

40-DAY PRAYER GUIDE FOR DISCERNMENT

40 days and 40 nights...a familiar phrase found throughout scripture, often in the context of trial and testing (ex. Moses on Mt. Sinai and Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane). What a fitting number of days and nights for us to spend in prayer and fasting as we collectively seek the voice of the Holy Spirit. In Scripture, fasting and prayer go hand in hand as a way to achieve powerful results.

The prayer guide is offered to provide each of us focus and inspiration as we enter a period of discernment regarding the future of the church that we all love so much. Invite the Holy Spirit to speak to you as you meditate on and contemplate these daily scriptures and prayers expecting the Spirit's guidance, counsel and revelation.

You are encouraged to fast as the Holy Spirit leads you. Fasting is a willingness to deny the physical in order to invite the spiritual. It's a discipline that enables one to bring more focus and time to prayer. A fast can include abstaining from things other than food such as: television, social media, shopping, etc. A fast can comprise a specific hour each day, one specific day of each week, a specific meal daily or longer periods of time. **Do not fast if you are pregnant, diabetic or have other medical conditions.*

It is hoped that these scriptures and prayers will direct and expand your prayer life so that you are committed to pray regularly and earnestly. May they move you into a deeper quiet and greater intimacy with God as you seek His Will for our church.

Day 1

DISCERNMENT

PHILIPPIANS 1:9-10

And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment so that you may approve what is excellent, and so, be pure and blameless for the day of Christ.

Prayer:

Dear heavenly Father, You number the hairs on our head and determine our days; You hang the stars and feed the sparrows; You open doors no one can shut and shut doors no one can open. Surely, we can trust You when the time comes for making big decisions or for that matter, any decision. We are in just such a season in our church, Father. We will trust You for generous wisdom, straight paths and peaceful hearts. This is not our decision, but Yours. We will plan, but we trust You to order our steps. We will search scripture not looking for proof texts but for You. We trust You for the opening and closing of doors that are in front of us. Amen.

Day 2

THE HOLY SPIRIT

PSALM 143:10

Teach me to do what you want, because you are my God. Let your good Spirit lead me on level ground.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, how I praise You for the gift of the Holy Spirit who has marked me as Yours and Who makes me like Jesus. What comfort, assurance and peace I have knowing that nothing can separate me from Your love; nothing will disconnect me from Your will. By the presence and power of Your Spirit, You will bring to completion the good work You have begun in me. gladly give myself to the work of Your Spirit in and through me today. In the name of Jesus, I bring my prayer to You. Amen.

GALATIANS 5:25

Day 3

PRAYER

ACTS 1:14

They all joined together constantly in prayer...

Prayer:

O merciful Lord, I seek Your presence. Here I am. Speak to me. Grant me Your grace. Pour out Your Spirit over me. O loving Lord, give me the desire and will to pray more. Break down the barriers in my heart and mind. Instead, show me again how Your love nourishes me. You bring me peace, and Your Spirit gives me clarity and discernment. Guide and teach me, O Lord to be faithful in my prayer life as I seek Your Word and Your Will. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

“The greatest tragedy in life is not unanswered prayer but unoffered prayer.” F..B. Meyer

1 Thessalonians 5:17

Psalm 109:4

Day 4

FASTING

EZRA 8:21

I gave orders for all of us to fast and humble ourselves before our God. We prayed that He would give us a safe journey and protect us, our children and our goods as we traveled.

Prayer:

Lord, please forgive me for craving other things more than you. I ask you to redirect my hunger. Be my God. Open my being to the benefit of fasting and open my heart to You like never before. Give me the desire to turn to You with all my heart and soul and all my strength. May I no longer live by bread alone but by every word that comes from Your mouth. Help me to fast so that I might hold fast to you as I pray for discernment about the future of my church. Amen.

JOEL 2:12

LUKE 18:12

The man who never fasts is no more on the way to heaven than the man who never prays. (John Wesley)

***Do not fast if you are pregnant, diabetic or have other medical issues.**

Day 5

WISDOM

JAMES 1:5

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask our generous God and He will give it to you.

Prayer:

God of all wisdom, you have promised that if anybody lacks wisdom, to ask You and You will give that wisdom. I ask You for wisdom now, Lord. Help me to make wise decisions that are for my good and Your glory. When I don't know which way to go, I ask that I would know You are near guiding me. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

PROVERBS 2:6

Day 6

REVIVAL

PSALM 85:6

Will you not revive us again, that Your people may rejoice in You?

Prayer:

Father God, I come before You today asking for the power of Your Holy Spirit to fill me afresh. Forgive me for drifting away from You and for allowing other things to take priority over You. Help me to live with intention anchored in Your Truth so that I choose wisely. Wake me up and remind me to live aware listening for Your voice. Enable me to sense the move of Your presence in my life, in my church and in the world. In the name of our savior and shepherd, Jesus Christ. Amen.

2 TIMOTHY 1:6

It's often in times of greatest darkness or difficulty that God's Spirit moves powerfully among His people – stirring our hearts – getting our attention.

Day 7

GOD'S PROMISES

2 PETER 1:4

Whereby are given to us exceeding great and precious promises.

Prayer:

Father God, thank You for all of the promises You have made to Your children. Help me to know throughout my whole being that your promises are for me! Fill me with the faith to accept and claim them. Amen.

2 CORINTHIANS 12:9 MATTHEW 6:34

God's Word contains some 7000 promises...enough to cover any circumstance. No matter what happens in this shifting, changing world, those promises will forever be the same so plead them boldly in prayer before Our Lord.

Day 8

FAITH

MATTHEW 17:20

Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can Say to this mountain, "Move from here to there", and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.

Prayer:

God of Jacob, help my faith to grow as I learn from the faith of Your people. Like David, give me the faith to trust You when confronted by giants. Like the prophets, give me faith to trust Your Word. Like Mary, give me the faith to trust You when my world seems to be turned upside down. Like the disciples, give me the faith to trust You when things don't go the way, I expect. Fill me with faith, Lord. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

1 TIMOTHY

PROVERBS 3:6

God has planted a seed of faith in our hearts. All we have to do is water it with prayer, fertilize it with God's Word and cultivate it with lots of love.

Day 9

EARLY MORNING PRAYER

MARK 1:35

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up and left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

Prayer:

I come before You, O Lord. As the sun rises, may Your hope rise up in me. As the birds sing, may Your love flow out of me. As the light floods into this new day, may Your joy shine through me. I come before You, O Lord and drink in this moment of peace that I may carry something of Your hope, love and joy today in my heart. Amen.

PSALM 5:3

PSALM 119:147

Day 10

GUIDANCE

JEREMIAH 6:15

When you stand at the crossroads, look and ask or the ancient path where the good way lies and walk in it and find rest for your soul.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ, when I am uncertain about what I should do, teach me Your ways. When I don't know which way to turn, show me Your paths. Help me to be attentive to Your voice as You guide me through life especially at this time of decision for my church. Shine the light of Your love into any confusion bringing clarity to my mind. In the blessed name of Jesus. Amen.

ISAIAH 30:21

PSALM 32:8

JEREMIAH 6:16

Day 11

SELF CONTROL

PROVERBS 25:28

He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down without walls

Prayer:

Lord, I pray that the fruit of self-control will grow in me like a tree of strength. I pray that I will control what I say and do and make them subject to Your spirit. In Jesus' name. Amen.

EPHESIANS 5:18

1 PETER 4:7

Day 12

THE GOSPEL

JOHN 14:6

I am the way the truth and the life. No one comes to the father except through me.

Prayer:

Father, You have called us as believers to go into the world and make disciples of every nation. I ask that You give me courage and boldness to share Your truth and Your Gospel with those around me. I pray that those in my path would see Your great love for them in the truth that I share. In the name of Jesus. Amen

MARK 16:15

ROMANS 1:16

Day 13

CONFESSION

1 JOHN 1:9

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Prayer:

Most merciful God, I confess that I have sinned against You in thought, word and deed, by what I have done and by what I have left undone. I have not loved You with my whole heart; I have not loved my neighbor as myself. I am truly sorry and I humbly repent. For the sake of Your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on me and forgive me, that I might delight in Your will and walk in Your ways, to the glory of Your Name, Amen.

JAMES 5:16

MATTHEW 3:6

Day 14

REPENTANCE

ACTS 3:19

Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, so that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, I come before You humbled and sorrowful, aware of my sin and ready to repent. Wash away my sin and help me to turn away from sin. Lead me to walk in Your way. You are loving and just, show compassion to me and shower me with Your mercy. Amen.

PSALM 51:1-4

2 PETER 3:9

Day 15

WORSHIP

PSALM 95:6

Come, let's bow down and worship him. Let's kneel before the Lord who made us.

Prayer:

Lord, teach me to ascend to Your throne room in worship and then descend back into the harvest field here on earth, praying and warring for victory in every area of life. Help me to have a lifestyle of worship, thanking You in every situation for Your spirit dwells in a worshipping heart. In Jesus' name. Amen.

ROMANS 11:36

PSALM 103:1

Day 16

GOD'S WILL

ROMANS 12:2

Don't be conformed to the patterns of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you can figure out what God's will is – what is good and pleasing and mature.

Prayer:

Father, because you are gracious and merciful, Your will is always oriented toward our benefit. Yet, this world we live in is cast in darkness. It can be difficult to understand Your will for us. What seems to us to be good, is sometimes not. Illuminate the darkness around us that we might understand Your will. Speak to us through Your holy word so that we might continue in our understanding. Amen.

Day 17

SCRIPTURE

HEBREWS 4:12-13

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. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, we are hungry for the knowledge fed to us by reading scripture. Let us willingly receive your good word and use it in our daily living. In Jesus' name. Amen.

2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17

ROMANS 1:16

Every time you read the Word of God, your heart is being changed.

Day 18

RENEW MIND

PHILIPPIANS 4:8

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

Prayer:

O Lord, you have mercy on all. Take away my sins, and mercifully kindle in me the fire of your Holy Spirit. Take away my heart of stone and give me a heart of flesh, a heart to love and adore you, a heart to delight in you, to follow and to enjoy you, for Christ's sake. Amen.

COLOSSIANS 3:2-3

PHILIPPIANS 4:8

Day 19

HUMILITY

PHILIPPIANS 2:3-4

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of others.

Prayer:

We pray for the heart position of humility. Humility in such a way that we do not cheapen our own worth or value within, but that we take the alignment that we are here for a greater purpose than just our own gain. We pray that You will highlight to us what it truly means to live a humble life, and that our own worth will be revealed by Your Light. It is only then that we may truly live in freedom and right standing, for we will hold our own value correctly. Lord, we welcome You to mold and secure our hearts in true humility by Your lead. Amen.

ROMANS 12:3

PHILIPPIANS 2:3-4

Day 20

UNITY

PSALM 122:1

I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let's go to the LORD's house!"

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, hear my prayer for unity, that we may all love each other as you first loved us. May we act with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience toward one another, living in unity with you. May we lay down our swords, set aside our grievances, and forgive each other as you forgave us. Lord, lead us to take what you've given us – love, mercy, grace, forgiveness – and spread those in this world, lavishing them upon others in our lives. May your love bind us together in perfect unity. All this I pray through your Son Jesus Christ. Amen.

ACTS 4:32

ROMANS 15:5-6

Day 21

TRUTH

JOHN 8:32

And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.

Prayer:

Dear God, we are grateful that you have blessed us with the bounty and richness of our lives. We pray you look down on us in this period of discernment and see fit to share with us the truth of Your ways . We wish to know Your will. We pray that the truth be revealed in our heart and soul and that we cast away falsehoods. Open our hearts and minds in purity and wisdom our gracious Lord. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

JOHN 4:6

EPHESIANS 4:25

Day 22

VISION

JEREMIAH 23:16

Thus said the Lord of hosts: "Hearken not unto the prophets that prophesy unto you. They make you vain; they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord.

Prayer:

Dear God, we desire as a church to learn and hold to the vision You have of us as a church and pray that You would lead and guide us to take a collective step in the direction You would have us go trusting that only You know the way and the truth. Help us grasp that vision and be sensitive to Your leading and guidance. Prevent us from pursuing our own inferior ideas or substitute our needs for Your plans and purpose. Draw us closer to each other and You as we take this journey. We pray that the church vision that emerges in our hearts will have been prompted by the Holy Spirit, for Your praise and glory. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

PROVERB 29:18

JEREMIAH 20:11

Day 23

PRAISE

JOHN 4: 23-24

But the hour cometh and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and mind; for the Father seeks such to worship him.

Prayer:

Dear God, we praise You to the highest with our hearts and soul; we praise You for Your presence in each of us no matter how much we go astray. We confess our need for You ; our lives and fleshly ways take control when we don't worship You first. We ask that You guide us and give us wisdom to discern what is right and true for each and for this church. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

PSALM 34:1

ISAIAH 25:3

Day 24

GRATITUDE

1 THESSALONIANS 5:18

Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Prayer:

Dear God, thank You for your gracious work in our church and our lives. Thank You for bringing hope even through the toughest times. Thank You for all the things we have accomplished as a church and how the church family has supported us in good times and bad times. Forgive us for not thanking You enough and realizing it is only through You that we have and will receive everlasting blessings. We love You, praise You and seek Your everlasting love and guidance. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

Day 25

MISSION

MATTHEW 28:19

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.

Prayer:

Dear God, grant us the vision of Your kingdom, forgiveness, and new life. Grant us the stirring of Your spirit to always be in mission to You and those in need. I pray that You give us eyes to see, ears to hear, the hands, feet and the heart and soul to run towards those in need instead of away. Lord, please continue to provide this church the passion and means to be in mission to our community and beyond all to Your glory. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

MARK 16:15

1 CORINTHIANS 16:9

Day 26

OUR CHURCH

ACTS 2:42

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Prayer:

Lord, my church is one of the most important things in my life, because it brings me closer to You. I ask Your blessings on it, and I lift it up to You. Thank You, Lord, for allowing me to be part of the St. Francisville United Methodist congregation and a part of You. In your holy name. Amen.

ROMANS 12:4-5

1 CORINTHIANS 3:9

Day 27

EXAMPLE OF CHRIST

1 PETER 2:21

To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

Prayer:

Almighty Father, Creator of the universe, I approach Your Heavenly Gates with a grateful heart. I bless Your Holy Name and submit the honor and praise that is due You. Beautiful Lord, I was created in Your image, fearfully and wonderfully made to be a light in this dark world. You are the Omnipotent Potter, and I am the clay. Shape me, mold me, use me and fill me each and every day to become more like Christ. Amen.

1 CORINTHIANS 11:1

EPHESIANS 5:1-2

Day 28

SURRENDER

JEREMIAH 29:11-13

Then you will call on me and come and pray to me and I will listen to you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart.

Prayer:

Father, search out my heart and change me into the person that You desire me to be, whatever it takes. May I decrease in my importance and desires until I am nothing, so that You may increase in every area of my life until You become my all in all. I ask this in the precious name of Jesus, Amen.

ROMANS 12:1

PROVERBS 23:24

Day 29

GOD'S LOVE

1 JOHN 4:8

Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank You that You loved the world so much that You gave Your unique and incomparable Son as the substitute for my sin and for the sin of the world. I pray that I will walk in spirit and truth and show forth Your love in my life. I pray that I may decrease and that You may increase in every area of my life, until I become a transparent vessel through whom Your divine love flows to others, to Your praise and glory. In Jesus' name. Amen.

PSALM 63:3

LAMENTATIONS 3:22

Day 30

OBEDIENCE

1 JOHN 2:17

The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, I know that the world is transient and at times I hang onto those things which I know are passing away. Help me to keep my eyes on You and help me to seek Your will in both the big and little things of my life. In the name of Jesus, I pray. Amen.

EXODUS 19:5

REVELATION 14:12

Day31

MERCY

PSALM 59:16

But I will sing of Your power; yes, I will sing aloud of Your mercy in the morning. For you have been my defense and refuge in the day of my trouble.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, when I think of the mercy You have shown me, it makes my heart sing. I want to praise You for Your love, compassion, goodness, and mercy. Lord of Lords and King of Kings. In Jesus' Holy name. Amen.

PSALM 13:5

Day 32

FORGIVENESS

PSALM. 86:5

You are forgiving and good, O Lord, abounding in love to all who call to you.

Prayer:

Our Father in heaven, we are so grateful for the grace by which You have reconciled us to You through Jesus Christ. We are aware of things we have thought, said, and done that are displeasing and dishonoring to You. We are also aware of what we have not done. Forgive us for our failure to love our neighbors well. Grant us grace to forgive others as You have forgiven us. Thank You for Your promise to put our sins behind Your back, to bury them in the depth of the sea and to remove them from us as far as the east is from the west. May Your grace *to us flow out* from us to others. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

ISAIAH 43:25

1 JOHN 1:9-10

The gospel of grace begins and ends with forgiveness.

Day 33

LISTENING

Luke 2:46

Now so it was after three days they found him in the temple sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking questions.

Prayer:

Open my heart and my ears that I may hear Your voice. Help me Lord Jesus to discern your voice, to listen to the truth. In Jesus name. Amen.

PROVERBS 19:27

Day 34

SEEKING

MATTHEW 7:7

Ask and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock and it will be opened to you.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, I pray that I would seek You with my whole heart. Your word promises that if I seek You, I will find You. You are the way, the truth, and the life. In Jesus name. Amen.

PSALM 9:10

Day 35

TRANSFORMATION

2 CORINTHIANS 3:18

Do not be conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect.

Prayer:

Dear Father, help us not to copy the behavior and customs of this world but be a different person with new ideals and a new attitude – so that we may prove for ourselves what is the good, acceptable and Your perfect will. In the perfect name of Jesus. Amen.

ROMANS 2:2

Day 36

INSTRUCTION

PROVERBS 19:27, 8:32-33

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Prayer:

Dear LORD, we believe that the whole Bible is Your final authority of life and that it is God-breathed, infallible, and tells us the truth. Help us to spend more time in Your Word so that we will be able to accomplish what You desire. In the powerful name of Jesus. Amen.

2TIMOTHY 3:16-17

Day 37

GRACE

EPHESIANS 2:8

For it is by grace (God's unmerited favor) that we are saved (delivered from judgement and made partakers of Christ's salvation) through faith. And this is not of ourselves: it is a gift from God.

Prayer:

Good God, help us to be humble, and as believers in Christ, to accept your loving favor towards us. In the loving name of Jesus. Amen.

EPHESIANS 1:7-8

Day 38

UNDERSTANDING

PROVERBS 3:5-6

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.

Prayer:

Dear LORD, please help us to wholeheartedly trust in You and not rely on our own intellect. Help us not to be wise in our own eyes but to leave pride behind so that we will walk in Your ways. In the Holy name of Jesus. Amen.

PSALM 119:34

COLOSSIANS 1:9

Day 39

JOY

JOHN 15:10-11

If you keep my commandments you will abide in my love, just as I obey my Father and live in His love. I have told you these things that my joy and delight may be in you, and that your joy and gladness may be full measure and complete and overflowing.

Prayer:

Father, help us to keep your commandments and enjoy the happiness we experience as you surround us with your love. In the name of the true Vine, Jesus Christ. Amen.

PSALM 16:11

1 PETER 1:8

Day 40

Hope

JEREMIAH 29:11

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you; plans to give you hope and a future.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, my whole being sings with joy because I know that hope in You and belief in Your promises, is the best thing that can be. Today, God, I lay down my feelings of fear, uncertainty, and frustration. I cling to Jeremiah 29:11 with all my might asking that You wash hope and peace over me in full measure as I need it. I also pray that for every member of our church family. Reign down on us all. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

ROMANS 15:13

1 PETER 1:3