

## -WEEK 3

ALIVE WESLEYAN CHURCH | 2023



"But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not let them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

This, then, is how you should Pray:
'Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one'."

- Matthew 6:6-18 -

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### SEVEN PARTS OF THE LORD'S PRAYER

PRESENCE | OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN

PRAISE | HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME

PURPOSE YOUR KINGDOM COME, YOUR WILL

BE DONE

PROVISION | GIVE US TODAY OUR DAILY BREAD

PARDON | AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS AS

WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS

**PROTECTION** AND LEAD US NOT INTO

TEMPTATION BUT DELIVER US FROM

THE EVIL ONE

PRACTICE | LIVE IT OUT



Many of us have mixed emotions when it comes to prayer. Maybe we had to memorize prayers when we were kids or maybe we have never been around someone who prays. Maybe we sat through long boring prayer meetings, or maybe we overheard a grandparent praying sincere, and moving prayers.

Maybe we love to pray, or maybe we don't know where or how to start a payer. Prayer can be confusing. It can seem both mysterious and boring all at once.

Jesus confronted the religious leaders of His day because prayer had become overcomplicated. He taught that pray doesn't have to be difficult. It doesn't have to be long.

When Jesus taught his disciples about prayer He explained that God isn't looking for an eloquent speech or a public performance. And God doesn't even need us to give him a list. He knows what we need before we even ask.

So how can we experience prayer like that?

What if prayer could be simple and meaningful, creative and fun? What if prayer could help us know the Creator of the Universe?

Join us as we journey through prayer over the next 21 days. We'll take a look at the prayer Jesus taught to his disciples. And from Jesus' prayer we'll look at 7 themes that can guide us to connect with God in creative and fresh ways. And maybe by the end of it, we'll each know God a little bit more!

#### How to use these readings:

Each day includes a section of scripture, a short explanation of the day's prayer theme, and a prayer step to help you pray that day. The prayer steps are designed to be simple and practical. Feel free to adapt or add your own ideas to the prayer time.

Consider reading these and then discussing with a friend, roommate, family member, or small group.



#### **HOW TO BEGIN YOUR FAST**

How you begin and conduct your fast will largely determine your success. By following these five basic steps to fasting, you will make your time with the Lord more meaningful and spiritually rewarding.

#### **STEP 1: SET YOUR OBJECTIVE**

Why are you fasting? Is it for spiritual renewal, for guidance, for healing, for the resolution of problems, for special grace to handle a difficult situation? Ask the Holy Spirit to clarify His leading and objectives for your prayer fast. This will enable you to pray more specifically and strategically.

#### **STEP 2: MAKE YOUR COMMITMENT**

Pray about the kind of fast you should undertake. Consider the following:

- Soul Fast: this is a break from things such as social media, TV, secular music, spending, etc.
- Selective Fast: removing certain foods from your diet such as sweets, caffeine, or only eating certain things such as fruits and vegetables.
- Partial Fast: this is fasting during certain times of the day such as morning, noon, or evening, giving up one meal a day.
- Complete Fast: giving up food for the entire 21 days, having only water and/or juice.

Jesus implied that all of His followers should fast (Matthew 6:16-18; 9:14,15). For him, it was a matter of when believers would fast, not if they would do it. Making these commitments ahead of time will help sustain your fast when physical temptations and life's pressures tempt you to abandon it.

#### STEP 3: PREPARE YOURSELF SPIRITUALLY

The very foundation of fasting and prayer is repentance. Unconfessed sin will hinder your prayers. Confess every sin that the Holy Spirit reminds you of and accept God's forgiveness. Make restitution as the Holy Spirit leads you. Meditate on the attributes of God, His love, sovereignty, power, wisdom, faithfulness, grace, compassion, and others

Begin your time of fasting and prayer with an expectant heart (Hebrews 11:6) and do not underestimate spiritual opposition.

#### STEP 4: PREPARE YOURSELF PHYSICALLY

Fasting requires reasonable precautions. Consult your physician first, especially if you take prescription medication or have a chronic ailment. Some persons should never fast without professional supervision. Do not rush into your fast. Prepare your body. Eat smaller meals before starting a fast. Avoid high-fat and sugary foods. Eat raw fruit and vegetables for two days before starting a fast.

#### STEP 5: PUT YOURSELF ON A SCHEDULE

For maximum spiritual benefit, set aside ample time to be alone with the Lord. Listen for His leading. The more time you spend with Him, the more meaningful your fast will be.

# DAY FIFTEEN PRESENCE

#### -READ -

"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one."

- Matthew 6:9-13 -

"For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse."

- Romans 1:20 -

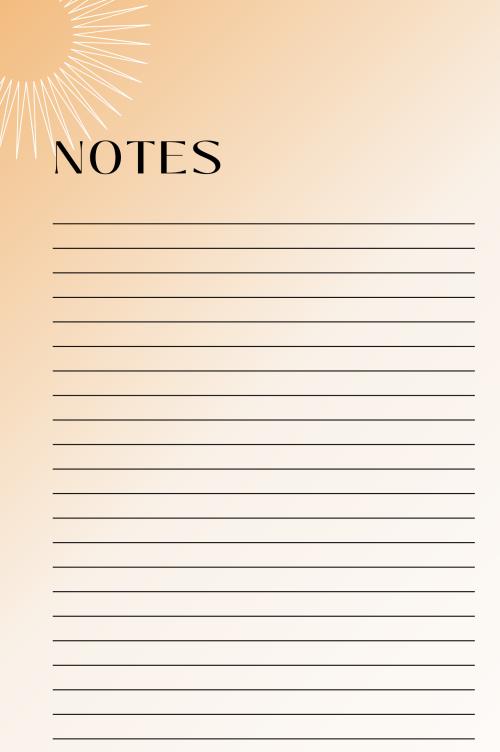


"If you have time today and are able, take a walk around your neighborhood. Although it sometimes feels like God is distant in heaven, He is Our Father that has created every living thing and He said that it was good. So as you're walking or while going about your day, be aware of God's presence in His creation. Maybe you see God in an awesome looking tree, a bird flying overhead, or in the faces of kids playing in the yard. As the verse in Romans says, we cannot deny that God's power and divine nature, through His creation, are evident.

Also, contemplate all the ways that God is present in your life specifically. That could be through friends and family, ways that He has provided for you, or moments that He speaks to you. The more that we look for God's presence in our lives, the more we find Him!

#### - PRAY -

As you are walking or driving through your neighborhood, think about all the people you pass and pray that they also would feel God's presence. We may not always "feel" His presence, but plead with God today, on your behalf and theirs, that we all may be aware of His presence.



# DAY SIXTEEN PRAISE

#### - READ -

"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.

- Matthew 6:9-13 -



Hallowed means "Greatly revered, honored, made holy, consecrated." Those are pretty lofty words. Jesus is telling us that as we pray, we should acknowledge that there is something different about God. His name, His nature, His ways, His existence is held in high regard. He's not like us. Nothing else in the Universe is like our God.

Praise isn't just about good worship music. It's about an attitude, a heart, a lifestyle. The Psalms are full of praises. Check these out.

"Shout for joy to God, all the earth! Sing the glory of his name; make his praise glorious. Say to God, 'How awesome are your deeds'!" — Psalm 66:2-3

Psalm 145 is packed with Praise! Here in verses 8-10, we see that God is praised for who He is, and how He treats His creation. It's not just people praising Him either, it's also 'all His works.'

The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made. All your works praise you, Lord; your faithful people extol you.

Praise is about choosing to notice who God is, and givingHim credit, where credit is due, for the way God goes about His business. According to scripture, you can praise God by: Shouting with joy, playing instruments, singing, dancing, and more! It seems like praising God can be noisy, active, and fun. Children seem to naturally know how to praise God. They move and sing with no thought of judgment. Praising God does that – it focuses you so much on who He is and how He is, that you don't have much time to think about yourself or what others think. Praise God for that!

#### - PRAY -

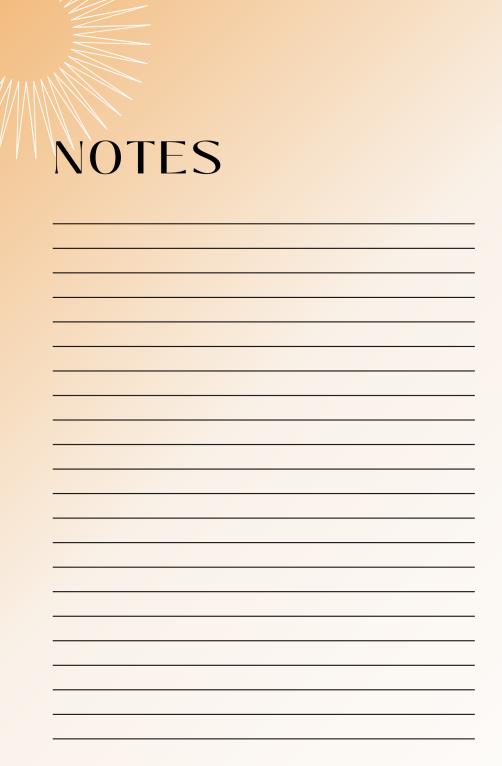
Maybe your prayer should look more like praise today! You don't have to speak a prayer to make it count. Sometimes you can sing it, or yell it. Some of the most honest prayers have strong emotion to them.

What attribute of God really blows you away today?

What has He done that makes you grateful?

Is His track record in your life worthy of praise?

Pro Tip: Play some worship music with really great praise lyrics to help you focus on praising God.



# DAY SEVENTEEN PURPOSE

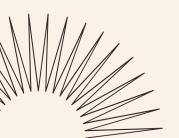
#### - READ -

"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one."

- Matthew 6:9-13 -

"The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it."

- Psalm 24:1-



"Your kingdom come, your will be done" – This simple phrase helps reframe the way we prioritize in prayer. It reminds us "the earth is the Lord's, and everything in it." And this phrase shows that God already had a plan in motion. God is in charge, and God has a purpose.

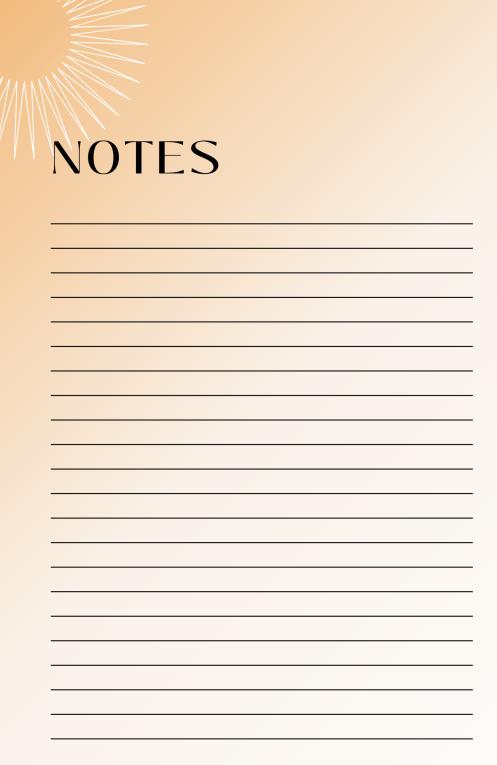
Because we know this, when we pray we aren't taking our agendas and asking God to adopt them, but we are looking to God and saying show us your agenda. Help us pray for the things that are already important to you.

This phrase also is a great reminder that God has a kingdom and that it is at work right here right now. God's work is happening all around us, and our purpose in prayer is to join with God in that work.

#### - PRAY -

Find a place with a great view, or if you can't do that imagine standing on the top of a hill or a mountain. Look all around. Everything that you see belongs to God—the trees, the mountains, the roads, the people in their cars, the restaurants. Take some time to thank God for the purpose He has for everything that you see.

Now take a few minutes to ask that God would show you what purpose He has for you right now wherever you are (in your workplace, at home, with friends). Pray that God would help you be a part of bringing His kingdom to earth where you are.



# DAY EIGHTEEN PROVISION

#### - READ -

"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one."

- Matthew 6:9-13 -

"Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in my law or not."



- Exodus 16:4 -

"Give us today our daily bread," is a phrase we rarely hear today. But when Jesus prayed this prayer, all those listening to him would have connected that phrase to its back-story in Exodus. God's people, the Israelites had been wandering around in the desert. They were desperate, and lost, and God literally brought bread to them from heaven. To them, daily bread meant daily and miraculous provision. Daily bread meant survival. It meant trust.

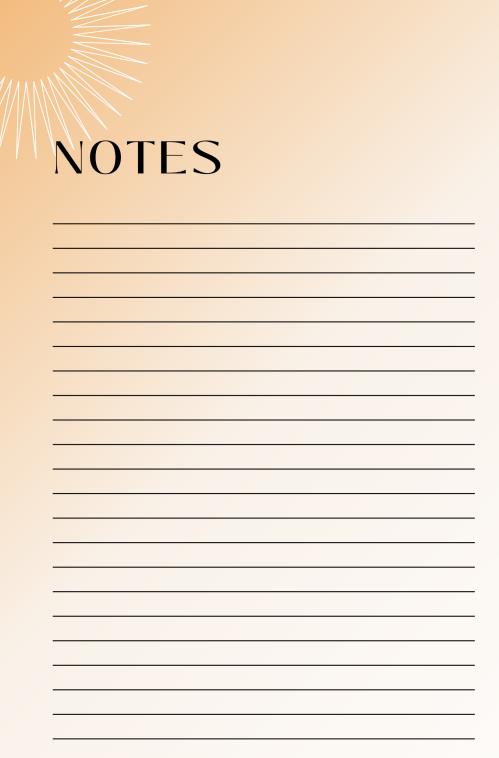
So when Jesus prays, "Give us today our daily bread," he expresses his constant dependence on God and his trust that God will provide what is needed for today. God is the Great Provider. And Jesus shows us that we can trust God to provide for us daily—even when we aren't sure it's possible.

#### - PRAY -

Before you begin praying, read Psalm 33:20-22: "We wait in hope for the Lord; he is our help and our shield. In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name. May your unfailing love be with us, Lord, even as we put our hope in you."

Read these verses a few times in a row and think about how God has helped you through his provision. Turn these verses into a prayer saying "God I wait and hope in you. You are my help and my shield. In you my heart rejoices. I trust in your holy name."

Now praise God for the way He has provided in the past. After this, think about the future, and ask God for His hand of provision once again. Ask in confidence. God is our great provider.



# DAY NINETEEN PARDON

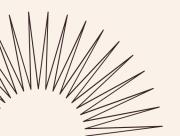
-READ -

"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one."

- Matthew 6:9-13 -

"Even if they sin against you seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying 'I repent,' you must forgive them'."

- Luke 17:4 -

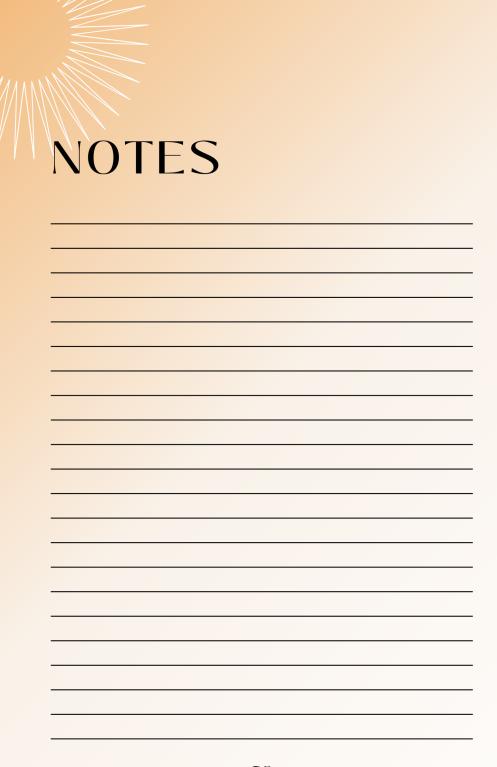


There are a lot of verses about forgiveness, some even say that God will not forgive us if we do not forgive others! That's pretty intense, but the reason is because God knows how powerful it is for us to let go of grudges and forgive others. It not only gives that person freedom, it gives us freedom from bitterness.

#### - PRAY -

So as you reflect, maybe write a quick note to someone that you should forgive. Giving it to them could be a powerful moment of healing, but even just writing it out will help heal any bitterness or pain in your heart.

Another step that you can take is to ask God to reveal anything you need to ask for forgiveness from. Maybe you need to approach someone asking for pardon, starting the healing process for everyone involved. When we are less distracted by our grievances with others, we can focus on our relationship with God more!



# DAY TWENTY PROTECTION

#### - READ -

"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
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on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
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And lead us not into temptation,
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- Matthew 6:9-13 -

#### - THINK -

God doesn't tempt us. He also has promised to never leave us, and to be with us until the end of the age. However, sometimes it feels like temptation is going to overcome us! And, sometimes we fall into temptation and sin. What are we supposed to do?

Jesus says we're supposed to ask God to help us. We should recognize we need help (Matt 5:3). We can recognize that even during temptation, God is not tempting us, and He is right there with us. He even promises to provide an escape route!

James, the brother of Jesus, said it this way,

"When tempted, no one should say, 'God is tempting me.' For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death." — James 1:13-15 —

So, it isn't God tempting us. It's our evil desires. And, if we allow those desires to turn into action, it results in death. That's a scary thought. But, right before that, James tells us what will happen when we resist that temptation!

"Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him." — James 1:12 —

When Jesus offers us a way around, through, or away from temptations, He blesses our perseverance with the crown of life!

Also, when you're tempted, you should know you're not unique. And, you'not alone. You didn't invent that sin or temptation. Check this out:

"No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it." -1 Corinthians 10:13 -

#### - PRAY -

Ask God what you are often tempted with.

Ask Him what the consequences or effects of that temptation are like in your life.

Ask Him to protect you, support you, and show you the way out that He's designed for that exact moment in your life.

Thank Him for being with you, and for the ultimate hope that He offers – life forever with Him!

# **NOTES PAGE**

## DAY TWENTY-ONE PRACTICE

#### -READ -

"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one."

- Matthew 6:9-13 -

"He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

- Revelation 21:4 -



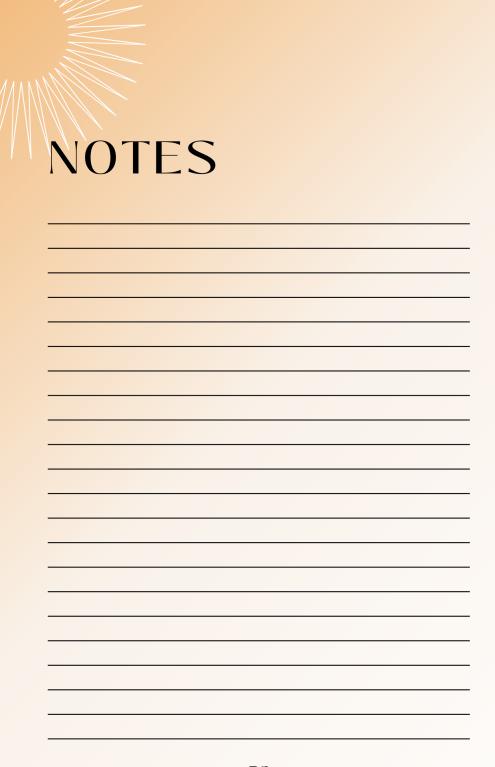
In his prayer Jesus gives us a vision of what can be. He instructs us to pray for things to be on earth as it is in heaven, but what does that mean? Scripture gives us a few glimpses of what it will look like when God's will is done. In Revelation, when John is describing the new earth and what life will look like once Jesus has returned he says, "there will be no more death, or mourning or crying or pain..." Can you imagine a world like that?

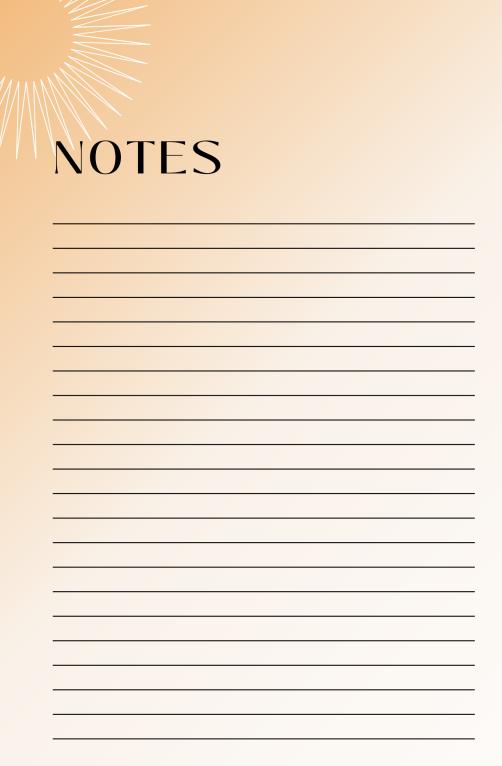
According to Jesus' prayer we don't have to wait until He comes back to start seeing His kingdom happening right here on earth. We don't have to wait to see suffering diminished. With God we can see kids in loving homes, schools full of hope and potential, communities that look out for one another, marriages healed, people with addictions restored. And we can see that happen through prayer and through our practices. We can live out the Lord's Prayer and start bringing God's kingdom to earth today.

#### - PRAY -

Take a few minutes to map out your community. Start with your neighborhood. Draw the homes of people living next to you or down the street. If you know their names, write the names of those families on their homes. Now draw the location of the closest elementary school, middle school, and high school and any names of students, teachers administrators in those schools.

What needs do you know of in your neighborhood? Your local schools? Your community? Make a short list, and pray that God's will would be done in those situations as it will be done in heaven. Look over the list; are there any needs on the list that you can help meet through your prayers, your generosity, and your service? If so, take one step this week to start meeting one of the needs on your list.





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# PRAYER & STING









