centred movement today?

Prayer

Dear Lord, thank you for the reassuring words and instructions that we find from Jesus in scripture. Lead us in this movement of Jesus-centred churches so that we can be a people who are doing the work that you started and have commissioned us to continue. May you be our focus, our guide, and our companion on this journey. Amen.

Compassion connection

Jesus told his disciples that they'll be able to do greater things than what he did in his ministry, which includes healing the blind, the deaf, and the leper and preaching the good news to the poor (Matthew 11:5). Pray this week for the transformation of yourself and your site that you may have a heart of compassion and a desire to fight injustice.

Pray for our church family in

Alliston, Sandbanks, Owen Sound, and Jesus Collective churches around the world

Practice

Spend 15 minutes in prayer.

- Ask Jesus to teach and remind you of everything he said to his disciples (John 14:26).
- Ask the Holy Spirit for peace (John 14:27).
- Ask God to help you to not be afraid (John 14:27).
- Share with or give something that stretches you to someone in need (Acts 2:44–45).
- Break bread (eat a meal) with a fellow Jesus follower (Acts 2:46).
- Ask Jesus for an opportunity to do his works (John 14:12–14).

Kids and Youth

- Read John 14:26–27. What scares you? What are you anxious about? How can Jesus help us with these things? Pray and ask him to be with you and to help you remember that Jesus is always with you even when you're scared.
- If someone asked about who follows Jesus in your school, would you know the answer? If not, how would you find out?

God has provided all we need

Scripture

Hebrews 4:14–16

Reflection

At times we face things in our lives that can feel completely overwhelming. We feel lost and alone and unsure of what to do next. The author of Hebrews acknowledges the rollercoaster of what it means to be human and encourages us to find solace and confidence in the fact that Jesus shared in that humanity as well. Jesus knows what we are going through and promises to meet us in our time of need. As we continue to move forward in the vision he's given us, we "approach God's throne of grace with confidence" knowing that where he has called us, he will lead us. He has given us everything we need as we remain rooted in him.

Prayer

Father, today we come before you with boldness and joy for the road that's ahead of us! We know that as we continue to connect with spiritually curious people and embody curiosity in our own lives, you are faithful to provide all we need. When we feel lost or lose confidence, let the Holy Spirit draw us back and keep moving us forward. We ask this in your Son's name, amen.

Compassion connection

Through life's hardships and losses, we're faced with new perspectives that have the potential to open us up to becoming more compassionate. Compassion means to suffer with one another. Pray this week for the people impacted by Raw Hope, a World Vision program that supports children in the most fragile states in the world.

Pray for our church family in

Brampton, Richmond Hill, Newmarket, Parry Sound, Ottawa

Practice

This week we want to practice boldness in our faith! Here are some ways you can do that:

- As you're walking down the street or through the grocery store, or even while you're driving, try to keep a smile on your face when you come in contact with people. It can feel weird and even look weird, but it can also be incredibly encouraging for someone who may be having a tough day and can even spark conversation!
- Read through Matthew 28:18–20 multiple times and take note of what words or phrases really stand out to you. Ask the Spirit for insight and where he's asking you to GO at this season in your life.
- Has this Month of Prayer been easy? Tough? Challenging? Encouraging? Hard to stay on top of? Take some time this week to reflect back on the past five weeks. Share what you've learned with others.

Kids and Youth

- Read Matthew 28:18–20. How can you go and make a disciple? An easy way to start is by inviting a friend to church! Pray and ask God who that could be, then go invite them! (Check with a parent first). And remember, Jesus is with you when you go (read verse 20)!
- Think about those who have helped you in your relationship with Jesus and make a list naming *how* they did that. Look at that list and pray about how you could start to behave like that with one of your friends.

What's next

We've spent the last five weeks in prayer and practice together. Yay! Thank you for your commitment to this Month of Prayer and for continuing to keep our vision and the life of our church in your prayers. It doesn't end here! Next week on April 8th, **we're going to participate in 24 hours of prayer** together as a church. Keep your eye on our social media for a link to sign up and join together with hundreds of others in prayer as we enter into the Easter season.

Maybe this Month of Prayer sparked a new passion for prayer for you, or maybe this felt really awkward and you want to learn more. Our friends at 24-7 Prayer have put together an eight-week course on prayer that can be a helpful resource to support you on this prayer journey. You can check it out at **prayercourse.org**.

From our leadership team, **thank you** for your prayers over this past month and the days/weeks/years ahead! Peace.