**21 Days of Prayer**

**Day 1: Humble Hearts that Seek God’s Kingdom First**

As we begin this 21-day journey, let us prepare our hearts and seek God’s face in humility. Ask God to search your heart and reveal anything that is compromising your relationship with Him. Confess any sin to Him and for His Holy Spirit to fill you anew with His presence.

May our spirits connect deeply with our Creator during these next 21 days as we, in unity, pray for God to act in powerful ways as we seek Him.

*“So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.* *Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world.* *Let there be tears for what you have done. Let there be sorrow and deep grief. Let there be sadness instead of laughter, and gloom instead of joy.* *Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up in honor.”* **James 4:7-10**

**Day 2: Make Us One**

In the seventeenth chapter of John, Jesus, the Son of God, our Savior, prays for his disciples, and He prays for us. Isn't that amazing? Jesus prayed for us-- the believers to come. This is what He prayed--make them one so that the world may believe that you have sent me and recognize your love for them.

Today we pray for unity among Jesus’ followers in the city of Toledo. We pray that we would be unified so that the people of this great city would see God's love for them and believe in His son. We pray that we would be blind to the things that divide us and see only the things that we have in common that we might accomplish the mission that Jesus gave to us to go and make disciples. We pray that God will connect us with other pastors and churches that have the same vision, and that we will work together to see hope restored in Holy Toledo!

*I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.* **John 17: 20-21 (ESV)**

**Day 3: Favor in the Presence of Men**

As we enter this third day of prayer, we are reminded of the Lord's servant, Nehemiah, and how he longed to go back to repair the walls surrounding Jerusalem. Many at that time would have described the task as an unattainable goal, a feat of immeasurable difficulty that could not be accomplished.  But Nehemiah's heart was broken by the condition of the walls, by the state of the holy city.  As he meditated upon his vision of the walls rebuilt, he asked that God would hear the prayers of His servant who delighted in His name, and that He would grant favor in the presence of man.

Today we pray that God would grant us favor as we move forward in this new year. We pray that He would provide every resource, make every connection that would allow this vision to be realized.

Pray with us today for God's favor in the presence of men.

*Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name.  Give your servant success today by granting him favor in the presence of this man.* **Nehemiah 1: 11**

**Day 4: Done in Love**

On this fourth day of prayer, let’s reflect on the apostle Paul, and on his letter to the Philippians. As he sits in a Roman jail, he reflects on his relationship with the Philippian church, a relationship that was characterized by amazing love.  He prays for them in the ninth verse of the first chapter that the love that he has experienced in their presence would not only remain steadfast, but that it would grow, abound more and more, and that it would be displayed in knowledge and insight.

Today we pray that God would cause the love that we have experienced while in the company of one another to grow and to abound, to permeate every aspect of what we do. We pray that the love that is in our hearts, because of His dear son, Jesus, would be displayed in great measure.  We pray that His love that has built us up will do the same for citizens all across the city of Toledo.

*And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in in knowledge and depth of insight.* **Philippians 1:9**

**Day 5: Immeasurably More**

When we bow our heads to pray, we speak to a God that has the power to do all things. This is the God that is celebrated by Paul in the third chapter of Ephesians. Because of His very nature, He knows what we want before we ask, and He makes provision for us far beyond what we could imagine that we need.  In the Old Testament, King Solomon had an open heaven to request anything of God, and he petitioned God for wisdom. We know that God granted his request, but what is equally important for us to note is that God also gave him much more- including personal wealth, and peace and prosperity for the nation of Israel.  As we continue this 40 Days of Prayer, it is encouraging to know that we can go to God and ask of Him what we want, and that He will provide, but not only that, we can also expect that He will do immeasurably more than we can think, imagine or conceive in our minds.

Today we pray that God would do more than any of us can think or imagine in our church, and in our city, in this generation, and for the generation to come.  We pray that He would carry out His purpose in us and through us according to His good pleasure.  Today we pray that the work would be accomplished by His power, and not through our own.  And finally, we pray that when this vision is realized that He alone would be glorified, because without Him, we know that it would not be possible.

*Now to Him who is able to [carry out His purpose and] do superabundantly more than all that we dare ask or think [infinitely beyond our greatest prayers, hopes, or dream], according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations forever and ever. Amen.* **Ephesians 3: 20-21 (AMP)**

**Day 6: A Legacy of Praise**

As we pray, be moved by the fervency of David's praise in Psalm 145.  He has prayed fervently for the five preceding chapters and has now arisen in songs of praise to the God who he is assured has heard and answered his cries.  One verse in particular stands out as we meditate--verse 6. In this verse, David speaks of the work of one generation being passed down to another, and the testimony that will accompany that commendation.

Let our hearts be filled with praise, as we reflect on the prayers that have been spoken so far this week. However, specifically today, let us praise God for a work that will go beyond our generation, one that will be taken up by the next generation of emerging leaders who will recount and tell of the great works that God has performed on our behalf in the city of Toledo.

Today we praise God for hearing our prayers and for answering them.  We pray to God for the emerging leaders that He will raise up to carry this vision. We pray that we, and the generation to come, will continue to declare His mighty acts. We pray that we will be intentional in our conversations, our interactions, and our discipleship of the next generation who matter so much to God. *One generation shall commend your works to another and shall declare your mighty acts*. **Psalm 145: 4 (ESV)**

**Day 7: By His Spirit**

One morning, after returning from Babylonian captivity, Zechariah, a prophet of the Lord, was awakened by an angel of the Lord and shown a vision of a golden lampstand that was being miraculously sustained.   When Zechariah inquired of the angel the significance of the vision, he received an encouraging word.  Zechariah was assured that the construction of the temple would be completed by the aid of God's providence and His grace.  The angel explained that just as the lamps were supplied with oil in a secret and unknown manner, without the help of man that God desired to do the same for the completion of the temple, His vision for His people.

Today we pray that the vision that God reveals to each of us will be completed by the power of His spirit.  We pray that we will not rely merely on our own abilities, but upon His leading and His strength. We pray encouragement for those who will work to bring this vision to pass and that they will know that it is God who will sustain us, and who will bring this vision to completion.

*Then he said to me, “This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts.”* **Zechariah 4:6 (ESV)**

**Day 8: In One Accord**

In the first verse of the second chapter of Acts, the disciples found themselves in the upper room praying and waiting. Waiting for the promise of the Holy Spirit that Jesus had told them would come.  He had told them repeatedly after His resurrection about how when they received Him, they would receive power--power to be witnesses to the uttermost parts of the earth.  They didn't understand what all those sentiments meant, but each day they found themselves in one place putting aside all their differences and praying with fervency for one thing-- the promise of the Holy Spirit. And when the time had fully come, when they prayed with one accord, God's spirit came in like a mighty rushing wind, and the disciples and the world were never the same again!

Today we pray that we put aside all the things that may divide and separate us and cling to what we have in common-- an expectation that God wants to revive and renew the city of Toledo by His spirit.  Today we pray that just as the disciples were empowered to share the gospel with power and see amazing results, that we will see amazing numbers of people receive Christ, so that daily our numbers will increase.  We pray for revival, that we would see God's kingdom here in our city and region, as the Spirit of the Lord is poured out once again in a group of believers who pray with one accord.

*And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.* **Acts 2: 1 (KJV)**

**Day 9: More Blessed to Give**

In Acts chapter 20, Paul sends for the elders of Ephesus so that he may speak with them before returning to Jerusalem, a trip that he is not sure that he will return from. During his final time with these elders, he encourages them to continue in godly ministry to God's people, specifically to those in need, the less fortunate. He explained that they should serve according to the example that he has shown them, and according to the words of their Lord Jesus Christ, ending with an admonishment and reminder that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

Today we pray that individuals would be moved to be generous with their time, talent and resources. We pray that they would know that their generosity mirrors the heart and example of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and makes such a profound impact.  We pray that each person that gives recognizes that they are laying up treasures and rewards in heaven that far outweigh material gains here on earth.

*And I have been a constant example of how you can help those in need by working hard. You should remember the words of the Lord Jesus: It is more blessed to give than receive*. **Acts 20: 35 (NLT)**

**Day 10: At Peace**

Often the world is full of violence, and our daily news is filled with news of conflict and turmoil, but God promises His people peace-- a peace that surpasses all understanding. In the sixteenth chapter of Proverbs, Solomon explains that the best way to procure this peace is to have ways that please the Lord.

Today we pray for peace in the city of Toledo. We pray that families would be established in peace, as they learn about you, and the ways that please you. We pray for individuals to find a sense of belonging in your family, and not in groups that promote violence. We pray that our city would be known for its love and for its peace.

*When people's lives please the Lord, even their enemies are at peace with them.* **Proverbs 16: 7 (NLT)**

**Day 11: Enlarge Our Territory**

What a blessed word God has for us as we prepare to enter into prayer!  In Isaiah chapter 54, the Lord begins to minister to His people through the prophet Isaiah.  He likens them to a barren woman who is now restored and is about to give birth not to one child, but to many children. He promises them such a fruitfulness that they are instructed to enlarge their tents and strengthen their stakes to prepare for the increase.  He also encourages them by telling them that their cities that have been known as desolate will now be inhabited.

This is a right now word for us -- we are to prepare for increase, as we are about to experience a time of great growth and our city is about to experience a miraculous rejuvenation!

Today we pray for wisdom as we prepare for increase.  May we with great knowledge and foresight put into place the systems, infrastructure, staff and leaders to sustain the growth and to serve His new children. Today we pray for our city to no longer be called a place of desolation, but to be known as a place full of hope.  We pray encouragement for all who have experienced shame that God would fully restore their joy and use them in ways unimaginable in His kingdom and for His glory! May we be like the barren woman who now prepares to give birth!

*Enlarge the place of thy tent and let them stretch forth the curtains of thy habitations; spare not: lengthen thy cords and strengthen thy stakes. For thou shalt spread abroad on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall possess the nations and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.* **Isaiah 4: 2-3 (ASV)**

**Day 12: New Things Have Come**

In the fifth chapter of 2 Corinthians, Paul explains that when one finds himself in relationship with Christ, he experiences newness. This succinct verse carries within it very weighty content. The things around the "new creation" don't necessarily change, but there is a newness now in the individual. When looking at the same circumstances, one is now able to see things in a new light-- he can now observe how situations are being used to help him discover purpose, find peace, and build character. In Christ, there is no longer despair, because now there is hope that this is a part of the process and victory is still possible.

Today we pray that the people in the city of Toledo would experience the newness that comes from a relationship with Jesus Christ. We pray that as we minister to them, they would begin to see their lives and circumstances in a new light--one filled with hope. We pray that challenges and difficulties will be seen as character builders and purpose excavators. We pray that each person and each neighborhood that we affect with the good news of Jesus Christ would know victory is still possible!

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come*.
**2 Corinthians 5: 17 (ESV)**

**Day 13: Living Stones**

As you continue to pray for vision, please remember what an integral part of God's plan you are. You are precious to God and have been chosen by Him. In fact, in the second chapter of 1 Peter, in verses 4 and 5, Peter explains a key concept-- that we are living stones that make up the spiritual house; we are the church. What's so significant about this concept is that no living stone can build something great on its own. It is only what God does through us together that is significant!

Today we pray for the living stones to come together to build the spiritual house. We pray that individuals will work together to accomplish something significant for the residents of the city of Toledo, whom God loves so much. Today we pray that the residents of Toledo will connect to Jesus, the Living Stone, and become a part of the spiritual house that is being built and the holy priesthood that offers their lives daily as a sacrifice to God through Jesus Christ. We pray that God would build the house, knowing that unless God builds the house, those that labor work in vain.

*As you come to him, the living Stone--rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him--you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.* **1 Peter 2: 4-5 (NIV)**

**Day 14: Overflowing with Hope**

Paul, in the fifteen chapter of Romans, prays an amazingly simple but profound prayer for the Gentile converts of Rome. He prays that they would be filled with joy and peace and that they would overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. He carefully and purposefully begins the prayer to reveal the source of the overflowing hope-- the God of hope. These simple words, the God of hope, denote something that each of us can grasp-- God is love, and that love brings joy and hope. He desires that every person would experience the power of salvation and be filled with joy and love, and ultimately hope!

Today we pray for the citizens of the city of Toledo, that they would connect to the God of Hope, who loves them so dearly, and who wants to fill them with joy, peace, and hope. We pray that as they connect to God, they would be filled with his Holy Spirit, and that His presence would create an overflowing spring of hope and purpose in their lives. We pray that God's joy and peace would displace all despair and apathy in their lives. We pray that the presence of God's joy, peace and hope would change their paradigms about their lives, their experiences, and their futures. May the God of hope fill each of them and each of us with an overflowing hope!

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.* **Romans 15: 13 (NIV)**

**Day 15: Better is One Day in Your Courts**

In the eighty-fourth chapter of Psalms, David describes the joy he finds in the service of God, in His presence. He explains that even one day, one glimpse of the love of God is better than a thousand days spent elsewhere. He uses a powerful comparison to place further focus on the comparison. He states that he would rather be a doorkeeper (the lowest possible station of service in the Lord's house) than to live in the tents (the highest position among those who didn't know God) of the wicked. Simply stated, David recognized that God's worst is far better than the devil's best!

Today we pray that the city of Toledo would no longer be one of the most unchurched cities in the nation. We pray that the residents would desire to spend time in God's house and in His presence. We pray that once they experience the sweet presence of His Spirit, and the love of God's people, they would realize that what the world has to offer is simply no comparison. We pray that they would develop a hunger and a thirst for righteousness, for God has promised that those who hunger and thirst after righteousness will be filled!

*A single day in your courts is better than a thousand anywhere else! I would rather be a gatekeeper in the house of my God than live the good life in the homes of the wicked.* **Psalms 84: 10 (NLT)**

**Day 16: Wisdom to Lead**

In 1 Kings chapter 3, King Solomon makes a great offering to God, and the Lord appears unto him in a dream and asks, "What shall I give you?" He comes to God with great humility, considering the job before Him, and responds that he wants God to give him an understanding heart to judge the people, that he wants to discern between good and evil. God was pleased with Solomon's request for wisdom and promised to give him what he asked for, and to give him riches and honor, promising that his success and reign would be greater than any other.

Today we pray for wisdom and understanding for the leaders of the city of Toledo. We pray that God will allow them to discern between good and evil so that they might govern your people, the citizens of Toledo, well. We pray for others in places of authority and influence, that they will consider the roles that God has given them with humility, and that they would seek His wisdom before profit and personal gain. We pray that they will discern between good and evil, and choose what is right.

*So God replied, “Because you have asked for wisdom in governing my people with justice and have not asked for a long life or wealth or the death of your enemies-- I will give you what you asked for! I will give you a wise and understanding heart such as no one else has had or ever will have!”* **1 Kings 3: 11-12 (NLT)**

**Day 17: Actionable Love**

In chapter twenty-five of Matthew, Jesus describes the response of two groups to those in need. One group responds with a love that mirrors His own-- feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, providing shelter to strangers, caring for the sick and for those in prison. He responds that what was done for those in need, for the least of these, was done for Him. In contrast, he describes the other group as unresponsive to him, noting the other group's lack of responsive love to these needs. One group is embraced and brought into the kingdom, while the other group is sent away. What was the determining factor for who stayed and who was sent away-- the tangible and practical expressions of Christ-like love towards others, specifically those in greatest need?

Today we pray that we will respond with actionable love to the needs of those in the greatest need in the city of Toledo. We pray that we will find practical and innovative ways to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, and to clothe the naked. We pray that we will partner with others to help provide care for the sick and to encourage, minister to and build up those who are in prison. We pray that we, at every opportunity, will mirror Christ's love for us in our response to need in our community. We pray that the areas around every campus that we plant will be positively affected and transformed by the outpouring of love that comes from our congregation.

*For I was hungry and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.* **Matthew 25: 35-36 (NLT)**

**Day 18: Go and Preach**

In Mark chapter sixteen, specifically in verse fifteen, Jesus commissions his disciples to go and preach. He shattered their notion that they were merely to preach to other Jews by stating that they needed to preach to all the world, sharing the good news with all creation. This idea of a proselytizing, missionary-style faith was brand new, but so was the covenant that Jesus had established with His sacrificial death. With one sentence, Jesus made His command clear-- the disciples were to preach the gospel to everyone and to make new disciples!

Today we pray that we, as disciples of Jesus Christ, would go and preach the gospel to all creation. We pray that we will bring the good news of Jesus to neighborhoods and communities all over. We pray that daily we will individually share the love of Jesus Christ through the preached word of God, as well as through our lives, and our loving actions towards others. We pray that as we plant new churches, in new communities, that we will reach new people with the message of a Savior who loved them so much that He gave His life for them. We pray that we would boldly carry out the commission given by our Lord and Savior until the day that He returns or we are reunited with Him in glory!

*He said to them, Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.* **Mark 16: 15 (NIV)**

**Day 19: Restore, Rebuild and Renovate**

In chapter 58 of Isaiah, the prophet addresses the children of Israel who have returned to Jerusalem following the Babylonian exile. He challenges them that they must return to the proper disposition towards God through authentic prayer and fasting, and towards their neighbor by addressing and changing the oppressive ways that the poor were treated. He promises that if they obey, their ruins will be rebuilt, the breaches repaired, and their community will become livable and prosperous again.

Today we pray that we will have the proper view of God and of our neighbors. We pray that as we spend this time fasting and praying, we would hear clearly and be wholly obedient to God's will for our lives, and for our church. We pray that as we are obedient to God that He will use us to rebuild the foundations of our community, both natural and spiritual, that today lay in waste. We pray that He would use us to repair breaches in walls that have allowed the enemy of our soul access to our families, and to our peace. We pray that He would use us to rebuild, renovate and make every area of our community and our city livable and prosperous again.

*You'll use the old rubble of past lives to build anew, rebuild the foundations from out of your past. You'll be known as those who can fix anything, restore old ruins, rebuild and renovate, make the community livable again*. **Isaiah 58: 12 (MSG)**

**Day 20: Fight for Families**

Nehemiah once again comes to mind as we prepare to pray.  In chapter 4, he is faced with great opposition from Sanballat, Tobiah, and the surrounding nations who were not happy to see their progress in rebuilding the wall.  In verse 11, their enemies come together to plan a surprise attack to once and for all put a stop to the work. However, God makes Nehemiah aware of their plan, and Nehemiah gathers the workers and declares to them that they must not be afraid.  They must remember their Lord, who is great and awesome-- greater than any opposition that they will face.  And they must remember what they are fighting for-- their children, their wives, and their homes!

Today we pray for families.  We pray for the restoration of marriages. We pray for our children, and for the children of all the citizens of this great city and region.  We pray for safety in our homes- specifically against the increase of violence that we see loved ones enacting against each other.  We pray for God's plans for each family to be realized!

We thank the Lord, who is great and awesome for His will being accomplished in families! He fights for us and with us!

*Don't be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your families, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes.* **Nehemiah 4:14 (NIV)**

**Day 21: Shine!**

In Matthew chapter 5, specifically in verses fourteen to sixteen, Jesus uses a metaphor to explain the significance and impact He desired his followers to have on the world. He compared them to a light. Using this metaphor, He directly connected the world's salvation or knowledge of Him to the disciples' diligence in showing His characteristics through their words and deeds. Because of their good works, people would glorify and open up to God who is in heaven. The disciples' light was to be a reflection of the Light of the World, and was not to be hidden, but to be like a city on a hill, or a light on a lamp stand. He succinctly summarized His expectation of His disciples in a single word-- Shine!

Today we pray that we would reflect the Light of the World in our words and in our actions. We pray that we would be bold as we go public with our expression of His love in the cities around us. We pray that as we keep open house, and are generous with our lives, that many people, all around us, would open up to God. We pray that they would come to know Him as their Savior, and as their generous Father in heaven. We pray that we would no longer be the best kept secret in our area, but that we would become like a city on a hill, a light on a light stand, that we might reach more people, and watch more lives be impacted by the life-transforming power of Jesus. We pray that as we shine, as Jesus commanded, individuals, families, neighborhoods, and our city would experience change.

You did it! Thank you for joining us in this 21-day journey using prayer to change lives!

*Here's another way to put it: You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light bearers, you don't think I'm going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I'm putting you on a light stand. Now that I've put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand--shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you'll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven.* **Matthew 5: 14-16 (MSG)**